



FROM SOCIAL TO POLITICAL

NEW FORMS OF MOBILIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Benjamin Tejerina and Ignacia Perugorria
Editors

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Bilbao – Spain

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ISA RC48 – Research Committee Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change, International Sociological Association (ISA)



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and Democratization

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Foreword

In the recent evolution of contemporary social movements three phases can be identified. The first phase is marked by the labor movement and the systemic importance attributed to the labor conflict in industrial societies. This conflict has been interpreted as a consequence of the shortcoming of social integration mechanisms by Emile Durkheim, as a rational conflict between entrepreneurs' and workers' interests by Max Weber, and as a central class struggle for the transformation of society by Karl Marx.

The second phase in this development was led by the new social movements of the post-industrial society of the 1960s and 70s: student, women and environmentalist movements. Two new analytical perspectives have explained these movements' meaning and actions. Resource mobilization theory (McAdam and Tilly) has focused on rational attitudes and conflicts. Actionalist sociology, in turn, has identified the new protagonists of social conflict that replaced the labor movement in postindustrial societies.

The third phase emerges in a world characterized by the ascendance of markets, the increasingly prominent role of financial capital flows, the closure of communities, and fundamentalism. In this context, human rights and pro-democratization movements constitute alternatives to global domination and the systemic conditioning of individuals and groups.

The objective of this conference is to foster theoretical reflections and to present empirical evidence on the recent mobilizations that took or are taking place in the Mediterranean region. This wave of protests has two clearly identifiable threads. On the one hand, those mobilizations that demand political reforms to deepen or initiate processes of democratization in countries such as Tunes, Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Syria, among other. On the other, the massive displays of discontent regarding the political mismanagement of the socio-economic crisis and the shrinking of the Welfare State in Southern Europe. Among the latter are the 15M mobilizations in Spain, the "Indignate-vous" protests in France, Italy and Greece, and other mobilizations organized by young people and students in England, Israel and Belgium.

This conference will bring together different academic networks and orientations around the study of social movements, expressed by the Research Committees RC47-Social Movements and Social Classes and RC48-Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change of the International Sociological Association. The conference will provide an opportunity to engage in a necessary and enriching debate about the continuities and discontinuities in the contexts, organizations, repertoires, identities, and symbols suffered by social movements in the last few decades.

Organizing Committee

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 Benjamín Tejerina Montaña, UPV-EHU – Spain
 Emanuele Toscano, Sapienza-Università di Roma – Italy
 Shujiro Yazawa, Hitotsubashi University – Japan

Conference Program

Thursday, February 9

9:00 Accreditation

9:30-9:45 Presentation

9:45-11:15 Session 1

ARAB SPRING I

Chair: Antimo Farro

• **Musleh, Abeer** (Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University)

Mobilizing during the Arab Revolutions: Palestinian Youth Speak for Themselves

• **Khosrokhavar, Farhad** (CADIS)

Arab Spring Mobilizations

• **Garduño García, Moisés** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

Iconography and Contestatory Language in the Arab Protest

• **Desrués, Thierry** (IESA-CSIC)

The 20th February Movement: Collective Action and Political Responses in Morocco

11:15-11:45 Coffee break

11:45-13:15 Session 2

ARAB SPRING II

Chair: Pedro Ibarra

• **Perna, Stefania** (University of Reading)

Social Media and New Technologies in Egypt and Tunisia:

Two Examples of Innovative Forms of Democratization

• **Esu, Aide & Maddanu, Simone** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari & CADIS-EHESS)

The Controlled Heteropia: Urban Ethnography among Tunisian Migrants

connected to Arab Spring

• **Gómez Martín, Carmen** (EHESS)

Gdeim Izik. A Change in the Struggle Strategies of the Sahrawi Population

13:15-15:30 Lunch

15:30-17:00 Session 3A

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PROTESTS

Chair: Amparo Lasén

• **Baumgarten, Britta** (CIES-ISCTE, Universidade de Lisboa)

Espanha, Grecia, Irlanda, Portugal! A nossa luta é internacional! The Portuguese Mobilizations around the Economic Crisis and their Relationship to Other Contemporary Protests

• **Langman, Lauren** (Loyola University)

Occupy: New New Social Movement

• **Grinberg, Lev Luis** (Ben Gurion University)

The Israeli Mix of Europe and the Middle East: Collective Identity, Mobilization and Socio-Political Context of the J-14 movement

- **Sotirakopoulos, Nikos** (University of Kent)

The Notion of the Multitude and Lessons from the Present Cycle of Struggles:
The Case of Greece

Session 3B

YOUTH AND STUDENT MOBILIZATIONS

Chair: Elena Casado

- **Fernández González, Joseba** (UPV-EHU)

The New Wave of Student Mobilizations in Europe Explained as a Fordist-Postfordist Transition

- **Zamponi, Lorenzo** (European University Institute)

Precarious Present, Uncertain Future: Multiple Dimensions of Precarity as a Symbolic Tool
and Resource in the Italian University Mobilization

- **Rebughini, Paola** (University of Milan)

Avatars of Emancipation: From Critique to Indignation?

17:00-17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:30 Session 4A

EMOTIONS AND AFFECTS IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Chair: Ybon LeBot

- **Langman, Lauren & Benski, Tova** (Loyola University & Tel Aviv University)

The Effects of Affects: Democratic Social Movements and their Visions

- **Lasén, Amparo & Casado, Elena** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Exhibitionism, Affects and Choreographies: Redefining Public Space
from Women's Movements among Others

- **Nomiya, Daishiro** (Sophia University)

Transforming the Ominous into Happiness: How Antinuclear Drive
Was Tamed in the Post-war Japan?

- **Bataille, Philippe** (CADIS)

Au sujet du corps, le corps du Sujet

Session 4B

RETHINKING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Chair: Paola Rebughini

- **Toscano, Emanuele** (Sapienza-Università di Roma)

The space of movements: An interpretative frame

- **Martínez, Zesar, Casado, Beariz & Ibarra, Pedro** (UPVEHU)

Aproximación a los movimientos sociales como sujetos de emancipación

- **Schlembach, Raphael** (University of Salford)

Social Movements in Post-Political Society: Prefiguration, Deliberation and Consensus

- **Angelovski, Isabelle** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona & MIT)

'Environment and health, yes... but for other reasons': Asserting Control,
Sovereignty, and Transgression in Barcelona

Friday, February 10

9:00-11:00 Session 5

15M AND 'INDIGNADO' MOBILIZATIONS I: CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

Chair: Dai Nomiya

- **Alberich Nistal, Tomás** (Universidad Complutense of Madrid)
Antecedents, Changes and Challenges of the New Sociopolitical Movements in Spain and the 15M Movement.
- **Tejerina, Benjamín & Perugorría, Ignacia** (UPV/EHU & Rutgers University)
Continuities and Discontinuities in Recent Social Mobilizations.
From New Social Movements to the Alter-Global Mobilizations and the 15M
- **Fernández García, Manuel** (IESA-CSIC)
Emerging Forms of Political Protest as Participation:
The Political Space of 15M Movement
- **Farro, Antimo L.** (Sapienza-Università di Roma & CADIS)
XXI Century Social Movements. New Issues and New questions

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 Session 6

15M AND 'INDIGNADO' MOBILIZATIONS II: LEARNING PROCESSES

Chair: Ignacia Perugorría

- **Rivero Jiménez, Borja** (Universidad de Extremadura)
The Assemblies of 15th May Movement in Cáceres: An Example of Democracy School, a Road to Dialogic Society
- **Romanos, Eduardo** (Universidad Pública de Navarra)
Collective Learning Processes within Social Movements: Some Insights into the Spanish 15M Movement
- **Nez, Héloïse** (Université Paris 13)
Among Militants and Deliberative Laboratories: The Indignados
- **Calvo, Kerman** (Universidad de Salamanca)
Fighting for a Voice: the 15M Movement in Spain

13:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-17:00 Session 7A

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Chair: Emanuele Toscano

- **Hyun, Jeong-Im** (Sogang University)
What Really Matters in Creating Mass Mobilization: Classical Organization or New Social Media? A Comparative Case Study of the Mass Mobilization Process in France and South Korea

- **Vicari, Stefania** (University of Leicester)
Twitter and Public Reasoning around Social Contention: The Case of #15ott in Italy
- **Del Amo, Ion Andoni, Diaux, Jason & Letamendía, Arkaitz** (UPV-EHU)
Protest Politics Through Music in the Basque Country. The Spread of the Lip Dub as a New Form of Collective Action
- **Del Val, Fernán** (Universidad Complutense)
The Sound of the Transition: Youth, Politics and Popular Music in Spain

Session 7B

IDENTITY AND PERFORMATIVITY

Chair: Tova Benski

- **Tominaga, Kyoko** (University of Tokyo)
A Study of Movement Identity on Protest Events:
The case of The Protest Against the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako G8 Summit
- **Everhart, Katherine** (Vanderbilt University)
Ocup(arte)!: Cultural Engagement in The University of Puerto Rico
Student Movement, 2010
- **Martínez, Miguel A.** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Cumulative Chains of Activist Exchanges: the Occupation of Squares
and the Squatting of Buildings

17:00-17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:00 Session 8A

NEOLIBERALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

Chair: Simone Maddanu

- **Xambó Olmos, Rafael & Ginés Sánchez, Xavier** (Universitat de València)
From the Save Movements to the Live Ones. An Analytical Approach
to the Evolution of Social Movements in Valencia in the Last Two Decades
- **Rosenhek, Zeev & Shalev, Michael** (Open University of Israel & Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Class, Generation and Social Protest. The Summer of Discontent in Israel
- **Bizberg, Ilan** (El Colegio de México)
Social Movements, Civic Society and Globalization in Latin America
- **Le Bot, Yvon** (CADIS)
The Emergence of the Migrant Subject. A Sociological Interpretation
of the Latino Movement in the United States

19:00-19:30 Closing ceremony

ARAB SPRING

Mobilizing during the Arab Revolutions: Palestinian Youth speak for themselves

ABEER MUSLEH

Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

Abstract

During the Arab revolutions, Palestinian youth found themselves, for the first time in 25 years, inspired by other youth in the region, instead of being the one who inspire others. The ability to achieve a mass mobilization and rebel against the division between the two main Palestinian factions, and against the Israeli Occupation was weak across the Palestinian youth. Scholars were trying to answer the question why Palestinian youth did not succeed in mobilizing despite the emergence of a political opportunity.

The objective of this paper is to understand, taking into consideration youth reflection on their experience, why the current generation of youth was unable to mobilize on the ground. To answer this question the following factors will be taken into consideration: culture of engagement, gender, youth identity and culture of mobilization, Mobilization structures, Frameworks and the sociopolitical context.

To achieve this understanding the research utilizes in depth case study analysis of the youth groups who acted on the ground in Ramallah during December 2010- till June 2011. The researcher conducted participant observation for events taking place on the ground, interviews with youth leaders of the various youth groups engaged in Ramallah governorate, Palestinian Political parties, and key people in the field of youth engagement in Palestine. The research will draw on the literature of social movements (SM) with emphasis on generations' literature. Generation literature provide a lens for looking at the experiences of young people and how they shapes their identities, communication style, leadership style, and the structures they decide to establish.

Keywords

Activism, Arab Revolutions, Forms of Engagement, Identity, Palestine.

Literature Review

Studies of social scientists about the latest Arab revolutions tried to explain what exactly happened, and why they could not predict these movements (Shehada, 2011). Further, these studies tried to explain the different directions of revolutions developed within the various countries taking into consideration the existing similarities in patterns developed such as: Tunisia-Egypt, Syria-Yemen-Libya, Morocco- Bahrain, etc... However, the spillover effect of revolutions cannot be missed all over whether through slogans raised, forms of engagement, leadership style, and social- class of leaders (Alshweiry, 2011; Hanafi, 2011).

The literature about the Arab revolutions focused on the socio-political characteristics of the actors within the revolution;. mainly the educated middle class non-affiliated youth, and the political parties. The relation

between the politically affiliated and non politically affiliated youth in Egypt was one of the aspects under study (Hanafi, 2011). Further, the Youth ability to overcome the personal ideology and their sense of agency to take different stands other than their political parties (Hanafi, 2011); in addition to their ability to connect between the political, civic and economical aspects was clear in the slogans of justice raised mainly by both the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt.

The importance of studying the Arab revolutions is that it came at a time when all the analysis for the Arab world was assuming that the people are not going to rebel against the injustice and dictatorship they live. It was a revolution that surprised most actor (Alshweiry, 2011). Most of the studies about the Arab revolutions tried to understand what happened from a socio-economical perception. Leaving mostly the free spaces in which the revolutions built its culture, and the new spaces utilized to nurture this culture, mainly social media, streets and mosques as public spaces where culture of movements are developed (ElSakka, 2011). One other aspect of the Arab revolutions is that it reinforced the concept of power of organized non-violence revolts for social change (ElEker, 2011) , and presented a space in which each citizen despite their gender, class, education can equally participate and contribute to the change.

The debate about Palestinian mobilization during the Arab revolutions most of the time started with the question why the Palestinian youth failed to mobilize, or why their social mobilization was not existent. Raising such questions is a problem as it assumes that a movement should take place, and the fact that it did not happen is considered the abnormal (Al-Azzeh, 2011), and it limits the ability to analyze the context. Nevertheless, both the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions had the largest impact on the Palestinian youth and inspired them to act as catalysts for their community. Reviewing the slogans raised by the Palestinian youth, it is noticed that the slogans the same structure that starts with “The People wants...”, they tried to have the same way for participatory leadership and present themselves as independent (Yates, 1999; Brown, 2011); However, one important aspect of the impact of Arab revolutions on the Palestinian youth is the increase of sense of agency and ability to change.

When studying youth mobilization in Palestine during the period of Arab revolutions, It is hard not to look at the changing relation between the Palestinians and the Arab World. According to Ala Azzeh (2011) the Palestinians turned to be watchers for the Arab scene instead of being the scene. It was a time in which they will demonstrate in solidarity with Arabs and not the opposite. It was a time in which they had to step back and learn new methods and forms of mobilization. One example is when the Palestinian youth at Qalandia checkpoint on the Nakba demonstration used similar Tactics that were used by the Egyptian at the Tahrir Square to overcome the impact of tear gas HS, Personal communication).

Further, youth mobilization is different from one country to another depending on the context in which youth live in (Yates, 1999). Within the Palestinian context, the internal conflict between the two biggest parties led to two disputed governments, which was not well received by people, and youth in particular, especially the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS) were and still are under occupation; added to this, the escalation violence and repression by the Israeli occupation. All of this led to bad economic situation, and left other political parties, and the Palestinian civil society that is in largely dependent on donors with minimal power. This situation affected the democratic process that has been put on hold as a result of the internal conflict between the main Palestinian Factions.

Scope of study

This article tries to analyze what happened in Palestine during the Arab revolutions. To do so, it tackles on one side, the sociopolitical context and the political opportunity structure that existed in Palestine; on the other side, it takes into consideration the youth perception of their experience which will allow to understand better what took place in regard to youth political mobilization; such as the challenges that hindered mobilization in the Palestinian context. The study is based on both literature of youth engagement and social movements.

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it not only provides hands on experience that took place in Palestine during the Arab revolutions, but also because it reflects on the youth experience through reading their narratives.

Research question and objectives

The objective of this paper is to understand the different elements that made it difficult for the current generation of youth to mobilize on the ground through considering youth reflection on their experience. In doing so, the following factors will be taken into consideration: context, gender, identity, framing, leadership styles, and forms of engagement.

Methodology

Most of the findings discussed in this article stem from the research conducted between December 2010 and June 2011 in Ramallah, Palestine. The researcher used case study approach in which the three main youth groups active in the area of Ramallah were selected. To collect data, the researcher conducted: participant observation for events and groups meetings, 14 interviews with leaders of the three main youth groups, and content analysis for articles and responses to the events taking place.

Within the interviews, questions to youth covered their involvement in the mobilization in regard to their: motive to mobilize, level of involvement, group's leadership structure, role they played, their perception of other main youth groups acting on the ground, their identity, specific ways of engagement, networks utilized, ways used to face repression, role of young women, and finally their future perspectives.

All interviews were conducted in Arabic; some of the interviews were conducted during the mobilization process and as the events were taking place, and part of the interviews were conducted after the whole mobilization process ended. Interviews were transcribed and coded, and analyzed using AtlasTI software. To protect the privacy of Research subject, pseudo names will be used instead of research subject's names. It is important to note, that the researcher ensured the youth to share the results and analysis of the research with them. The results shared will be a way of evaluating the experience they passed through. The youth considered the researcher an insider in the groups, especially that the researcher was a member of one of the groups, and considered her task as documentation and as part of the effort needed to enhance the group experience.

The Palestinian context and political mobilization

The nature of youth political mobilization in Palestine has been changing over time. The nature of political mobilization usually impacts the position of youth within their community, the power to holding positions, and the impact they can make in the Palestinian society in general. Historically the Palestinian youth played an important role in community mobilization for national causes. The 1st Palestinian youth conference took place in the year 1931 in which Palestinian youth looked into ways to community mobilize to resist the Zionist movement threats to the Palestinian society (Hüt, 1981) in the 1950's the Palestinian youth through the student movement formed and led the PLO and mobilized the Palestinian community around the Militant resistant of occupation (Şâyigh and Sirhan, 2002). In 1987 they provided a model of non-violent popular resistance through the 1st Intifada. Since signing of Oslo Accord till now Palestinian political youth engagement showed various forms of activism that varied based on the affiliation and context within the Palestinian community.

Studies about the Palestinian youth, indicated a decrease in the level of youth political activism and mobilization since the signature of the Oslo agreement (Bailey and Murray, 2009) compared to their significant role during the first Intifada. Since then, main changes took place regarding the Palestinian youth identity, forms of engagement, position, and role of youth within the Political Factions.

Youth engagement does not happen in a vacuum it is affected by the context in which youth live in. This context includes structures and values, logics and practices that provide young people with opportunities/constrains for development and participation (Yates, 1999). Being under occupation, the clear system to rebel against due to continued increased oppressive measures presented by the Apartheid wall, the settlements, confiscation of land, checkpoints, demolition of houses, and apartheid laws against Palestinians whether they live in Israel or in the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip - the state- did not exist within the political context (Al-Azzeh, 2011). Despite their disappointment from the Palestinian system and structures, which is feeding the division, the youth could not reach a position where they can stand completely against it. This limited the forms of engagement they adopted.

The situation becomes worse considering the division between Fateh and Hamas, in which the youth were divided between the two big political parties, resulting in having youth fighting against each other instead of uniting together for developing the society and resisting occupation.(Bailey and Murray, 2009; Rahal, 2009). Ending division between the main two factions became the main concern of the Palestinian society in general and the youth in particular (Bailey and Murray, 2009). As the PLO weakened after the Oslo Accord, it could not play a role in solving the internal conflict. Various attempt took place since 2006 to end the dispute, however, all these attempts failed, and a system ruled by security forces was reinforced in both WB and GS that year.

At the level of the Palestinian organizations and political parties which are important in nurturing youth into political engagement, as they are the place where political socialization usually takes place, did not play this role. Both Mcadam (1986) and (Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006) described the importance of community organization and indicated the importance of institutions in creating the opportunity for young people to enter the political process. However, in the case of the Palestinian youth, most of them have been facing many challenges such as being stuck within older structures, led by older generations, which did not allow youth to have a role in decision making within the organizations and parties' structures. In addi-

tion the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), being dependent on Donors, lost their connection with the grassroots, and could not be the places where youth values, communication style, and identities are developed and shaped, and where negotiations between old and new world's visions and communication styles can take place. Palestinian youth activists reflected that, to a certain extent, that they don't find a place within these structures; politically affiliated youth and youth involved in organizations could not get out of the authority of these structures to have their own way of thinking and develop their field of interest. Therefore, it is clear that the existing structures of the various institutions and political parties did not encourage youth participation, which resulted in the youth's mistrust in these institutions. It goes without saying that within these structures, usually, the politically affiliated youth could not remove the hat of their political party and wear the hat of a youth activist that has a different vision.

The opportunity for the political participation change came as a result of the Arab revolutions when Palestinian youth found a new model to identify with. The First Palestinian youth mobilizing attempt, during the Arab revolutions, was an act of solidarity with the Tunisian people. The demonstration was initiated by youth groups who identified themselves as independent. This is not surprising as the youth in the political parties were tied by their parties' policies and this explains why youth who were not politically affiliated to parties made the first move. These youth were members of independent activists groups, and were reached through facebook personal networks. The first demonstrations to support both the Tunisian and Egyptian people were faced with repression by the Palestinian security forces. The solidarity demonstrations with the Tunisian and Egyptian people, however, started to raise slogans of ending division and occupation by February 7th, 2011

Youth groups started to emerge and organize mainly either through facebook, or face to face through closed meetings. Members of the groups were trying to avoid the security forces intervention and interrogation. However, there was a serious problem that faced these groups. The activist youth groups could not reach a consensus on one main objective of their mobilization. They were mainly divided between "End Division" and "End Occupation". Hundreds of groups emerged on facebook, under the above two objectives. In addition, there was no clear agenda or agreed upon plan to how to go about it and could not even agree on one date.

Taking into consideration that the Palestinian society is highly politicized, political parties had a high control and access to networks of individuals and institutions, despite the high disappointment of their performance (Brown, 2011). Political factions control over the affiliated youth was, and still is, very strong. One main incident that showed this control was burning the sit-in tent. While the public was waiting for the youth to make a change; yet and it was not willing to be part of this change. Building on the Arab experiences, the public was anticipating for change to happen. Within political socialization previous experience, relation to institutions and cross age relations are all aspects that shape youth forms and willingness of engagement (boyte,2004).

As the Palestinian society is politicized, the creation of security controlled authority, is one of the challenges that limited youth and community participation. Within this context, freedom of expression and political rights were threatened.

Both of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions created a change in the Palestinian morale, and gave youth some hope to make a difference within the Palestinian political structure.

Research Results and Discussion

This section will reflect on the main issues mentioned by youth and posit it in the frame of youth political engagement through considering mainly identity, framing, leadership styles, and forms of engagement taking into consideration context and gender as significant variables.

Identity

Identity gets its meaning from being part of collectiveness. Gender, race, class, and education are elements that affect identity formation (Klatch, 1999). Although youth activists from all groups identified themselves as independent, they still had different identities and perspectives based on their previous and current affiliations. According to Miche (2008), every individual has multiple identities as a result of belonging to various collectives. Individuals negotiate the dominant identity at a time given depending on the setting and the various collectivities existing and the public they are trying to create. Groups and individuals are perceived by identified by their affiliations and belonging to various collectivities. Within the Palestinian context political affiliation is one of the major identities that define individuals and groups. Despite the self definition as 'independent', the members of the groups were still perceived by their previous affiliations. The three groups were mainly divided into independent youth(no previous political affiliation) , politically affiliated youth (previously affiliated with leftist factions), and a group affiliated with Fateh and NGOs.

Miche (2008), mention the importance of identity in building alliance across groups while building alliances and networks. The groups could not agree on one umbrella to work beneath. The discomfort across the groups was noticed on the ground in three forms: slogans raised by the groups; dividing days of activities across the groups (i.e. each group conducted its activity at the Manarah square (main square in Ramallah) on a different day, and finally, conducting different activities on the same day when uniting efforts was needed. This was clear on the Land Day on March 30, when one group perceived to have leftist affiliations, led a demonstration toward Beit Eil Israeli settlement where they got into confrontation with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) (the PNA police declared that they will stand against any attempts to reach to the points of confrontation with the Israeli Army), while the group with no previous affiliation called for supporting the people of Nabi Saleh Village near Ramallah that are impacted by the Apartheid and Separation Wall (MM, personal communication).

It is important to note that the conflict between groups and individual identities mainly existed within groups who were conducting activities on the ground, contrary to the group who conducted the Sit-inn and hunger strike. Those groups on the contrary played an important role at least during the first month in bringing youth groups together, they were the brokers between the groups, especially that they had members that are committed with all of them. The form of engagement provided them with insider/outsider perspective and status (Miche, 2008).

Further, the fear that the youth had from being co-opted by other political factions made them draw a boarder that isolated them from others. Even when they were approached by youth from various political parties they could not build with them a collaborative relation, and move toward a mutual identity or even negotiate the relation between the politically affiliated and independent youth. Instead, they assumed that every attempt to support them from political factions is meant to co-opt their mobilization and eventually refused it. This meant that the youth lost a large possible network of support that they could have developed.

Further, the borders that the youth draw around themselves were clear on the Manarah square when young people made a human circle in which activities took place within. Although on the first day, this circle aimed at protecting the activists from being physically and sexually harassed, it created eventually two spaces (inside and outside the circle) in which events take place, this limited communication between the activists and the rest of the community.

The connotation of the circle is important not only in regard to the identity of the youth activists and the other youth groups, not only who are politically affiliated to, but its is also significant in identifying who come from a what socioeconomic background. According to HZ : “it was important for us in order to protect ourselves at the first 3 days to do the circle; after that we limited ourselves into a small corner instead of occupying the street” (HZ, Personal Communication). Further, being in the circle, young people were asked to behave in a certain way, follow certain direction which is not necessary representing the general population of youth. As a result, disturbing the circle, getting into it, or conduct activities close to it was a way from other groups to negotiate and show power.

The youth tried hardly to identify themselves as non-factional, and tried to present themselves as community catalysts. However, such a stand within a highly politicized community meant that the young people needed to have “careful navigation between being co-opted by the older movements and challenging them too directly” (Brown, 2011). Further, According to Hilal (2011) political parties were afraid that the youth mobilization can turn into a mass mobilization, which will make political factions lose its role and power in the community, specially with an increase of disappointment and withdrawal of youth from political parties to reach approximately 60 percent (Hilal, 2011). As a result political parties tried to limit and co-opt the youth mobilization directly or indirectly.

Gender was another component of identity for youth mobilization. Starting 15th of March gender identity started to show clearly through: roles and responsibilities taken by different group members, power perception, type of repression by security forces, forms of engagement. Starting the demonstrations of 15th of March, it was noticed that traditional perceptions of women roles and space started to show up especially when discussing issues of women sleeping in the sit-inn, it was clear that young men immediately adopted the traditional roles in which they thought all young women should go back home (FQ, Personal communication; HS, Personal communication; ZS, Personal Communication). Further, the perception of male activists all the time were thinking that they have the responsibility to protect the female activists, although young women were the ones who actually protected the male activists from physical harassment when it took place on that same day. Further, it is important to note that female activists from all groups were the ones who are willing to bridge gaps between the groups, they were willing to participate in all forms of engagement, however it was not always allowed by male activists from their own groups.

Framing

In the case of Palestine, three discourses used were ‘ending Occupation’, ‘ending division’, and ‘New Palestinian national Council’ (PNC) for the Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO) Although the groups tried at some points to raise all the slogans at the same time mainly in the demonstration of the 15th of March, 2011, youth were not able to have one framing that all groups will adopt. Further, the first framing of objectives of mobilization were not a result of well thoughtful process. According to HAH :

“ We were marching on the 7th of February demonstration, which was a large turnout, A friend and I were wondering what would happen if we would call for ending of the internal division, and this is what we did’ suddenly everyone in the demonstration started calling the same slogan. At the same demonstration people also started calling for ending the occupation. The next day hundreds of facebook groups appeared. These groups were divided between the two slogans and only few combined both” (HAH, Personal communication).

After this, the groups started to work on their vision and identify priorities for the Palestinian community. For example, the youth groups that selected a new PNC slogan, raised the slogan as a start to be different from the groups of youth affiliated with political parties, Both Fateh and Hamas affiliated groups that raised the slogan of ending division, and one major group which included both NGOs and Fateh affiliated raised the slogan Ending occupation. It was their way to show their independent identity and to connect with larger number of Palestinian youth in 1948 and Diaspora (FQ, Personal Communication; HAH, Personal communication; NB, Personal Communication; ZS, Personal Communication).

Framing (A frame is ‘schemata of interpretation’ Goffman (1974:21)) is important to support participation in Social Movement (Snow, E. Burke Rochford et al. 1986), as it enables individuals ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences within their life space and the world at large. Frames play an important role in organizing experience and guide actions for both individual and the collective (Snow, E. Burke Rochford et al., 1986). Frames are considered vital for shaping ways activists organize and communicate, as well as symbols they carry. Frames affect channels of communication, structures formed, identities, and worldviews.

Several factors played role in the division across their groups: First, The geographical division with different living situations across the various Palestinian places of existence. For example, the interest of the youth in Gaza made ending division their priority; however, in regard to Palestinians within the West Bank, in addition to division, ending occupation was also a priority. The difference in the context between the West Bank and Gaza impacted the interpretation to priorities. The geographical division also impacted the level of communication across youth groups during the framing process. Most of the discussions took place over facebook pages (FQ, personal Communication, ZS, Personal Communication), except for few meetings that took place across some youth leaders, and lectures conducted by youth groups at various locations before 15th of march, 2011.

Second, the identity of the political faction was stronger among most of the politically affiliated youth, they could not separate themselves away from their parties and work on a different framing and the independent youth could not trust the politically affiliated youth not to try to co-opt their movement and hijack it. Taking into consideration the highly political Palestinian society, with political parties that do not provide a place for young people to be part of decision making (Rahal, 2009), and considering the existence of ruling political party structure and culture in both the WB and GS and the high levels of disappointments from political parties since Oslo accord, developing an alliance between independent and politically affiliated youth was not an easy matter.

As Sherrod et al (2010) indicates the importance of collaboration with others having similar interests in order to develop the collective power to influence the political system in Political participation. Participation required groups to be able to present their own interests, listen to others, and negotiate joint decisions. Understanding the others perspectives was not one of the strong assets for the existing groups.

Further, taking into consideration both the context and the characteristics of youth activists, the framing process in which they went through before they moved to confrontation with the system was short and was not enough to develop the support they needed from the community. According to Hilal (2011) the Palestinian youth could not raise slogans that could mobilize people around them and this is due to the strong link between democracy and national struggle. In addition to the slogans that did not present any real challenge for the two authorities in the WB and GS. Accordingly, youth could not reach a mature framing process to encourage people join them.

Falling short from unifying the objectives meant that the youth could not build a strategy, and an approach to reach their objectives. Youth could not build a collaboration with those who had have similar interests which was needed to develop the collective power to influence the political system.

Leadership and communication style

The young activists, being unable to find a place in the existing structures, tried to adopt a horizontal and participatory leadership style, as style of leadership that allows for more participation, and decision making. According to Miche (2008), Leadership structures adopted by generations are impacted with their previous experiences and affiliations, in which they develop different ways of communication, and they adapt it according to the situation they live. This applies largely to the Palestinian youth situation. Two factors led young people to aim to have a horizontal and participatory leadership: first, their previous experience with Palestinian Institutions presented by (political factions, and NGOs). These structures did not provide a space for youth to participate in addition to the disappointment of youth with the performance of political parties and NGOs. Second, the model presented in both Tunisia and Egypt revolutions, in which no clear figures of leaders were presented, and the boundaries between groups were flexible, and eventually kept a level of innovation for all youth who showed interest in getting engaged (FQ, Personal Communication; HS, Personal Communication; HZ, Personal Communication).

However, this kind of leadership created problems for the group on the ground. Some of those problems were mainly related to the speed of taking decisions on the ground, communication with authority figures, media, and reaching a joint demand and discourse. Not having a clear structure and channels of communication on the ground in which usually the traditional chain of command takes place, made it difficult for the activists to face the two main political factions that have a strong network of individuals and organizations. The lack of clear structure combined with a small number of activists, and little of experience, made it impossible for young activists to keep their stands, and instead of acting, most of their action became a reaction to the repression they faced from the security forces and the attempt of the Main political parties to coop their Political Mobilization.

Youth groups' leadership was demonstrated on the ground in 3 forms of engagements: the leadership of youth participating in the sit-in, leadership of youth participating in the hunger strike, and leadership of youth groups conducting activities at the Manarah Square and resistance of occupation actions. It is important to notice that until the 18th of March 2011, the leadership for the three forms of engagement was one. And both members of the hunger strike and the sit-in were the same as youth conducting activities. However, with the increase in the numbers of youth participating in those forms of engagement, and with the increase in the level of risk taken, the leadership for the those forms of engagement became more apparent, keeping into consideration the need to coordinate efforts. In one of the meetings to evaluate the events of

the day and plan for the next day, FQ, a member of one of the groups who conducted activities and participated in the sit-in and hunger strike said: “ We cannot decide on the demands of the people participating in the hunger strike, it’s their decision when to halt their strike, they have to decide the risk they want to take” (FQ, Meeting on the 17th of March).

Despite the attempt to keep horizontal structure, the differences between group members, Risk taken, gender, media, interaction with politicians and security forces, rapid changes on the ground, time and availability, and the concentration of information led to the emergence of individual leadership style within the groups. Groups members tried to develop subgroups that are specialized and responsible for specific tasks (Media, dealing with insurgency forces), but that approach moved the groups from the participatory leadership style to more individual and hierarchal leadership. (HS, Personal Communication; HZ, Personal Communication; MAH, Personal Communication). This made the groups move to a level in which decision making and information are concentrated with specific people.

The new leaders became the address for the groups. The emerging leaders started to take decisions on the spot, and, at some points, they built the expectations that other members in the groups would follow their decisions. Some group members, especially female activists, felt excluded from the groups’ decision-making process, vision, and that their experience and knowledge is not appreciated. In most of the groups, female activists were the ones who raised concerns in regard to the expectations of their role, the space provided for them to participate, and the appreciation of other fellow members.

Negotiations between members and emerging leaders in regard to the group identity, characteristics, and type of activities took place, led to inefficiency on the ground, bad feelings and non cohesion across group members, and, eventually it ended in some members halting their participation, or moving to other groups (FQ, Personal Communication; HS, Personal Communication; NS, Personal Communication)

It is worth mentioning that the participatory leadership was only successful until the youth started the major mobilization event where confrontation with the authorities took place. At that moment they regressed to the traditional way of leadership which was easier to practice. The limited experience youth had in political participation, combined with their personal characteristics, and the small number of activists made it easier to drop participatory leadership.

Gender was an important factor that impacted the leadership of the group, and impacted the conflicts within it. Male activists, at various times, could not see the role young women activists could play, The social risk that young women faced, and further, they exported the traditional patriarchal male character to their leadership style. All these factors led many times to a conflict among group members.

Forms of engagement/ type of activities

Forms of engagement adopted by youth are a result of a combination of different factors, such as political socialization and political opportunities (McAdam, 1986; Yates, 1999) indicates that the characteristics of those who participate in risky activism is different from those who are involved in low-risk form of activism. Political participation forms are impacted with the type of exposure to institutions and the relation with the system. Political socialization helps to understand the background of activists, their orientation and how that shapes the forms of engagement they adopt.

Palestinian youth utilized The following forms of engagement in their mobilization during the Arab revolutions.

Social media activism

All youth groups used the new free space for its activism. although social mobilization spaces had less centralization and hierarchy from other structures. yet trying to escape the intrusion of security forces, groups s tried to control members access to its facebook sites. Social media's success in mobilizing youth varied from one event to another, for example it was very successful in the Nakba march on the 15th of May, but it was less successful during daily activities at the Manarah square Transferring activism from the virtual world to the real one did not take place in large numbers. The number of young people participating in virtual activism was much higher than the one who actually showed up during the events. Moving from believing in something to action depend on many factors such as the level of consciousness (McAdam, 1986; Yates, 1999; Rahal 2009), existing structures and institutions, and the culture of engagement(Mische, 2008)

In addition to the mobilization role of social media, it played a role as observers for both occupation and authority practices, personal cameras and mobiles, live streaming are all new means that youth used to spread their perceptions, and what is happening on the ground.

Social media was a tool of communication across Palestinian youth at places of existence (Youth in 1948, 1967, Diaspora), and a way of connecting with activists around the world and the Arab world.

Demonstrations

Demonstrations were used by various youth groups in a joint effort to contest the existing situation. However, the main demonstrations conducted were mainly co-opted by political factions that are responsible for the current situation. Demonstrations were a place to challenge the slogans of the ruling party, they were a place where youth tried to raise their framing and be visible to the community. As demonstrations were co-opted by political parties, and considering the violations of the security forces to the rights of expression of the demonstrators in public, failed the expectations of the public that built expectations on youth engagement, and led to the withdrawal of various community groups from demonstrations or even refusing to participate at all.

Hunger strike, Sit-in

Youth decided to start with the sit-in and hunger strike two days before the assigned date for the main demonstration (15th of March demonstration), The purpose of initiating the hunger strike and Sit-in was to ensure that political factions cannot co-opt the initiative of youth. One of the aspects that affected the impact of these two forms of engagement is the lack of experience of youth. For most youth, this was their first participation in such an event; as a result, the first challenge was setting their objectives so high, instead of building gradually their demands. Second the hunger strike and sit-in needed more proper preparation, especially in terms of logistics, demands, and management of the sit-in and hunger strike.(FQ, Personal Communication; HAH, Personal Communication.).

However, the tent as a place for the sit-in and hunger strike became a space where discussion took place, educating process about the Palestinian history, structures of the PLO, and other issues of concern. Ensuring that the tent stays at the Manarah Square had an important significance for all groups who are participating in sit-in in the various locations of WB and GS.

Setting the tent at the Manarah Square did not take place without some difficulties. The PNA refused to allow setting the tent till after one week of starting the sit-in and hunger strike. Security forces ensured to have some of its informants as part of the participants in the sit-in; and finally the tent was attacked and burned by Fateh affiliated youth on the 30th of March.

Daily activities at the Manarah

Activities at the Manarah Square started as a way of mobilization and recruitment of the community; the square was also a place to raise demands from the Authority. This period was characterized by tension with security forces, political parties who were trying to co-opt the youth mobilization, and conflicts with the Fateh affiliated youth and security forces as they were trying to repress the events taking place.

Another challenge was coordinating with other groups about activities to take place, trying to decrease the level of tension across the youth groups; the groups decided that each group will be responsible for activities on a different day. Further, after a while the activities conducted by youth groups became repetitive, and became a burden on the youth instead of a tool to reach for people. According to youth activists, the declaration of reconciliation was a good opportunity to save their face.

I think one of the challenges for the activities taking place at the Manarah Squares that youth were trying to duplicate what is taking place at Tahrir Square instead of adapting forms that fit with their context and situation.

Resisting occupation form of engagement

Trying to establish a better connection with what takes place in the Palestinian community, the youth started to participate in resistance of occupation activities. Not all members of the groups participated in these activities, but it became one of the main activities that they mobilize around. This was clear in the mobilization for the Nakba march, and the weekly demonstrations against the wall.

Youth started to join other movements working in the Palestinian society such as the Boycott and divestment and sanctions movement (BDS), prisoners' movement, and popular resistance movement.

Conclusions

Although the above results show that Palestinian youth political mobilization failed to be at the level of youth participation in the Arab revolutions, it is worth noting that this experience was the beginning of a new trajectory of youth political mobilization.

First: Youth political engagement is measured by its continuity and sustainability. These youth have not only continued to mobilize, but could also invent new forms of engagements that were not present in their first mobilizing experience (the period covered by the study). These new forms of engagement are adapted from Arab and international social movement experience. Examples are the latest Freedom Riders initiative where the youth together with nonviolence activists went on an Israeli settlers' bus as a protest against Israeli Apartheid.

At another level, these youth became more flexible to join different movements and groups. They devel-

oped the ability to work with each other, with other groups and could build alliances which have resulted in continuous actions of activism against occupation and the different Palestinian political issues of concern; such as the internal division, normalization with the occupation, state declaration.

The identity issue is one of the major concern of the youth was resurrected to consider Palestinians in Palestine and Diaspora. This was reflected in the common activities that took place at the same time, and virtual networks developed in the different major areas of Palestinians' reside. At another level, the youth are still demanding conducting elections for the PNC which represents Palestinians everywhere.

As for framing, although the youth conducted various actions, their efforts do not build on one other. They still need to develop their discourse; accordingly, they need to define their future action while continue developing their individual and group networks and alliances. To do so, they need to open up to other youth who are affiliated to political parties, to different social classes, and to cross the geographical boundaries to learn more about the different realities of the Palestinian people.

Taking into consideration, that participatory leadership is a process, it goes without saying, that it needs time to mature. However, leadership style is defined by experience, identity, and discourse.

Abbreviations

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

PNC : Palestinian National Council, Which is the highest council in the PLO

NGOs: Non Governmental Organizations

PNA: Palestinian National Authority.

Palestine 1948: Part of Historical Palestine which was occupied in the year 1948, and the state of Israeli is established over it.

Palestine 1976: It represent the Palestinian land occupied by Israel in the year 1976 and it includes the West Bank (Including east Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip.

WB: The West Bank

GS: Gaza Strip

BDS: Boycott and Divestment and Sanctions of Occupation

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Ṭawra: contestatory language and iconography in the Arab revolution

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Abstract

This paper will analyze the particularities of the Arab Protest through visual and verbal expressions in its resistance language. Lexical expressions like *irḥal* (go away) or *al-ša‘b yurīd isqāḍ al-niẓām* (people want to dismantle the system) are embodied in a language that, on one hand, has to organize and to coordinate the protest itself in the *midān*, neighborhood, mosque and hospitals and, on the other, to express the legitimate claims through electronic and mass media, newspapers and others to the international public opinion. Time after time, language shines as an important identity element that, in the case of Arab people, grammatical rules of *fushḥā*, *amiya* and *wusta* play a crucial role to the incorporation of existing concepts as *ḥurriya l-ta‘bīr* (freedom of speech) or *ḥurriya al-ṣaḥāfa* (freedom of the press) to the protest in the street and as a tool of self determination against corruption, censorship and persecution of the governments.

Keywords

Arab civil society, contestatory language, creative resistance, lexical and visual expressions, revolution

Introduction

Al-maktūb ūqrā‘u min ‘unwānihi (the content of a book must be read it from its title) is a famous Arabic proverb that people use not only to analyze a visual/verbal piece but also to understand it. In Arabic, “title” comes from the verbal root ‘*anā* (ع ن ن), “to signify”, and refers something or someone that matters to a person as well as the coincidence of all elements that constitute the fullest intellectual work of a piece. The verb ‘*anā* is also de root of the Arabic word “sign” which embodies sloganization, allegories, symbols, icons and imagination which is transmitted from the rational heart of a writer to the sensitive mind of a reader.

The Arab Spring has its own titles, messages, symbols and slogans to introduce people to the emergence of a “New Arab Era” and to explain why and how young students, activists, workers, doctors and much more people are in the “Arab Streets” right now. Despite of the most of people call this “spring” as “Arab”, the reader should note that Arabic (in the standard and colloquial registers) is not the only language used by people in the demonstrations and by contrast English, Amazigh, Kurdish, French and Persian, among others, are included to shape messages stronger, wider and more receptive to public opinion abroad. In fact, the first word used as contestatory language in the so called “Tunisian Revolution” was the French word *degage* (go away) that gave rise to the very popular Arabic translation *‘irḥal* which quickly was expanded in other demonstrations across Egypt, Yemen and Syria.

But to talk about signs, it is necessary to be able not only to translate messages but also to transfer them to present times. For that, we will take a look at the principles of sign's theory in order to recognize the plethora of signified(s) and signifier(s) that result in the lexical and verbal expressions of Arab Revolutions and, at the same time, to provide textual and contextual readings of slogans stressing on the difference between "meaning" and "significance". This shall be done to provide a better understanding of slogans and messages by Arab people avoiding confusion, indifference and misinformation through a closer signification of what people feel and perceive for the future of their countries.

Signified, Signifier, Meaning and Significance in the Making of Slogan

Slogans are used in political, commercial, religious and others social contexts as a repetitive expression of one idea or feeling, but it must be clear that they are not only memorable mottos waiting to be translated but also series of verbal, visual and gestural signs providing a dynamic "*representamen*" for a fact during *in absentia* (or *in praesentia*) of something or someone (Kristeva, 1981: 13).

Any speaker is more or less aware that language "symbolizes", "represents" and "names" facts because of "the sign is the core of the language". In words of Pierce (1975:46) the sign is a triadic relationship developed between an object, its representative and the interpreter as long as the sign does not represent the whole object but only a very clear idea of that. According to this, Pierce has classified signs into three categories:

- a) **The icon.** Sign that refers to the object by its resemblance to him: for example, the drawing of a tree that represents the "real tree", which looks like it is an icon.
- b) **The index.** Sign that does not seem necessarily to the object but receives an influence of the former and, for that matter, has something in common with the object: for example, smoke coming from a building can be a reagent index of fire.
- c) **The symbol.** Sign that refers to an object by a kind of law or convention through an idea: for example, the linguistic signs.

Since Pierce developed a general theory of signs, Saussure was the first scholar who made emphasis on linguistic signs. Saussure (1916a; 1968b) notes that it is illusory to believe that the linguistic sign is just associated with the relationship name-thing and proposes the construction *concept (signified)-sound image (signifier)*. This latter is not the sound itself but "the psychological imprint of the sound or the representation that gives us the testimony of our senses. According to Saussure (1968, 67), for example, if we take the term "revolution" then its linguistic sign would consist of 1) the mental idea of "revolution" (signified) and 2) the sound image "r-e-v-o-l-u-t-i-o-n" (signifier) both of which will give us the psychological sense of the fundamental change in organizational *structures that takes place in a relatively short period of time* (Tilly, 1978: 189). Thus, revolution (as a sign) will have an equivalent in the psychic reality of a Spanish signifier "revolución", the Persian "enqelāb", the Portuguese "revolução", the Arabic "ṭawra" among others.

According to Saussure, a signified may have several signifiers and viceversa. We can call "tomato", "tomate" and "tamātim" to the traditionally edible red fruit that English, Spanish and Arabic speaker imagine in his mind respectively and, on the other hand, we can say the idea "apple" to refer to either a computer

or a fruit depending on the context which the individual is exposed. But the question is to think about what happens when we call something by a psychological idea that not belongs to the object which we imagine, or instead we imagine something totally different from what others want to mean. In this sense, Meschonnic's theory (2011,5) destroys this binary organization when notes: "no more sound and sense, no more double articulation of language, no more signified and signifier...the language is only signifiers". The signifier, Meschonnic insists, refers to a practice, the acting of a subject which exposes its historicity. The French word "signifiant" keeps the idea more efficiently than the English word "signifier" whose ending suggests a role or a function, that is to say an action one could undertake with distance or neutrality. In Arabic, we can explain it with the prototype "fa'il" and "maf'ul" (taking the verb 'anā) where the signifier is the "subject" or the responsible for signify ('ā'in) and the latter is just what is signified by the responsible (ma'nawī) which can exist just through the subject (Cortés,1996: 779).

In short, when we translate signs we translate signifiers, culture, meaning, time and context in order to explain "the author's verbal meaning as understood by the commentator" (Lafraie, 2009: 9). The whole problem is not only the meaning of words (linguistic sign itself) but also the sense of language. That's why we are concerned not so much with slogan's pure "meaning" but rather with its "significance." The distinction between "meaning" and "significance" has been particularly developed by E. D. Hirsch Jr. (1967; 18) who points out that the term "meaning" refers to the whole verbal meaning of a text, and "significance" to textual meaning in relation to a larger context. Then, significance of *t'awra* (revolution) must be elucidated by "criticism" which is not identical with significance but rather refers to it, talks about it and describes it (Hirsch, 1967: 22). In these regards, one might also say that to explain the power of language in political life the context is everything. It gives meaning to events and creates an aura of understanding. It is a basis of competing views. In short, context frames meaning and meaning creates context. Change the one and you change the other (Apter, 2006: 780).

Ṭawra

After recent facts at Tahrir Square, Homs, Sana and Manama, it must be said that "Arab countries" are effectively facing another context, another era and another system of values which suggest a little of "translation" and a little more of "interpretation". When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire on December 2010, nobody knew he would electrify the entire region and send the existing political order in the Middle East into a long period of turmoil. Very quickly, however, there were signs that the success of Tunisian demonstrators in toppling their long-ruling dictator had sparked something important and one label derived from Czechoslovakia's brief Cold War-era uprising against Soviet rule quickly engraved itself in the Western lexicon. Today, the uprisings that have engulfed a dozen Arab countries are collectively known in the West as the "Arab Spring" (Ghitis, 2011: 1).

The label, apt or not, has taken hold for now. But according what we have seen, heard and perceived in Arab Squares (*midān*) the title of "Arab Spring" is by far eclipsed by the Arabic term "revolution" (*t'awra*) which has been proclaimed by the author "the people" (*al-sha'b*), addressed to one commentator which has been by far the "public opinion" (*ra'ī al-'āmm*) in the middle of a framework represented by the early 21st century.

Ṭawra has been a widely used term coined by people in the *midān* as an effort to change the domestic

tyranny that has emerged in the aftermath of European colonialism in the form of post-colonial societies. From Western Sahara to Syria young people believe that dictators represent fake and phony post-colonial states that have posed themselves as “anti-colonial” and then for forty or fifty years have looted their countries without any semblance of democratic institutions or change. A young audience, that has no future in their country, is sick and tired of being denigrated and denied any kind of participation in the global society. They don’t want to emigrate to be subjects of even more harassment and racism in Europe and the United States anymore and instead they want to reclaim their society, their culture, and their politics and other civil rights through peaceful means.

In this quest, they have called this process a *t’awra*, a revolution, a change. However, one of the first translations and (mis) interpretations done by the media and some scholars (Khouri, 2011: 7) was the term “awakening” which refers to Arabs as if they had been in a state of lethargy all these years just to wake up on December 2010 and to fight against dictators. But in fact, Arab people welcomed the current century with the second Intifada in Palestine and with a mass mobilization against the invasion of Iraq; conducted socio economic demonstrations against dictatorial regimes like Berber uprisings in Algeria, textile strikes and protests by Kefaya movement in Egypt and mining worker’s demonstrations in Tunisia; Arab people also denied any legitimacy to jihadist solutions refuting ideas of Bin-Laden and radicalism, and last but not least, reinvented civic participation based on non economic public spaces as civic associations and NGO’s (Gómez, 2011). For Arabs, the 21st century began as the 20th exactly did, with repression, wars and postcolonial dictatorships but never with the closed eyes and immersed into a deep sleep.

After the term “awakening” many other translations of *t’awra* were presented to public opinion such as “demonstrations”, “insurrections”, “fighting”, “mobilizations”, “protests”, “uprisings” among others which have perplexed the commentator. When the viewer can find a word transcribed and translated in four or five different ways he cannot recognize the significance of word (just several and different meanings) and consequently it leads him to an estrangement that aggravates the ignorance towards the phenomenon. As an example, it is enough to remember the misunderstanding of Islam in general and Arab People in particular since 9/11 events and even before since the beginning of French and British orientalist approaches to the Middle East (Said, 1978: 386) where religion, the figure of Prophet Muhammad and Islamic culture were reduced to synonyms of violence, fanaticism and terrorism in the lexical expressions of western Literature, Politics and media (Lewis, 2003: 170). So, if commentator translates *t’awra* for any other concept that is not “revolution”, not only misuses the term but also betrays its signified (change) and its signifier (*t’awra*) and therefore what people want to mean is totally misrepresented.

Even, the term *t’awra* must be accompanied with the adjective that characterizes the current form of mobilization in modern social movements at the *midān*, this is, “peaceful”. We say this because the current signifier “revolution” is not the same signifier of “revolution” two hundred years ago where the social change had been done more by violent than by peaceful means (Tilly, 2004: 38-41). In nowadays, “revolution” or *t’awra* is a concept that must be taken in the media simply by the fact that comes from its author, *al-sha’b*, and because involves stated support for (or opposition to) actual or proposed actions by the objects of movement claims under new paradigm of collective action where people do not use razors, knives or guns but cameras, microphones and mobiles and do not set fire and violence in the *midān* but just show the sole of their shoes as only weapon they use along with their own voice, the *vox populi* “the voice of people”.

The Arab *t’awra* is by far the first social revolution of current century. It represents the end of post

colonialism and, unlike from their precursors such as the labor movement and other movements which had been seen previously as focused on economic concerns, Arab revolution look for specific changes in public policy, identity, lifestyle and culture. Moreover, this new era in Arab World is clearly inserted in the age of the so called New Social Movements where a great emphasis on the role of post-material values in contemporary and post-industrial society is given as opposed to conflicts over material resources despite of contra-revolutionary strategies taken by some Arab States that believe that this revolution is just for the money. According to Melucci, these movements arise not from relations of production and distribution of resources but within the sphere of reproduction and the life world, as a result of which, the concern has shifted from the sole production of economic resources directly connected to the needs for survival or for reproduction to cultural production of social relations, symbols and identities (Melucci, 1999: 21). In other words, the contemporary social movements are rejections of the materialistic orientation of consumerism in capitalist societies by questioning the modern idea that links the pursuit of happiness and success closely to growth, progress and increased productivity and by promoting alternative values and understandings in relation to the social world. The Lybia, Syria, Arabia Saudi and Bahrein cases can be good examples of these realities.

Ṭawra's claims consist of assertions that "we" (the claimants) constitute a unified force to be reckoned with, able to assert ties and similarities to other political actors like excluded minorities, religious groups, or loyal supporters of the regime (for example the army in the Egyptian case and at least in the first 18 days of the manifestations) and, furthermore, often reject whole categories of the local population as unworthy of belonging to "the people."

Irḥal

Irḥal (go away) is an Arabic verb in imperative form perfectly adapted by Arab people in the claims against dictators and particularly expressed in Egypt against Mubarak. In the *ṭawra*, the signifier "*irḥal*" has had many others signifiers for the same signified (go away) in visual expressions more than in verbal ones. Since the President is the symbol of the *nizām* (regime) as well as the army and state bureaucracy, pictures, images and cartoons of Mubarak, Saleh, Qadafi and Al Assad have been the best icons for the signified "we don't want you, we want change" as the agents of post colonialism and tyranny in their respective countries. According Nsara (2011) this slogan, part of creative "Egyptians weapons of the weak" and Gene Sharp's methods of non-violent resistance, contributed a lot in toppling down Mubarak's regime and now is causing effect in other scenarios like Yemen and Syria what suggesting that Egyptians also have created a new encyclopedia of non-violent action tools and that Gene Sharp might have added them to his list of 198 methods of non-violent actions.

Irḥal comes from the Arab root *raḥala* "to go" (Cortés, 2004: 430) and is a very good signifier to demand "the exit" not only of dictator but also the removal of all their supporters abroad, mainly the United States and Israel. As popular, the street-based *irḥal* term has tried to force domestic reforms through the Arab countries and the only fixed criteria in this widespread social "experiment" has been the dogged interventions of the United States and its allies. From Tunisia to Bahrain, to Syria, to Yemen, to Egypt, to Libya "America footprints" mark the otherwise indigenous Arab political sandstorms hurling through the region. Noble initiatives to hasten much-needed political reforms and economic stimulus would be welcomed with open arms by most Arabs. But the United States has shown little interest in these developmental essentials,

instead focusing entirely on a strategic holy trinity: 1) unfettered access to cheap oil, 2) advancing Israeli hegemony over its Arab neighbors and 3) regime-change in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Nasra, 2011).

There is not one thing on this list that seeks to promote a better life for Arabs. In fact, in order to achieve its goals cost-effectively and efficiently, Washington has dogged into the bag of old colonial dirty tricks like nurturing and establishing an elite class/regime to administer its interests as we have seen with the "Moderate Arab States" of Saudi Arabia and Jordan which are still stuck repeating the Washington-born narratives that characterizes the Middle East as the "world" (like one world apart in the world) that is often torn between "Islamism versus secularism", "Shia versus Sunni" and Arabs versus Iranians and other ideological and stupid artificial divisions.

Irhal is against the highly cynical appropriation of revolutionary ideals by Powers. "*Irhal* America, *irhal* Iran, *irhal* Israel" are very blunt slogans against a "pressure cooker" effect. The United States suggests not repression but the opposite: the creation of spaces for people to speak. "Sell them hope, the hope of change". But Arab people see this as contra slogans describing them as "the magic ingredient for Arabs these days." Arabs are shouting "*irhal* Amreeka", show bullets "made in America" in front of the martyrs and cameras and strongly criticize the "American military support" to the revolt in Syria and Libya while this support is keeping a suspicious silence in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Bahrain (this latest home of the 5th Naval American Fleet in the Gulf).

Religious terms social concerns

Again we say "religious terms and not "sacred terms."

From *la ilahah ila Allah*, (no god except God) to *Allahu akbar*, "God is great", the diffusion of this term throughout Arabic language expresses lots of feelings in the *tawra*, but it does not mean that *tawra* is taking shape of a Khomeini Islamic revolution as Iran explained (Manthorpe, 2011). We focus on just one word, God, the first name of the first verse of the first quranic sura "Bismillah erra'hman erra'him" (in the name of God the merciful, full of grace), which gives the biggest sense of collective orality in the Arab street. God is the main defender of people not only for Muslims but also for Christian and Jews, and repeating almost his name one hundred-thousand times a day becomes audible and a strong signifier for the only one who never let *tawra* be abandoned. A better example of this can be found in the latest slogans pronounced by Syrian People in Homs last January where phrases like "victory is from God only, not Obama, not Erdogan", "we swear by God the Magnificent, we will not be silent over the blood of our martyrs", "God we have none other than you", among others, were pledged with real devotion as a symbol of peaceful and civil resistance.

Of course young people respect God and reject his misuse by corrupt regimes to justify their actions and false politics. Today, the *tawra* is seen as a new version of the Ibn Khaldun's *Asabiya* where people hold the power to overthrow their rulers and to establish a more just, equitable and democratic system. No leaders, no ideology, neither Arabism nor Islamism, it just people using religious terms and chanting the right to do it.

Bismillah erra'hman erra'him has some signifiers like *in the name of God* more "the clement et misericordieux", "clement and merciful", "le tres misericordieux, le Compatissant" among many others what draws attention not only for the use of all theses variants at the end of the phrase but for the little interest in

translating the word “Allah”. In other words, the most of western media do not translate it (the name) by the signifier “God”. They left the name in Arabic: Allah. And this immediately reveals a theological issue, that is to say a considerable and dramatic theologico-political issue, very much of current concern. If we say “God,” in translation (in whichever language), we place ourselves in a universal perspective with the same signified (Meschinnic, 2011: 117). “God” means that there is one God, who is the “lord of the worlds”, which by definition harbours both the whole world and everyone. Whatever the translating language if we translate Allah by God we make of Islam a universal. Therefore, the non-translation, which is the most accurate from the theologico-political point of view of sunna Islam, with the consequences it implies, brings a kind of denegation. Then “God”, “Dieu”, “Gott, are a disavowal of Allah and vice versa. What we try to say is that both Western and conservatism Islam views of God are not inclusive and connected with the religious culture of each other and therefore are totally incoherent with the current use of people collective action which has shown us how easy is to include people when only accept God, language and culture as such. This has been also expressed by hundreds of Copts and Muslims people working together in the protests of Tahrir Square where the Copts carried medicines to mosques that were functioning as temporary hospitals for the protesters.

That’s why we have to translate Allah by “God”, “Dios”, “Gott” and so on in the respective signifiers of our psychic reality. Allah is not a strange and particular God of Arabs and much less a “singular being” apart from the monotheistic worldview and by contrast is what makes Islam strong.

Arab people quickly adapted God into *t’awra* in both verbal and visual expressions. We are talking about the slogan *kun ma’allah* which means “be with God” which was adapted to *kun ma’ t’awr* (be with revolution). *Kun ma’allah* is very familiar proverb to people. In Egypt, which is a religious society, when slogan was replaced with *t’awra* was something big. *Kun ma’ t’awra* has had a multiple plastic interventions in the *midān*, the mosque, the church, the hospitals and other strategic places for peaceful collective action in several cities of Arab countries. This calligraphy art work was presented in April 2008 when the activists in Egypt called for a general strike all over Egypt, it was just an artwork by Mohamed Gaber’s project “Graphic Against System” and by that time it was used online over some of the photographs taken for the riots happened that time and was generally spread online on all the social network as Facebook, and Twitter. By December 2009, Gaber made another version called *kun ma’ fan* or “be part of art” used it in a street-art project with street artists from Alexandria. By January 2011 and the mobilizing for 25th January revolution in Egypt, the activists online re-used it, spread it online, and printed it out into posters and banners to hold in Tahrir square. Then the author did a co-work with the Brazilian cartoonist Carlos Latuff which found a great feedback by people in the streets (Gaber, 2011) becoming a great icon for the Arab revolution in nowadays.

Revolutionary Arabic in the creative resistance

The urgent need for humor takes a very well established position in the *t’awra*. To rediscover the comical of thought, people have created lots of works for publicity and public utility mindset which have taken an active role in the struggle against the repressive regimes, especially against the Syrian one and the violent crackdown it has launched.

User-generated creativity has been a distinctive mark of the Syrian revolution. Syrian artist have dared

to challenge the official media discourse with innovative formats that blossomed on the internet, as much as the people have braved the streets despite daily violence. *Top Goon: Diaries of a Little Dictator*, a series of 15 episodes which premieres every week on YouTube with English subtitles, combines the Syrians inclination to comedy and professional acting with a dark humor that is truly taboo-breaking, and comes to pick up the methodology proposed by Elia Suleiman in his master piece “Yadun Ilahiya” (Divine Intervention) in the Palestine issue. Since its launch, *Top Goon* has received lavish praise and occasional furious outbursts from audiences who are stunned by its unprecedented lampooning of the president. The series stars a finger puppet named Beeshou, who clearly resembles President Bashar al-Assad, even in his famous lisp when pronouncing the “s”. In the first episode, Beeshou is haunted by nightmares, he fears that his people won’t love him anymore, only to be reassured by his aide Shabih (meaning thug) that the majority of the population still love him. It is precisely for its ability to remix real events and characters with parody and dark humor that *Top Goon* is so provocative and innovative (Della Ratta, 2011).

Another similar expression to *Top Goon* is a series of clips, cartoons and images produced by the web site *kharabeesh* (<http://toons.kharabeesh.com/?hl=en>) where authors show, through channels, blogs and YouTube videos, different and spontaneous experiments about social and political life through commentary cartoon pieces that sarcastically tackles some of the burning issues in Arab societies. One of them is “The Bu Khashims” (<http://www.bukhashims.com/>) which is an animated comedy show in Arabic about a Bedouin family that recently moved to the city. Every day they learn more about city life, where their nomadic culture funnily collides with urban culture.

In terms of verbal expression, songs have been one of the most frequent modes of expression in the Arab revolution. A lot of titles reflect the political and social situation in different Arab countries with a wide variety of music styles from the rap and rock to acoustic and regional music. Among the most famous songs (which can be found in the site <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL17EDB0C67472CC8B>) we have “Leave” by Ramy Essam, with lyrics comprising all the most popular chants and slogans of the revolution heard on the streets. This song became the hit of the revolution, going viral on YouTube. Essam lived in Tahrir Square’s tent village for the entire revolution, composing songs, and playing almost every hour on one of the many stages that sprouted there. We also have the twenty-one year old Hamada Ben Amor, also known as “El General” released an incendiary rap song called “Head of State” around the same time as Bouazizi’s suicidal act. The song, which directly addresses now-former President Ben Ali, caught on like wildfire on Facebook, inspiring thousands of young Tunisians to take to the streets, and landing “El General” in jail. El General took to the stage once more, in Tunisia, to give an emotional performance in front of a crowd of students.

Other iconic titles of the revolution have been “Egyptian Intifada”, written by the poet Ahmed Fouad Negm, sung by Sheik Imam. Egyptian folk act “al- tanbura” and others from the El Mastaba Centre for Egyptian Folk Music filmed in the streets of Cairo with a cut titled “Tahrir Square Jam”. “Rebel” by Egyptian rappers Arabian Knightz, sung in English, its lyrics rewritten by the group’s Karim Adel Eissa, aka A-Rush, on the night of Thursday January 27. Cairo rock luminaries, Amir Eid, Hany Adel and Sherif Mostafa are also present with their rousing anthem to the revolution “Sout Al Horeya” (The Voice of Freedom). The Iraqi rapper Narcicyst with other MCs from the Arabic rap diaspora in North America, including Omar Offendum, Freeway, Ayah and Amir Sulaiman, with “#Jan25” (a reference to both the date the protests began in Egypt, and its prominence as a trending topic on Twitter). Master Mimz “Back down Mubarak” and many others existing that were added to those productions like “kofeyye Arabeyye” by Shadia Mansour.

With regard to other visual works, handbills, posters, stickers, anything that can hold an idea was being plastered on the graffiti-strewn walls of the Middle East's newest democracy-in-waiting. Alongside all of the earnest portraits, optimistic slogans and anachronistic symbols, an enigmatic series has been popping up around many downtowns haunts. There are no photos, no party logos, just words in Arabic script. *Mat'adineesh* (don't make me your enemy), *matistaghrabneesh* (don't consider me strange), *matkafarneesh* (don't call me an infidel) among other slogans have carefully chosen word by word on a poster to communicate more than grandiose proclamations of patriotism and morality.

As we can see, these messages have been written in colloquial Arabic and are the most recent creations of the Arab revolution which have emerged in Egypt as a way to make feel, now more than ever, the popular language of the *sha'b* against the tyranny that has shown the SCAF in recent days. The significance of using dialect is that while it is considered the language of the people, it is rarely used in the political-media realm, and certainly was not utilized for any of the campaign posters advocating candidates over the past few weeks. The dialect implies a different kind of tone and familiarity, which serves to strike a resonant chord by amplifying the meaning of the words. By using Egypt's distinct street patois, the campaign subversively critiques the language of political discourse, and communicates its particular slogans to Egyptians from Egyptians.

These posters are the work of artist Bassem Yousri. His words provide a counter-narrative to the more commonplace party-led campaigns. He calls it "Hamlit Matikhsarneesh," (Spread a Word). The campaign was inspired by the bombing that took place outside the Saint's Church in the early morning of 1 January 2011 (killing 21 people and injuring hundreds) and had the intention of making political posters to avoid sectarian divisions in the revolution emphasizing that those attacks had been made by the government and not by the Islamists as military and international media presented (Awad, 2011). In Egypt, posters have long been used as a tool of political propaganda, Yousri explains, citing the posters of the Mubarak family that flooded Egypt before January. "I thought that we could use posters to propagate ideas spreading human rights and tolerance, the words are meant to reinforce personal rights, and to encourage the public to deliver its own message to any person or authority that violates those rights (Berger, 2011).

In terms of vocabulary, it is necessary to say that both colloquial and eloquent Arabic have been exposed together in the sticks, posters, songs, slogans and other kind of visual and verbal demonstrations in Arab revolutions, making of *al luga* (the Arabic language as one corpus) a "reference language" which I call "Middle Contemporary Arabic" (Garduño, 2012: 171-172) which is taught in most Arab and no Arab universities and, as now happens with Arab revolution, has been the result of the need to deal with political and social problems in the Middle east since the incorporations of terms like "binlādiniyya" (بين دل انب) that would be used to study the ideology of the former and now defunct leader of Al-Qaeda terrorist network, "awlama" (علموع) which is translated by the term "globalization", "slāydāt" (تاديل اس), which is used to describe the slides in a presentation in power point among others.

In the case of Arab revolution, we have collected some iconic and useful words for the *t'awra* based in the work of some pictures, bloggers and you tube videos as follows:

Egypt	maSr	رصد
Tomorrow	Bokrah	دركب
Real Education	ta3leem begad	دجب مي لعت
Freedom of opinion	Horeyyet er ra`y	يأرلأة يرخ
System	niZaam	ماظن
Parity	takafoo`	ؤفالكنت
Dignity	karaama	ةمارك
Hope	amal	لمأ
Poverty Eradication	maHo el-fa`r	رقفلا وحم
Retirement	el-ma3aash	شاعملأ
The change	et-taghyyer	ري يغتلأ
Democracy	eddimokraTayya	ةيطارق مي دلأ
Abolition of Emergency law	ilгаа` qanoon eT-Tawaaree`	ءيرواطلا نوناق ءاغلأ
Conscience	eD-Dameer	ري مضلأ
New president	ra`ees gedeed	دي دج سي ئرأ
Social Responsibility	mas`oolayya eg-tima3aaya	ةي عامتج ءي لؤئس م
Social Justice	3adaala eg-tima3ayya	ةي عامتج ءل ادغ
Dialogue=	el-Hiwaar	راوخ
Fair Salaries	mortabaat 3aadila	ةلداع تابترم
Sincerity	el-ikhlaaS	صالخالأ
Job opportunity (job that benefits me)	shoghl yenfa3ni	ين عفني لغشن
Elimination of ignorance	al-qadaa` 3ala el-gahl	لدجال وحم
Better living	ma3eesha afDal	لضفا ءش يعم
Appreciation	et-taQdeer	ري دقتلأ
Secure life	Hayaah amna	ةنم ءايخ
Political Freedom	Horeyya seyasay-ya	ةي سايس ءي رخ
Honest ,virtuous people	shorfaa	ءافرش أ
Citizen ship	mowaTanah	ةنطاوم
KFC*(This is a sort of a joke because there were rumors during demonstration that some demonstrators are paid 50LE+KFC daily To protest)	kentaaki	ي كاتنك
Zamalek champion * Another wish as Zamalek football team used to be one of the best of teams in the Egypt but they couldn't win any real champion chip in years)	ed-dawri lil zamalik	كل امزلل ي رودلأ
Cleanliness	naDaafa	ةفاضن

Our right	Haq-qina	انقح
Health care	re3aaya SeH-Heyya	ةيحص ةياعر
Fresh air	hawaa` naqi	يقن ةاوم
Domestic Industry	Sinaa3a maHalayya	ةيلحم ةعانص
Security for my children	amn awlaadi	يدالوا نم
Honest media	i3laam SareeH	حيرص مالع
Accept the other	taqbo l al-aakhar	رخال لبقت
Homeless care	re3ayet el-moshardeen	نيدرشمل ةياعر
State of institutions=	dawlit mo`sasaat	تاسسوم ةلوم
Food (ak l is the word for food but (lo`met 3ayesh) which is an expression that means " a piece of bread" , Minimum of poor Egyptians food ,basic sustenance, and it refers her to the minimum wages people)	lo`met 3ayesh	شيعل ةمقل
Bride	3aroosa	ةسورع
Master ship of public	syaada sha3baya	ةيبعش ةدايس
public	sha3b,sha3bayya	يبعش
National Unity (This expression is usually used to refer to the unity between Muslims and Christians)	wiHda waTanayya	ةينطو ةدحو
A look to upper Egypt (The word "naZra" here means "attention" as Sa3eed is a poor part of Egypt	naZra lil-Sa3eed maSr	رصم دي عصل ةرظن
Dignity of teachers (Colloquial word for teacher is "modar-riss ".the sentence reflects how teachers of local schools feel because of their low salaries)	karaamat al-mo3lem	ملعمل ةمارك
Human rights	Hoqooq el-insaan	ناسن ال قوقح
Change	taghy-yeer	ري يغت
Youth housing	iskaan esh-shbaab	بابشل انكس
Literacy	maHo el om-mayya	ةيمال وحم
Culture	thaqaafa	ةفاقث
Renaissance	nah-Da	ةضه
Humanity	insanay-ya	ةيناسن
Disability rights	hoqooq el-mo3aqeen	نيق اعلم قوقح
Affiliation	entimaa`	ءامتنا
Fair Representative councils	magaales nyabayya Haqeqayya	ةيقيقح ةيباين سلاجم
Azhar rights(this refers to the low wages that Azhr employs are struggling with)	hoqooq al-azhreen	ني يرزال قوقح
Implementation of Judicial Decision	tanfeez aHkaam qada`ayya	ةيئاضقل الما كحل اذيفنت

Free voting	Soutee yawSal	لصوي يتوصأ
Better future	mostaqbal afDal	لضفا لبق تس م
Ethics	akhlaaq	قالخا
Freedom	Horayya	ةيرخ
A look at Suez	naZra lel-swees	سيوسلل قرظن
Physiotherapy	3elaag Tabee3i	يعيبطجالع
Easy exams	imtiHnaat sahla	الهس تاناح تم
Childhood	Tofoola	ةلوفط
Egyptians agenda	agendet el-maSreen	ني يرصملا دنج

Final comments: al-ša‘b yurīd isqāḍ al-nizām and the challenges for t’awra

Studying Arab Protest through visual and verbal expressions in its resistance language is a very important and useful method. As we could see lexical and visual expressions are embodied in a language that, on one hand, has to organize and to coordinate the protest itself in the *midān*, neighborhood, mosque and hospitals and, on the other, to express the legitimate claims through electronic and mass media, newspapers and others to the international public opinion.

Time after time, language shines as an important identity element that, in the case of Arab people, allows to incorporate some existing concepts as *ḥurriya l-ta‘bīr* (freedom of speech) or *ḥurriya al-ṣaḥāfa* (freedom of the press) to introduce the meaning of the *t’awra* as a tool of self determination against corruption, censorship and persecution of several governments. The main weapon of Arab protest, after the model of peaceful mobilization, is the language, not only in grammatical rules of *fushā* but also in the wisdom of fresh vocabulary and proverbs of colloquial and Middle Contemporary Arabic, this latter as the contemporary Arabic language that is created from a mix between eloquent and colloquial one.

Throughout the twentieth century, Arabic People underwent a modernization, reform and intellectual adjustment vis a vis the emergence of the economic, cultural and political influence of Great Powers. In nowadays, in the middle of *t’awra*, Arab People have incorporated several Arabic and no Arabic terms in an eloquent and clear way to express what people is concerned in modern times and what, why and how they demand it for. So, we have the potential to study the popular Arab demands through their slogans, actions, songs and pamphlets not only in Arabic language but also in English, Farsi and other languages that appeared in the streets since the so called “Tunisia revolution”.

If we can resume in just one slogan all of we have seen in this paper we have to talk about *al-ša‘b yurīd isqāḍ al-nizām* (people want to dismantle the system). This phrase evolves the clue to comprehend the significance of this Arab revolution (yet unfinished) as summarizes all we have discussed notes above. It describes both terms change and revolution as the main objectives of people are in the square and streets. Source of inspiration for most of songs that we mentioned, this phrase contains orality, rhythm, clarity in Arabic (even for Egyptian People who have pronounce perfectly the sign “qef” in the phrase) and aesthetics.

The rendering of autonomy in Arabic illustrates how people could capture their social cohesion and the unity in just one common project. This slogan largely be determined in the streets, as well as in the internet cafes, and in the union halls, newspaper offices, women's groups and private homes of millions of young Arabs who have served notice as publicly as possible that they will no longer tolerate being treated with the contempt and disrespect their governments have shown them for their entire lives. When they repeat this phrase they are not only referring to their corrupt governments but they also mean the old regime that has prevailed for decades in the entire Arab world, from the Atlantic to the Gulf (Rashid, 2011).

In post-Mubarak Egypt, given the fact that the military government only partially met the demands of the revolutionaries, with the dreaded state of emergency remaining in place, some protesters started using a somewhat different version of the slogan: The people want to bring down the field marshal, referring to Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi (*al-ša'b yurīd isqāḍ al-mushir*).

In short, we can say that people have spoken clear and loud when show the face of revolution as saying "people want to dismantle the system". In Syria, Yemen, Bahrein, Lybia and other countries *al-ša'b yurīd isqāḍ al-nizām*, and its adaptations, is just the beginning for this revolutionary process which will take at least ten years to offer their first and concrete results. What we can celebrate for the time being is that people, the author of *tawra*, are finally speaking and are being heard (although more in some places than others). But major challenges lie ahead. We are living an important moment in the Middle East that covers sensitive topics like the jure achievement of the Palestinian state in the United Nations, the future of democracy in Egypt and a series of pending demands in several peoples from Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq and others and the "nuclear issue in Iran". Given this, Israel has responded with a threatening rhetoric in order to push the U.S and other western countries to attack Iran or, at least, to activate tougher sanctions to the political, economical and military elite, the Pasdaran.

Once again, those interested in opening this rhetorical political marketing, primarily AIPAC leaders, seem determined to spread a series of ideas that make no sense and just deflect international public opinion from real interest issues in the Arab region, this is, envisioning democratic governments in the Middle East (as we have seen how Egyptian people is trying to do in Tahrir right now), ending corruption and repression in the streets, winning civil rights to express freedom and justice and remaining independent of any American, Russian, Iranian or Israeli interference in internal affairs of Arab Countries.

In this sense, the only thing in the mind of Israel government is to remain as the only "democratic state of The Middle East" with base on its "ethnocracy", something as absurd and impossible, and at the same time to avoid this democratic wave in Arab world through the invention of two common enemies between Arabs called: Iran and Islamism.

The arrival of a new generation of Islamist parties, which can be called "Demo-Islamist Parties" (in position with the existence of Christian Democratic Parties in Europe and away from the conservative vision of Khamenei or Saudi Islam), is ready to enter into the democratic game and to replace authoritarian regimes as we could see in the Tunisian and Morocco elections cases. This wave is conceived as a threat by Israel and other political actors like the U.S and Saudi Arabia that will seek a type of re islamization in Arab society in order to use radical Islam to convince Egyptian, Libyan, Yemeni and other peoples that "the end of authoritarian governments is at the same time the end of the guarantors of stability and security people against radicals". So, a new wave of insecurity, barbarism and terrorism would be coming back to streets

in order, on one hand, to force people to condemn the “fake face of new Islam Parties” and, on the other, to persuade people to make no more changes, protest and revolts.

This re islamization attempts to connect “distortion of Islam” and Islamist parties in coming months. This strategy, with Israel and Saudi Arabia financial support, would be a spearhead for discredit the current Arab Spring process making a stronger determinism against new Islamist candidates as well as generating fear between religious minorities in the case that they support the revolts and democratic process. This responds to the recent attacks on some Coptic churches in Egypt which, according to several versions of young activist in situ, have been the work of former Mubarak’s government, Saudi Arabia, Israel or United States. The fact is that the perpetrator can be any of them.

Moreover, there is another and more complicated strategy in this game called Iran. The current rhetoric in Israel is related with a possible military intervention against Iran nuclear facilities that would ignite the whole region and attract the attention of international community clouding the Arab Spring. But, it must be noted that, although things are developing as in pre invasive Iraq in 2003 (sanctions, suspects and deterrence policy), Iran is not Iraq and the U.S are not the U.S of 2003. This is said because Israel cannot launch a military strike against Iran without warning and support (at least moral support) of the U.S. Otherwise, an Israeli attack would have strategy effects in the Iraq’s scenario where American troops would need to postpone the departure announced later this year in order to avoid Pasharan influence in the risky border between Iran and Iraq, something not expected by new Iraq’s government.

Although the Syrian regime is disable to provide logistical and intelligence support to Iranian regime as he had promised some years ago, the current situation indicates that Israel cannot attack Iran unilaterally and automatically because an attack in the coming months has to involucrate, at least, some Arab Gulf countries which, with a particular style in the case of “Saudi Arabia’s Pasharan -Mexican gangsters Plot”, have been supporting the construction of an Iranian threat. As Russian say, attack Iran would be a mistake not only for strategic difficulties but also because this work will not undermine what Israel, Saudi Arabia and the U.S want to undermine, this is, the democratic wave in the region, issue that is more dangerous to Israel than Iran’s nuclear program.

These two strategies, the internal fear of re islamization and the external fear of the Iranian threat, will try to blur the racist role of Israel in the Palestinian conflict, to avoid the collapse of authoritarian governments in the Gulf zone mainly Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and to rebuild, if that is possible, the U.S image in the Middle East through of two fashion freaks: Islamism and Iran.

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Social media and new technologies in Egypt and Tunisia: two examples of innovative forms of democratization

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Abstract

In 2011 Web 2.0 has emerged as a crucial tool in organizing demonstrations and mobilizing people in Western countries and during the uprisings in the Arab world. This paper aims at underlining that new media and new technologies, together with open sources software such as Ushahidi and FrontlineSMS, have also been used as important tools for democratization. The paper has been divided in three parts. The first paragraph revolves around the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. The second illustrates what crowdsourcing is and how FrontlineSMS and Ushahidi have succeed in merging it with the new form of communication provided by ICTs. Finally this paper will take into consideration two case studies, Egypt and Tunisia, which clearly show the impact on democratization that such approach has had.

Keywords

ICTs, Crowdsourcing, Elections, Democratization, Web 2.0

Introduction

The shift from the Web 1.0 to 2.0 has provided a wide range of new opportunities for Internet users. Through the introduction of RSS and the consequent creation of social media, the Internet has been transformed in a forum for interaction where users are no more bound to the limitations imposed by the interests of the big web firms, but have become the main creators of the contents of the web itself. These new forms of communication, which have linked people in a many-to-many form of connection, have also opened the way for the introduction of a new method of data gathering, crowdsourcing. By counting on people in order to get primary information, the web and new technologies, otherwise known as ICTs, have become tools to expand political, social and economic freedom of people and for this reason have been named ‘liberation technologies’ or ‘technologies of freedom’. By relying on crowdsourcing, there have been several occasions in which ICTs have been used in order to support mobilization and to strengthen democracy. The on-going Arab uprisings that erupted in 2011 are clear examples of how ICTs have created a new window of opportunities for common citizens to mobilize and to regain the control of their social and political life. What these tools have allowed has been the birth of a new form of activism, which is twofold: it is functional to the development of new forms of engagement of people in the society, but it is also fundamental in denouncing what happened in a country on the international stage. In the moment in which such tools has been organized in two open source software such as Ushahidi and FrontlineSMS, the impact of these new technologies has been astonishing, as the experience in Egypt in 2010 and in Tunisia in 2011 show. In these two cases, the deployment of on-line platforms that merged the use of new technologies with the techniques of crowdsourcing, have contributed at strengthening what I defined “Activism 2.0” and in en-

gaging citizens in the process of democratization.

From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0: the electronic democracy

During the Web 2.0 Conference in 2005 in San Francisco Ross Mayfield¹ argued “Web 1.0 was commerce. Web 2.0 is people”². What happened in 2005 can be considered a revolution that changed not only users’ approach toward the World Wide Web, but also what people could do with the Internet in their social and political life. Tim O’Reilly³, the main sponsor of the San Francisco Conference, tried to define what the new system, widely known as Web 2.0, was about and although a common definition is still under discussion among experts, O’Reilly’s description is a good starting point and can be considered an exhaustive overview of the main issues addressed by the Web 2.0. The founder of O’Reilly Media⁴ defined the Web 2.0 as an “*‘architecture of participation’ [...] based on social software where users generate content, rather than simply consume it, and on open programming interfaces that let developers add to a web service or get at data. It is an arena where the web rather than the desktop is the dominant platform, and organization appears spontaneously through the actions of the group*”⁵. O’Reilly compared the Web 2.0 to a solar system composed of web sites where they all have in common the same practises and principles that form the core of the system itself. The author listed seven main principles that differentiate Web 2.0 from Web 1.0: the Internet as a platform for political discourse; the collective intelligence emergent from political web use; the importance of data over particular software and hardware applications; perpetual experimentalism in the public domain; the creation of small scale forms of political engagement through consumerism; the propagation of political content over multiple applications; and rich user experiences on political websites⁶. Although not all these principles are equally fundamental at the point of explaining the reasons why and how Web 2.0 has been functional to the development of new forms of democratization and mobilization, some of them, such as the use of the Internet as a platform for political confrontation, the propagation of political content over multiple applications and users’ experiences on political websites are indeed useful for highlighting the big impact that the new approach toward the Internet has had on the social and political life of the crowds. Web 2.0 has radically changed the way in which people relate with the web because through the introduction of the RSS (Really Simple Syndication), available only under this system, web sites has not only be easily linked together, but users can now ‘jump’ from one web site to another and interact by leaving comments and messages. The possibility of this new communication has indeed empowered people, setting them free from the binds that trapped them into a form of dependency on Web 1.0 software vendors and transforming them from mere customers into contents creators. This is the hypothesis to which Mayfield’s sentence relates. If the functioning of the old World Wide Web system was focused on big enterprises’ vending priorities, the new one is created, commented and modified in real time by people themselves, without the imposition of any constrain or boundary. What Web 2.0 provided has been a new virtual forum in which users discuss, chat and create links and post comments that have added value to the Web surfing experience itself. People have

1 Ross Mayfield is co-founder, Chairman and President, and former CEO of Socialtext Incorporated.

2 Ryan Singel, Are You Ready for Web 2.0?, available at <http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2005/10/69114>, accessed on 2/1/2011.

3 Tim O’Reilly is the founder of O’Reilly Media (formerly O’Reilly and Associates) and a supporter of the free software and open source movements.

4 O’Reilly Media (formerly O’Reilly and Associates) is an American publishing house that releases books and Web sites and produces conferences on computer technology topics.

5 Ryan Singel, cit.

6 Andrew Chadwick, Web 2.0: New Challenges for the Study of E-Democracy in an Era of Informational Exuberance, in *I/S: A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society*, Vol. 5:1, 2009.

become the main features of a system that through the Nineties has presented itself as a one-to-many tool of communication, whereas what Web 2.0 has created has been a many-to-many form of connection. The merge between blogging and interaction has enabled people to create and to express themselves on a stage that previously was reserved to experts, creating at the same time something that in many occasions compete in terms of accurateness and completeness to what is available on journals and newspapers.

With this framework in mind, it is interesting to look at the evolution that the Web experienced after 2005 in terms of the Froomkin approach. In his trenchant examination of online democracy, Michael Froomkin (2004) drew a parallel between the introduction of the new types of connectivity derived by the new Internet system and the possibility of enhancing the quality of the participation of masses into the political life. According to Froomkin, the new Internet system enhances “the quantity and especially the quality of mass participation in a representative democracy”⁷, a situation that can be considered an answer to the request of major participation and decentralization put forward by Jürgen Habermas in his philosophical theory⁸. The philosopher argued that engaging people in political debates and encouraging them to associate in order to exchange opinions can improve inherently the political process itself, as it enables the masses to disenfranchise from the control that institutions and political parties play upon them. What is worth emphasizing is that through the creation of blogs and through the new connectivity offered by the Web 2.0 the Internet can indeed be considered a new virtual forum that has brought people closer again to political processes. What recent experiences, such as the on-going political uprisings in the Arab World, or the demonstrations in London, Madrid and New York or again in Russia during the last parliamentary elections in 2011, show is that in the last six years the Web has worked as a platform where people engage in thoughtful and continued conversations, mobilize and became social activists. In other words, what happened during 2011 not only has pushed to reconsider the reliability of the information spread by official media, but has also had an important educative effect about the main principles on which democracy is based on. Web 2.0 has made possible the emerging of the so-called “electronic democracy”⁹ whose effects has been heretofore extraordinary.

The web 2.0 as “Liberation Technology”: the power of crowdsourcing

The main characteristics of the new Internet, its decentralization, its interconnection and its ability to put in communication a huge amount of people in real time in different part of the world, have open a huge amount of possibility for citizens to report and document what is happening in their own countries. The social media that have been created through the evolution of Web 2.0, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, along with the applications that new technologies have made possible, as mobile phone with camera and video, have had an extraordinary impact on the approach that people have developed toward their daily social and political life. People are now able to report misconducts committed by governments or local administrations, to express opinions on a broader amount of issues, to mobilize and monitoring and to spread information in real time on the international stage only by connecting to the Internet. Web 2.0 has enhanced the freedom of people and in this sense we welcome the definition that Larry Diamond¹⁰ has given to the new Information

7 Michael Froomkin, *Technologies for Democracy*, in *Democracy Online – The Prospect of Political Renewal Through the Internet*, Peter M. Shane et al., pg. 12, Routledge, New York, 2004.

8 See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962.

9 Electronic Democracy is a new English term coined in the Nineties that refers to the participation of people in the political life through new media and new technologies. For a deeper analysis see Maurizio Bolognini, *Democrazia Elettronica*, Carocci Editore, Roma, 2001.

10 Larry Diamond is senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, director of Stanford University’s Centre

and Communication Technologies¹¹. According to Diamond (2010) “liberation technology is any form of information and communication technology (ICT) that can expand political, social and economic freedom”¹². What changed compared to the past is that Internet users are no more passive recipients of what traditional media provide, but in most of the cases they are the main actors of what media lately reports. Patrick Meier¹³ has given an outstanding example of the consequence that the new users’ approach toward the web has created. Meier (2011) recalled what an Egyptian activist told during the uprising against the regime of Hosni Mubarak in Cairo at the beginning of 2011. He said: “We use Facebook to schedule our protests, Twitter to coordinate and YouTube to tell the world”¹⁴. The front page of the New York Times of The 22th June 2009 can offer another visual example of the importance that ICTs has acquired in the last years. During the revolts that followed the alleged episodes of fraud in the aftermath of Iranian presidential elections in 2009, mobile phones and the Internet have played a fundamental role in circumventing the censorship imposed by the government and in spreading the information on the international stage about what was happening in the country. The following picture is emblematic of the massive presence of mobile phones and how they have been used to document the revolt and the push for change embodied by the Green Movement¹⁵.



Picture 1: Picture of the front page of the New York Times, 22 June 2009. Source: Meier 2011.

Although their primary use is not related to political activities, ICTs have proved to play a fundamental role at the point of supporting citizens and protesters in organizing demonstrations and revolts. For this reason Howard Rheingold has considered the spread of ICTs a fundamental factor in organizing and mobiliz-

on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, and founding co-editor of the Journal of Democracy.

11 Information and Communication Technologies is a term that defines a group of tools for communication, such as phones and computers that enable users to create, change, spread and manipulate information on a large scale.

12 Larry Diamond, Liberation Technologies, in Journal of Democracy, Vol. 21:3, pg. 69, National Endowment for Democracy and The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

13 Patrick Meier is the Director of Crisis Mapping at Ushahidi, co-founder of the International Network of Crisis Mappers and previously co-director of Harvard University's Program on Crisis Mapping and Early Warning.

14 Patrick Meier, Do Liberation Technologies change the balance of power between repressive states and civil society?, A Thesis Presented to the Faculty Of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, November 2011, pg. 1.

15 The Green Movement is a pro-reform movement born in the aftermaths of the presidential elections in Iran in 2009. Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karubi are considered the leader of the movement.

ing people, a phenomenon he called “smart mob”¹⁶. As Diamond (2010) writes, recalling the definition of Rheingold (2003), a smart mob is a “vast network of individuals who communicate rapidly and with little hierarchy or central direction in order to gather at certain location for the sake of protest”¹⁷.

The combination of new tools for mobilization and the will of people of getting increasingly involved in what is happening in their country and on the international arena have also developed a special aspect of the phenomenon known as crowdsourcing, which is the crowdsourcing for humanitarian and democratic purposes.

Crowdsourcing is an activity already implemented during the Nineties mainly in the economic sector and that was previously known as outsourcing, that is the contracting of external actors by firms and societies in order to develop parts of their duties. When the Web 2.0 has allowed starting new forms of communication impossible or unimaginable beforehand, the term crowdsourcing, literally outsourcing to the crowd, has emerged. This expression made its first appearance in 2006 on an article written by Jeff Howe¹⁸ on Wired Magazine and then refined in his work. Howe (2008) defined crowdsourcing as “*The act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call*”¹⁹. What crowdsourcing permits is to treat the crowd as a tool to reach a specific objective, which in humanitarian or democratic promotion terms means to count on people in order to get information, or to process them. Through crowdsourcing, people are now given a mean by which they can participate and being part of a certain project, such as rescue programs, monitoring or information activities. Although can be a very general phenomenon, crowdsourcing will be addressed in this paper by giving examples of its implementation in the cases of democracy promotion and conflict prevention. The two main case studies of this work, Egypt and Tunisia, are two outstanding examples of how crowdsourcing has been implemented as method of gathering information from the crowd and at the same time as a mean of democratization. The two cases, however different, counted on crowdsourcing to receive information about the developing of their respective electoral processes and about possible episodes of frauds violence or misconduct during the electoral confrontations. Regarding the crowdsourcing initiative in Egypt, it has been launched by a local NGO with the aim not only of exploiting a potential situation of political vacuum and re-drawing people to democratic processes, but also to overcome the censorship and denounce the episodes of frauds and corruption of the regime of Hosni Mubarak on the international stage. On the other hand, in Tunisia, the initiative has been launched on the request of local authorities whose aim was to engage people in order to grant transparency during what has been considered and historical moment in the social and political life of the country freed from the Abdulaziz Ben Ali regime, the election of the Constituent Assembly.

In these experiences, as well as in every situation in which crowdsourcing is implemented, one of the most difficult challenges is to verify information gathered from the crowd. At the point in which communication becomes particularly easy, what it is improving is not only the ability of spreading useful information, but also the possibility of manipulating or falsifying them. A clear example of manipulation and diffusion of false information through mobile phones and new technologies can be given by what happened

16 Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. Cambridge: Basic Books, 2003.

17 Larry Diamond, cit., pg. 11.

18 Jeff Howe is a contributing editor at Wired Magazine, author of the blog crowdsourcing.com and the author of the book *Crowdsourcing, Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the future of Business*, published in 2008 by Crown Books.

19 Jeff Howe, *Crowdsourcing: Why the power of the crowd is driving the future of business*. New York: Crown Business, pg. 99, 2008.

in Kenya in the aftermath of 2007 elections. Once violence erupted, after the communication of the results, some groups mobilized and started sending text messages to prevent violence and to inform people about what was really going on in the country. However in the mean time mobile phones have also been used to spread hate speeches, further igniting an already tense and violent situation.

The process of verifying information is proving to be one of the most challenging elements in crowdsourcing initiatives. Verifying information is absolutely essential for the success of a crowdsourcing project but it may take time and what is also important is not losing the advantages given by real time communication. One of the main gains of crowdsourcing is indeed receiving information even from the most remote parts of a country, therefore covering a big percentage of the territory that NGOs and CSOs official could not able to reach, but also getting these information in real time. This can be a critical benefit especially in monitoring deployments for risk assessments, early warning or disaster responses. To date there have been several attempts strategies useful for verifying information in the most quick and accurate way, and they refer both to the information coming from mobile phones or the Internet and social media. Depending on the source of the information, the process of verification changes only slightly. In the case of data gathered through new media, it is possible to rely on the strategies typical of investigative journalism, namely merging the processes of interrogating the source and/or triangulating the information. If an information is taken by the Internet, for example from social media such as Twitter, a way of verifying its truthfulness is analyzing the reliability of the person who has 'tweeted' the message, which can be made by studying the 'history' of its tweets or by googleing the name on the web in order to find more information. Another method is communicating with the source, or triangulating the information. An interesting example of triangulation has been given in occasion of the violence erupted in South Kyrgyzstan in 2010²⁰.

At the same time, the quantity of information received is also a factor that matter during the verification process. Once several different pictures or video, or messages, are submitted to the organizers of the crowdsourcing initiative, and all confirm the occurrence of an episode, there is a sort of 'auto-validation'²¹. In this case, the more information received, the more reliable the information is, confirming the principle that the more people participate, the more the crowdsourcing initiative is successful.

An exhaustive example of how to combine all these different methods of verification, adapting the process to the need on the ground, can be given by the crowdsourcing initiative developed in Egypt during the parliamentary election in 2010, which will be analyzed more in depth later. In this case the team of U-Shahid, the platform that run the project, firstly prioritized the information that needed verification, then relied on video and photos submitted by social media or text messages, and then verified the information come through these tools by calling the number or tweeting to the person that sent the report. A third phase involved in-person verification via a trusted source, that is sending election monitors on the ground in order to verify in person the episode, or, if the monitor was not available, checking the information with partner NGOs. Finally, there was also a double-checking of the information by relying on mainstream media.

20 During the months of May and June the turmoil in the country have been fuelled by misinformation and disinformation, especially through mobile phones. In order to verify information some civil society organizations on the field opened a Skype chat where to ask each other in real time information when a rumor came up. Only trusted people have been added to the chat, crating a trusted and geographically distributed network where to ask for the truthfulness of information, see Patrick Meier, *Verifying Crowdsourced Social Media Reports for Live Crisis Mapping: An Introduction to Information Forensics*, available at <http://irevolution.net/publications/>, accessed on the 3/01/2012.

21 Diane Coyle and Patrick Meier, *New Technologies in Emergencies and Conflicts: The Role of Information and Social Networks*, Washington, D.C. and London, UK: UN Foundation-Vodafone Foundation Partnership, 2009

In order to reduce the risk of unreliable information, crowdsourcing initiatives can also be developed using a ‘bounded’ crowdsourcing²², that is counting on the information coming from verified sources, such as bloggers and activists already in contact with who run the initiative. One example in which such method has been used has been during the crowdsourcing initiative developed in Tunisia in October 2011, which is the other case study that will be lately addressed.

Two outstanding examples of organizations that have merged crowdsourcing with the advances provided by Web 2.0 are Ushahidi and FrontlineSMS. Whilst the latter counts on the improved communication provided by mobile phones, the former merges mobile technology with the new opportunity provided by the Internet and goes a step further, introducing real time mapping activities.

FrontlineSMS and Ushahidi: Development 2.0

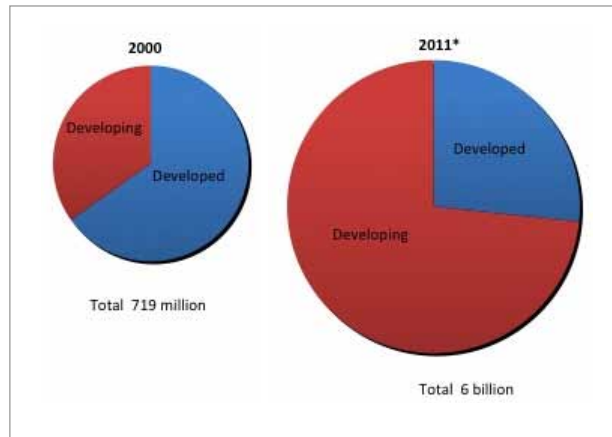
FrontlineSMS

FrontlineSMS is a free downloadable software created in 2005 by Ken Banks²³ with the primary goal of helping South African authorities in engaging and communicating with the public in wildlife conservation efforts. The main struggle was to think about a system that would have not relied on the Internet, since at that time the web infrastructures were not as developed as they are now. From his work and research, Banks planned FrontlineSMS, an open source software that can send, receive, and organize text messages through a mobile device and a laptop, without the need to be connected to the Internet. Once the software has been installed on a laptop, there is no need to be on the web, since this program turns every computer in a hub for communication and allows every user to communicate and receive text messages. All needed is a USB cable to attach a cell phone or GSM modem with a SIM card. Once done, FrontlineSMS allows to create contacts and to communicate with people through sending and receiving text messages, which appears on the screen and can be recorded as a proper database.

Even if was born with an idea in mind, FrontlineSMS has never been announced as a tool for a specific aim. On the contrary, every user has been left free to decide how to use this software and the results have been astonishing. Being provided with this new tool, people have demonstrated to have enough ideas and initiative to use it for their own goals, adapting it to the situation of the ground. To date, FrontlineSMS has been downloaded over 16,000 times and is being used in over 70 countries and in every case users have adapted this tool to local needs. NGOs have especially benefitted from it, since it has become a mean by which cutting costs and simplifying the communication on the field. The utility of FrontlineSMS is directly connected to the rapid spread of mobile technology in the world, especially in the developing world. Most of the countries in which developing projects are implemented are in the developing part of the world, where the Internet connection either does not exist or is solely present in the urbanized zones. As result, wide areas of the world are cut out of the World Wide Web, and consequently people are increasingly relying on mobile phones to communicate. According to the most recent report by International Telecommunication Union, in 2011 the mobile-cellular subscriptions have reached the 5.9 billion, with a penetration that goes from the 87% in the developed world to the 79% in the developing world.

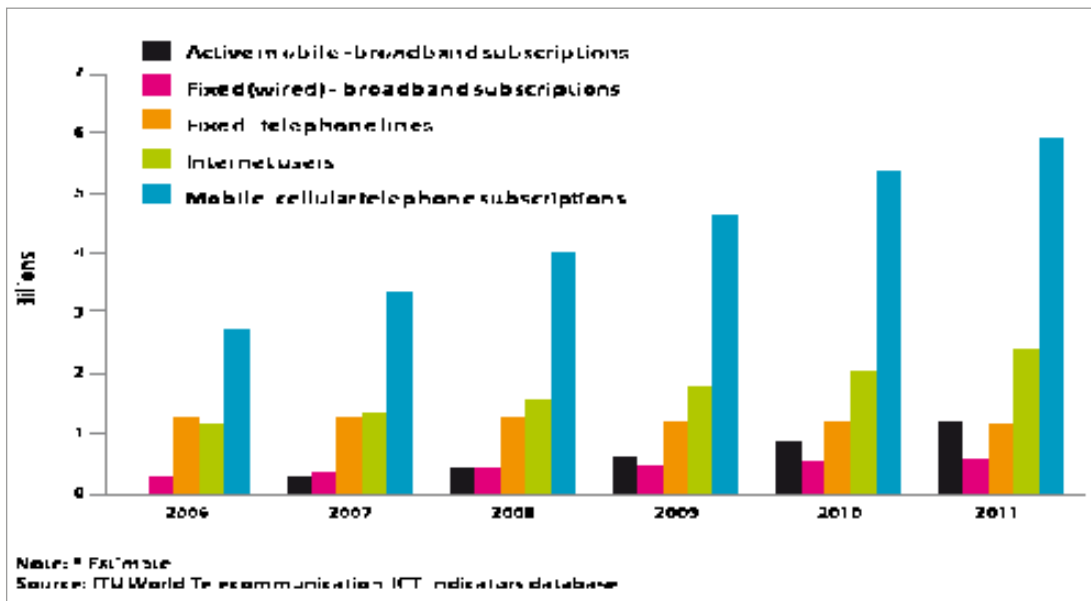
22 Ibidem.

23 Ken Banks is an anthropologist and an innovator, founder of FrontlineSMS and owner of the blog <http://kiwanja.net>. He devoted himself to the application of mobile technology for positive social and environmental change in the developing world and spent 19 years working in African countries.



Picture 3: Mobile-cellular subscriptions by level of development; Source: ITU *Estimates

Moreover, in the last four years subscriptions have grown 45% annually, to the point that today there are more mobile than fixed phones subscriptions²⁴.



Picture 4: Mobile-cellular subscriptions 2006-2011; Source: ITU

Many FrontlineSMS deployments have been made especially in the health, agricultural or human development fields, but one of the most common uses is for election monitoring. The first of such deployments has been made in the occasion of Nigerian elections in 2007. In that occasion the software has been used to receive texts from people attending the polls that were witnessing inconsistencies or frauds in the electoral process. This information have been lately forwarded onto the electoral body and placed on a map, where problem spots could be visualized. The first aim of this project has been an attempt to put democracy back in the hands of the voters, therefore empowering them and making them play an important role in the society.

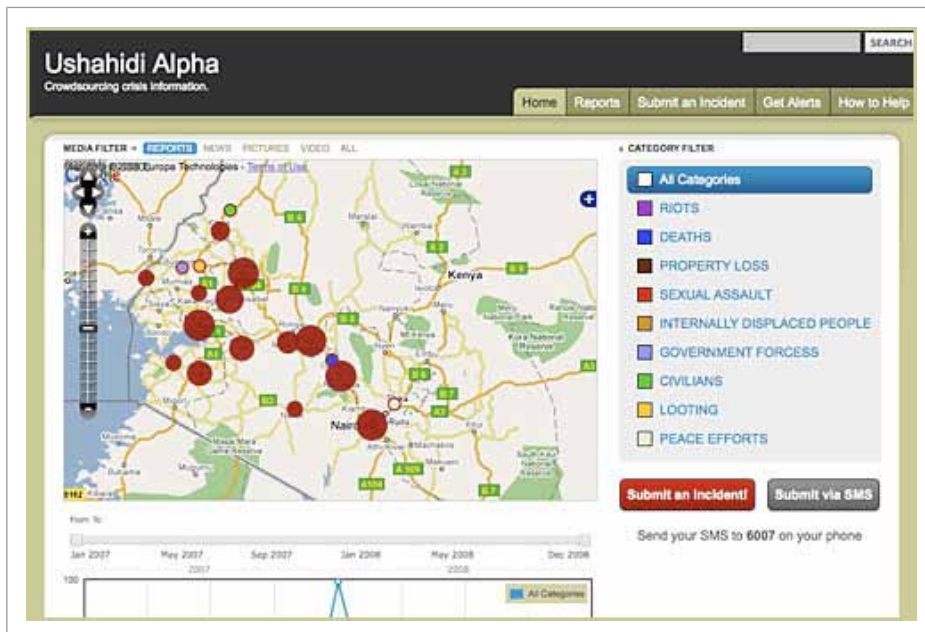
24 ITU, ICT Facts and Figures, The World in 2011, ICT Data and Statistics Division Telecommunication Development Bureau International Telecommunication Union, Geneva, 2011.



Picture 5: How FrontlineSMS works; Source: FrontlineSMS

Ushahidi

Ushahidi is an organization that was created by a group of scholars during the turmoil in the aftermath of Kenyan election in 2007/2008 with the aim of providing information to people of what was happening in the country in a moment in which official information were lacking or not reliable. Counting on the ability of putting together the functionalities of different ICTs (the Internet and mobile phones), Ushahidi created an open source software able not only to gather information through crowdsourcing, but also to map them on a visual interactive map.



Picture 6: Screenshot of the Ushahidi website; Source: <http://blog.ushahidi.com/>

These improvements have provided a new tool that has been used in different deployments for different goals, from natural disasters rescuing operations to election monitoring activities, therefore contributing to election-related violence risk assessments or early warning projects. By allowing the participation of people, Ushahidi represents the kind of tool that has succeeded in using the advances of technology in order to prompt local population to take part in their political life. From 2008 to March 2011, there have been more

than 11,000 Ushahidi deployments and the Ushahidi platform²⁵, which can be defined as a “free and open source platform that combines SMS, Twitter, and Google Maps to crowdsource crisis information”²⁶, has proved to be a useful support to traditional methods of analysis and data gathering.

Its main strength is the fact that Ushahidi is an open source freely downloadable and that it is easily adaptable to the needs on the ground. Once installed on a laptop or pc, the Ushahidi software is able to receive information coming from mobile phones, emails and social media, such as Twitter, that are processed and geo-located on an interactive map and then verified. This process can be done by those who run the software but in the case of particularly relevant deployments, such as the one in occasion of the Haiti earthquake in 2010, which has been the turning point in the history of Ushahidi, or again during the Libyan crisis, an entire online community has taken part to the projects, putting together individual skills that have made possible to reach objective otherwise unachievable.

The method of processing the information that arrive on the platform is straightforward and every single step is designed to get the most out of the information received and to ease the process of drafting reports and statistics on what happens on the ground. Every message is analyzed in order to make it fit in one or more categories, useful at the point of identifying the different types of problems that appear in a given situation. In the case of deployments aimed at monitoring an electoral process, the categories can refer to episodes of violence against polling stations, harassments of candidates, hate-speeches or frauds committed during the voting day. The messages are lately located on a map, giving the coordinates of where the event has taken place, and then video or photos, if present, are uploaded. Once completed the processing procedures, the information pass to the verification team and only after it has been considered reliable, it appears on the main page.

The impact of the use of Ushahidi has been huge, especially in supporting organizations on the ground and its use has demonstrated that people can be the most ready and reliable source of information in situations of crisis.

FrontlineSMS and Ushahidi are just two examples of tools that have benefitted from the latest technological advances and that have been designed to bring people back to the central stage of their political and social life. This is particularly evident in the cases in which these tools have been used to monitor electoral processes. Elections are an essential part of any democratic system and only by granting the development of regular and transparent electoral processes it is possible to build an effective and efficient democracy. Converting people in electoral monitors means not only giving them the power to control and to denounce possible irregularities during the polls, but it also translates into the possibility of spreading democratic principles and good practice. Once people learn what is right and wrong, it is easier for them to recognize a good or a bad social or political behavior and not to be manipulated by political or governmental actors.

In this sense, new technologies and crowdsourcing have been particularly useful to the goal of democratization, as the deployments of two crowdsourcing platforms in Egypt and Tunisia show.

In the last years Egyptian and Tunisian people have benefitted from the opportunities given by web 2.0 and have ridden the wave of change, playing a new role in their own countries.

25 Sarah George, Ushahidi Key Deployment Report – March 2011, available at <http://blog.ushahidi.com/index.php/2011/03/21/key-deployments-and-lessons-learned-part-1/>, accessed on 8/01/2012.

26 Diane Coyle and Patrick Meier, cit., pg. 23.

Egypt and Tunisia: two examples of innovative forms of democratization

In order to understand why the two crowdsourcing experiences that will be analyzed in this paper have been so important in mobilizing Egyptian and Tunisian people and in democratizing their social processes, it is fundamental to draw a picture of the social background situations in both these countries. Although different, Egypt and Tunisia share some common features, especially if related to freedom of expression, movement, press and speech.

In 2011, both Tunisia and Egypt succeeded in toppling two of the most long-standing dictatorships of the region, whose autocratic rules imposed for decades a sole political though coupled with a restricted freedom of speech and other political rights both toward religious minorities and political opposition groups. In this context the rise of new technologies and the use of the advances provided by Web 2.0 have proven to be fundamental in giving voice and providing a new platform where to organize dissent to that part of Tunisian and Egypt societies that wanted to find a way to express their discontent against the regimes. These tools became instruments in the hands not only of social and political activists, but also of those parts of the society, especially the young and educated people, that saw in the Internet and in the new technologies an opportunity of getting again possession of their political life. By canalizing the dissent and providing a new 'virtual' space for interaction, these developments have contributed to the reshape of the social and political scenario both in Tunisia and Egypt. A new social class has emerged from the networked arena of the web, in which ordinary citizens and highly IT-literate individuals, with a structured political consciousness, emerged as leading actors of the protests and then as primary monitors of the democratic processes. This social and political engagement, reshaped in its form and modalities, has produced a new kind of activism that can be defined as 'Activism 2.0'. The fact that new media and new technologies have been considered crucial elements during the uprising that led to the fall of the regime both of Hosni Mubarak and Abdulaziz Ben Ali, revolves around these conditions. However, it is important to bear in mind that these new forms of communication have not been the sole triggering causes of the social and political unrests registered in these countries during 2011, but they opened windows of opportunities to already existing social movements, such as the network of Egyptian bloggers, that allowed better communicating and organizing people. In other words "New media enabled individuals to bypass the traditional gatekeepers to, and sources of, information"²⁷.

However, the desire of playing a different role in the society and the increasing political awareness of the population toward social issues have been evident well before 2011, especially in the case of the U-Shahid experience in Egypt in occasion of the parliamentary elections in November 2010.

The idea of using a crowdsourcing platform during the electoral process in Egypt has been an attempt to bring back the electoral process to people, by providing a mechanism of control that was in the hand of those who were casting their votes. By pushing Egyptians to monitor their own electoral process, U-Shahid wanted to make people realize that by actively participating in the confrontation, the process itself would have become more authentic and less corrupted. By observing and judging the regularity of the electoral process, Egyptian have been pushed to look at the electoral process no more as tool in the hand of the authorities to affirm once again their power, but as an instrument that would have allowed them to play a new

²⁷ Elisabeth Iskander, *Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant After Egypt's January 25 Uprising?*, International Journal of Communication 5, London School of Economics, 2011.

role and to take back the control over the democratic practices of the country. For such a long time elections have lost their meaning for Egyptians, a situation demonstrated by the increasingly low voter turnout registered during the last 30 years.

Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout
1976	40%	1995	50%
1984	43.7%	2000	25%
1987	50.4%	2005	27.5%
1990	40%		

Picture 7: Voter Turnout in Previous Egyptian Parliamentary Elections, Source: Al-Ahram Press Institute

Under the Mubarak regime, taking part to the electoral process has been a privilege limited to people closed to the Government or the Military establishment, whereas strict laws that have constrained the political and social rights of opposition movements have influenced the political campaign to the point that there was no doubt on who would have emerged as the winner of the Egyptian electoral confrontations. This situation has increasingly pushed people away from polling stations. Moreover, since 1981 the electoral processes have always been polluted by frequent episodes of frauds that have never found justice through appeal procedures due to the high levels of corruption. However in the eve of parliamentary elections in 2010, the political situation in the country was slightly different. A sort of political vacuum was visible since Mubarak suffered from serious health problems but had not named a successor and there were doubts on the ability of his son, Gamal, of gaining the trust of the Army, which was a fundamental condition to rule the country. In this context the opposition gained space and capitalized this opportunity through the opportunities offered by new technologies and media.

This was the context in which the U-Shahid platform has been launched. The decision to give birth to this experiment has been taken by the DISC (Development and Institutionalization Support Center)²⁸, an Egyptian group based in Cairo whose aim was to monitor the parliamentary elections through reports submitted by local people through SMS, email and twitter and to process them to a real-time map. The DISC downloaded the Ushahidi platform and customized it according to the needs on the ground.

²⁸ The Development and Institutionalization Support Center, DISC, is an Egyptian organization promoting political, economic, and social change throughout the Middle East and North Africa, whose aim is “to build the capacities of NGO’s and civil society, encourage youth participation, and support transparency and accountability through the use of new media”, http://disccenter.com/?page_id=2, accessed on the 4/01/2012.



Picture 8: Screenshot of the U-Shahid home page; Source: www.u-shahid.org

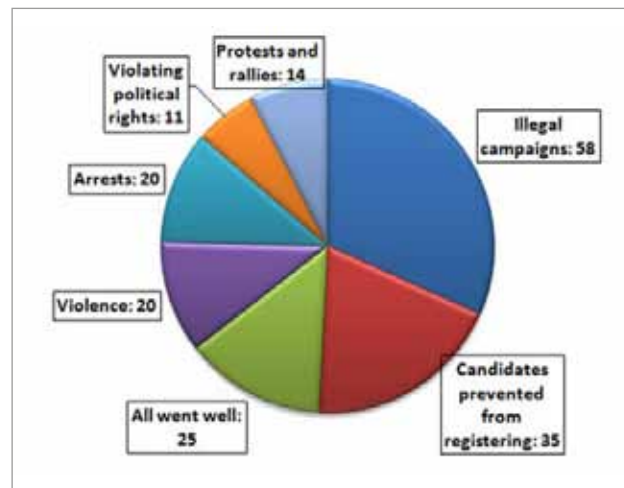
The principle at the base of this deployment was the belief that by providing access to pertinent and timely information about the electoral process, this would have acquired transparency and it would have pushed Egyptians toward an increased participation and trust in democracy. This objective has been strengthened by the fact that people themselves would have monitor elections and that they would have not be dependent on foreign help. Through the U-Shahid platform, deployed by a local NGO, common citizens have become activists, creating a circle of trust that has strengthened the initiative. For this reason the call to take part to the project has been opened to “candidates, election observers, a range of commentators, and ordinary Egyptian citizens”²⁹ and instrumental to this aim has been the translation of the whole web site in Arabic. However, from the very beginning, the idea was that the impact of the platform should not have been limited to the country itself, at least in terms of communication. On the contrary, one of the main aim was to overtake the censorships and the limitations imposed by the Mubarak regime, who did not opened the country to international observers, and therefore to spread to the international stage the information related to the electoral process, denouncing the frauds, the constrains and the corruption in the country. The initiative has therefore been twofold, making aware people in the country, but also make the international community hear their voice, by denouncing on the web the frauds and irregularities.

Another interesting feature of the U-Shahid platform is the fact that its deployment has not been limited to the days of the election, but it has run for an extended period of time, a characteristic that has given the possibility of looking not only at the voting day, but that has also allowed to give a general insight of what have been the entire electoral process, from the starting of the electoral campaign to the communication of results. This is an interesting aspect of the deployment because it proved the validity of the platform also in terms of risk assessment tool since it monitored the situation of the ground on the medium and short term. However this has not been the only advantage. By pushing people to report from the initial stage of the electoral process, the U-Shahid deployment has contributed to raise popular awareness toward elections without focusing the attention only on the voting day. On the contrary it has contributed to illustrate to people what is the correct code of conduct during electoral confrontations, playing as a tool for voting education.

The period in which U-Shahid has monitored the electoral process in Egypt can be divided in three parts: the registration of candidates, the political campaign and the voting day.

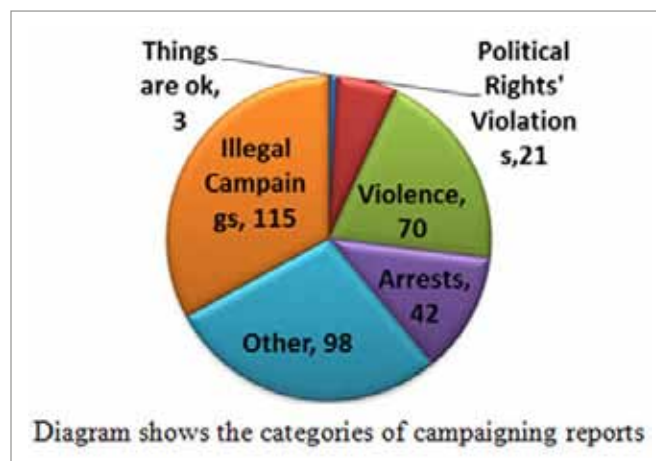
²⁹ http://discenter.com/?page_id=2, accessed on the 11/01/2012.

During the first phase, which covered the period between the 3rd of November, the start of candidate registration, and the 15th of November 2010, the day before the announcement of the final candidates' lists, 183 reports were submitted, and the biggest part of them (58) referred to episodes of illegal campaigning (i.e. campaigns that started before the set time, or that used public facilities). All the reports have been divided according to different categories, which remained almost the same during the whole observation period: violation and frauds, illegal campaign, harassment of candidates, violation of political rights and violence.



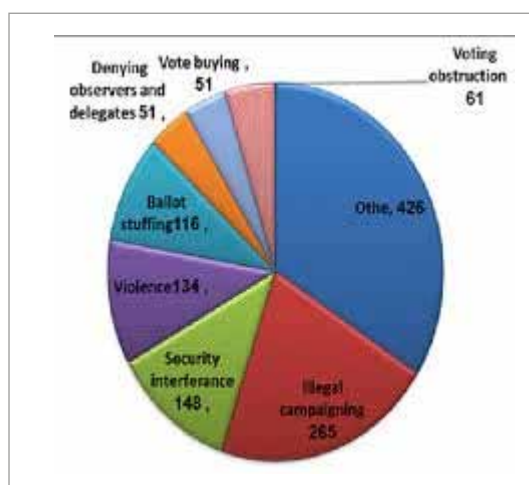
Picture 9: Testimonies categorization on Ushahid platform on the stage of candidates' registration for the Egyptian Parliamentary Election 2010; Source: U-Shahid

The second period, that went from the 14th of November until the 27th of November 2010, the day before the voting day, 349 reports were submitted, most of them related again to illegal campaign and violence.



Picture 10: Categories of campaigning reports, Source: U-Shahid

During the voting day there was a boom of reports, 1252 in total, 287 of which were correlated by video and 111 by images. The majority of these reports (265) highlighted again violations related to the continuation of illegal campaigning, while 134 documented frequent and spread episodes of violence.



Picture 11: U-Shahid reports on election day; Source: U-Shahid

According to the administrator of the platform, one of the most curious features highlighted by the reports submitted on the e-day was that “there was apparent patterns of violations repeating throughout Egypt, at the same time, which gave clear impression that those violations are systematic”.³⁰

The impact that the platform had on the political scene is difficult to assess because even if the numbers were impressive for such an experiment, they were quite small if compared to the national voter turnout. Nevertheless, what is important to highlight is the potential impact that U-Shahid has had on local population, and that has been confirmed by those who run the platform. As Meier reports in his work (2011) the administrators of the web site agreed on the fact that the possibility of reporting anonymously from the polling station, surely encouraged people in taking part to the project and the details that emerged from every report submitted prove that the political awareness that on the 25th of January 2011 pushed Egyptians to take the streets and that led to the ousting of Hosni Mubarak was already there in 2010 and that people were ready to use ICTs in order to make hear their voice. Moreover, what the U-Shahid platform has provided has been an alternative source of information to those who were looking for real evidences about what was happening in the country.

A similar experiment has been also developed in Tunisia during the last polls for the elections of the Constitutional Assembly last 23rd October 2011. Although the background conditions related to the will of the population of getting back to the central stage of their political life were comparable to those described for U-Shahid in 2010, in the case of the Carte de Controle du Processus Electorale, the Tunisian deployment has worked in a completely different political environment. This electoral process has taken place in a country already free from its dictatorship and the electoral process represented an historic opportunity for the Tunisian to show to the international community that people were ready to respect democratic rules and to actively contribute to the construction of a democratic country.

30 <http://www.u-shahid.com/en/?p=114> accessed on the 5/01/2012



Picture 12: Screenshot of the home page of the Carte de Contrôle du Processus Électoral web site, Source: http://carte.isie.tn/fr/?l=fr_FR

The Carte de Contrôle du Processus Électoral has been organized by the Higher Independent Election Committee, or ISIE³¹, together with the ICT4Peace Foundation of Switzerland³² and Ushahidi, and funded by DCAF³³ with the aim of answering to the numerous calls coming from the peace-building and the humanitarian assistance community for a more integrated communication among the electoral stakeholders. In fact the request to launch such platform has been made by the Election Commission and the Tunisian Ministry of Interior with the aim of using this tool as a confidence-building instrument between local authorities and Tunisians. The goal was to provide a tool able to grant transparency during the electoral process, the first since decades that for the biggest part of the population represent a test of trust.

A deeper analysis of the Tunisian initiative shows that this crowdsourcing experience has been slightly different from the one developed in Egypt, but also in this case what emerges is that even in a different context and with different modalities, ICTs are increasingly becoming an important tool for democratization and mobilization.

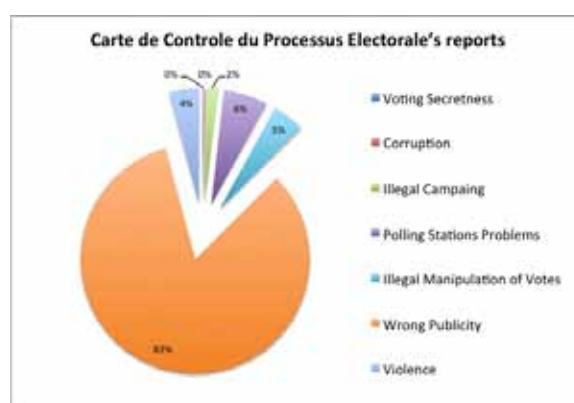
What differentiates the Carte du Contrôle du Processus Électoral's platform is the fact that the crowdsourcing has been made mainly by SMS and that in this case the authorities chose to implement a bounded-crowdsourcing. *"A network of 850 trained reporters representing ISIE are deployed on field all over Tunisia sending reports and observations via SMS to the portal where it will be validated by the mapping and*

31 Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections

32 ICT4Peace is a policy and action-oriented international Foundation that explores and champions the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) for crisis management, humanitarian aid and peace-building, ICT4Peace Foundation, Workover 2011, available on the web site <http://ict4peace.org/>, accessed on the 12/1/2012.

33 DCAF is an international foundation established in 2000 on the initiative of the Swiss Confederation, as the 'Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces'. DCAF contributes to enhancing security sector governance (SSG) through security sector reform (SSR). More information can be found on the web site <http://www.dcaf.ch/>.

verification centre before it makes it to the online front-end of the portal”³⁴. Also in this case the Ushahidi platform has been adapted to the ground needs, the web site has been operating in French and Arabic, and in this occasion the organization launched the advanced version of its traditional software, Ushahidi 2.0, which is more easily customized and more precise in terms of geo-location. The platform has run from the 1st of October 2011 to the 23rd of the same month and during this period more that 800 reports have been submitted and verified.



Picture 13: Carte de Controle du Processus Electorale's reports; Source: <http://carte.isie.tn/fr/reports>

The majority of the reports referred to episodes of wrong publicity, that is the posting of political posters outside the authorized areas, the use of flags, the possibility to have access to places where the entrance was restricted and the violation of the electoral silence.

Another interesting feature of the platform was the possibility of activating the crowd-feeding function, that is registering one's position, giving the e-mail addressed and be advised in the case episodes of violence, or others categories, would have happened in an area of 20 kilometres around the subscriber.

The final official reports of the platform have still to be released, but from the already available information it is evident that this experience has had an enormous impact in such an historic moment as the Constitutional Assembly Elections in Tunisia has been.

Conclusions

The advent of the Web 2.0 has radically changed the approach that users had toward the Internet and the increased connectivity that the new system has provided contributed to the rising of a new form of social and political involvement, especially in Egypt and Tunisia. Not just bloggers and activists, but normal citizens have become the main actors and monitors of their social and political life. Through innovations, they exploited the new opportunities provided by the Internet which become a virtual forum where to exchange opinions, spread information and behind which shielding in order to bypass the censorship and the control

³⁴ Monitoring Tunisia's first election: ICT4Peace Foundation and Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections, <http://ict4peace.org/updates/monitoring-tunisia-first-election-ict4peace-foundation-instance-superieure-independante-pour-les-elections>, accessed on the 4/01/2012.

imposed by authorities on traditional media. This new way of using ICTs has been defined Activism 2.0, a term that underlines the increased political awareness of people and their predisposition at using the web as a tool for mobilization. Egypt and Tunisia have witnessed in 2010 and in 2011 respectively the impact that the use of an on-line open source platform that merges new technologies with the techniques of crowd-sourcing, Ushahidi, has had on the processes of democratizing and mobilizing people. In order to analyse its impact, it has been chosen to study its implementation in occasion of two relevant electoral confrontations, the Egyptian parliamentary election of 2010 and the Constituent Assembly election on 2011 in Tunisia. The political background condition in which the platform has been implemented are very different, since in 2010 Egypt was still under the Hosni Mubarak regime, whilst in 2011 Tunisia was already free from the dictatorship of Abdelaziz Ben Ali. The modalities in which the platform has been used, changed from one country to the other as well. In Egypt the initiative has been launched by a local NGO with the twofold aim of re-engaging people in the electoral process, after decades of riddled elections and corruption that caused a dramatic drop in voter turnout, and of denouncing on the international media the lack of democracy in the country. In the case of Tunisia, local official authorities, such as the Electoral Commission, requested the use of the platform because letting people monitoring the electoral process has been considered a way of granting transparency and putting people at the centre of the political life of the country that was emerging as a new democratic entity on the international stage. By becoming 'official' monitors, people have continued to play the role of actors that they began to develop at the starting of the uprisings that ousted Ben Ali. However different, what emerges in both these deployments is the astonishing role that ICTs have played at the point of not only mobilizing people but also engaging them in the democratic process. The Internet and mobile phones have been the main tools by which spreading information on how the electoral processes were developing, replacing in the case of Egypt, or joining, in Tunisia, traditional media.

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Gdeim Izik: a change in the struggle strategies of the Sahrawi population

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Abstract

This communication will contribute to clarify factors involved the first and the less known of the Arab revolutions. We will also show the differences between this revolt and other events taking place in neighbour countries some months later: above all, the capability of the Sahrawi people for combining social and economic demands, the struggle for identity recognition and classical claims of independence. Finally, these elements will allow us to try to predict the effects that the new scenario emerged from Gdeim Izik will have in the short/medium term in Western Sahara. In this sense, we foresee an increased political commitment of Sahrawi people in the occupied territories; the transition from peaceful actions towards more radical and violent reactions; and a direct and daily confrontation with Moroccan settlers, affecting relationships between both populations and stopping any possibility of coexistence.

Keywords

Western Sahara, Gdeim Izik, peaceful camp, revolts, Sahrawi, Moroccan.

Introduction

In autumn 2010, as a prelude to the popular protests in the Maghreb and Machrek, the Sahrawi population living inside the occupied territories performed a totally unexpected action: more than 20.000 people set the peaceful camp Gdeim Izik to denounce their political, economic and social situation. Several weeks after its establishment, the camp was violently dismantled by Moroccan security forces. This intervention triggered bloody riots in some cities of Western Sahara, causing 13 dead among Moroccan policemen and Sahrawi citizens, and hundreds of wounded and arrested.

Gdeim Izik is considered by some authors¹ as the first revolution of the ‘Arab spring’. According to Professor López García (2011), Gdeim Izik must be linked to a ‘new Arab time’, because as in the following protests it was the youth who forced an authoritarian power to negotiate using innovative ways of call and organisation. This author considers as well that the camp as protest strategy was exported from Gdeim Izik to the Kasbah of Tunis and Tahir Square at El Cairo. The so-called ‘Dignity’ camp introduced important changes, above all, a radicalization of political positions and an increase of violence among Sahrawi and Moroccan population. One year after the appearance of the camp, the dynamics of this action and its consequences can be better understood by carrying out an exhaustive analysis of the situation in Western Sahara, before, during and after Gdeim Izik. Besides, we can observe that the spirit emerged in Gdeim Izik

¹ One of the first authors pointing out this fact was the north-American political scientist Noam Chomsky: http://www.democracynow.org/2011/2/17/the_genies_are_out_of_the

remains, and that it fed the riots happened in other Arab countries. Despite the initial failure of their revolt, Sahrawi people did not lose hope regarding their cause because they verified the possibility to break the dynamics of impunity characteristic of some Arab regimes.

Taking into account these facts and their immediate consequences, this communication² seeks to answer the following questions: How was the political socialization of the actors involved in the 2010 revolt? What have been the major changes in struggle objectives and methods compared to previous years? Can we talk about the emergence of new political and social Sahrawi organizations? (Role played by Human Right activists/Polisario's position within the resistance in the occupied territories). What role played the traditional mass media and the new information technologies in the development of this protest?

Chronology

Gdeim Izik resulted from several unfruitful attempts of setting protest camps in the outskirts of a number of cities of Western Sahara (El Aaiún, Smara, Dajla, Bojador and the port of Al Marsa). With this new struggle strategy the Saharawi people tried to denounce the harsh social and economic situation in the occupied territories, specially their marginalisation regarding access to jobs and housing, the corruption of local authorities (be Moroccan or Saharawi), the state welfare policies guided by clientelism rather than by socio-economic criteria, and the traditional denounce of the plundering of natural resources of Western Sahara, to which the original population of the region do not have access.

The idea of building a new camp in the Gdeim Izik area, about 15 km away from El Aaiún, was conceived at the beginning of October 2010. As in previous attempts, the spark was ignited by the questionable management of development funds and social subsidies by the Moroccan authorities. The first demonstrators gathered on October 10, most of them women and unemployed young men. On this occasion the Moroccan security forces did not ban the rally, encouraging more people to join the protest³. Such massive attendance made the management of the camp a complex task. Although each family cared for their own supplies, after a few days the formation of so-called popular committees was necessary: internal security, cleaning, camp planning, basic services and negotiation⁴. The camp was divided in six quarters, each one under responsibility of a zone chief. As time went on, the Moroccan security forces established a blockade around the camp by digging trenches and sand dikes. The access gates were reduced to a single entrance at the road connecting El Aaiún and Smara, where three police check points made even more difficult gaining access to the protest place.

The calm was hardly maintained until October 24, when a car ignored one of the check points and was shut by troopers, killing one of the passengers, a 14 year old who was buried three days later without the authorisation of his parents and without the presence of any relatives. This event changed dramatically the situation at Gdeim Izik. Outside the camp the informative blockade was tightened. The Moroccan authorities blocked the access of foreign journalists to El Aaiún, and some of them were even expelled from the

2 Regarding methodology, this empirical research has used a qualitative approach: interviews (Sahrawi people present in "Gdeim Izik", Human Right Sahrawi activists, international observers and political representatives of the Polisario Front), analysis of reports developed by Human Right Sahrawi and Moroccan associations, newspapers and social networks and videos.

3 The attendance estimates oscillate between 20.000 and 25.000 demonstrators and between 6.500 and 8.000 tents.

4 Sahara Thawra report: Gdeim Izik, November 8, 2011, p.5.

country⁵. This happened also to some international observers and MEPs such as the Spaniard Willy Meyer and the French Jean-Paul Lecoq. On the other hand, the atmosphere inside the camp became tense. In view of the likely imminent dismantling of the camp, pro-independence speeches were more and more frequent among the displaced population.

Despite the evident tension and perhaps with the objective of gaining some time and project a lenient image, the Moroccan authorities agreed to negotiate with a committee of representatives of the camp (composed by nine members, men and women). The contacts were held initially with Mohamed Jelmous, who had been to that date the *Wali* (governor) of El Aaiún, and later with a commission of the Home Ministry integrated by three *Walis* of the central administration. Finally, the last phase of the negotiations was led by the Home Minister in person, Taïeb Cherkaoui. On November 4 a basic agreement was reached, by which the Moroccan State pledged to address progressively the housing and employment demands of the protesters. The creation of a joint commission was planned, with the task of channelling the claims and building a census of impoverished people. In principle, such measures should have been in force from November 8, but none of the commitments were fulfilled, since the camp was dismantled that very same day⁶.

The operation took place early in the morning and without a chance for the displaced population to organise the evacuation. Chaos developed among those trying to run away from water cannons and tear gas, and those trying to organise resistance against the State security forces. According to Moroccan authorities, the intervention could not be delayed, because the camp was under control of criminals and traffickers who held part of the population against their will⁷. However, Saharawi and Moroccan Human Rights organisations question this version⁸. According to them, it is difficult to understand how four *Walis* from the Home Office and the Minister himself had been negotiating with the spokespersons of the camp if they considered that it was hijacked by dangerous individuals. Another fact disproving the official discourse is the report published by Amnesty International about Gdeim Izik, where it is highlighted that the number of participants in the protest was oscillating along the week, implying that Saharawi people could travel between the camp and El Aaiún without overwhelming problems, despite the check points⁹.

The breaking of the security forces into the camp generated an extremely violent response among many of the displaced young people¹⁰. Violence spread shortly later to El Aaiún, where the lack of information and rumours induced people to believe that a massacre had happened during the eviction. The confuse information and the lack of police brought chaos to the city centre, where barricades were erected, and public buildings, shops, bank offices and cars of Moroccan citizens were plundered and burned¹¹. During the riots a Saharawi young man with Spanish nationality died after being run over by a police car, which amplified the strikes against shops and public and private properties. The arrival of the bulk of the Moroccan security forces back from Gdeim Izik stopped the violence unleashed by the Saharawi population at El Aaiún, but during the evening Moroccan civilians under police protection launched into plundering and

5 The Spanish journalists were the worst hit by this decision. Rabat accused them of conducting a campaign to damage the international image of Morocco.

6 ASVDH- report: « sur le campement de Gdeim Izik et les événements qui ont suivi son démantèlement ». LAAYOUNE / Sahara Occidental, 4 Janvier 2011, p.10.

7 Among these groups also violent young men belonging to Frente Polisario were included.

8 E.g. CODESA, ASVDH and AMDH.

9 A.I. report: "Morocco/Western Sahara Rights trampled amidst protests, violence and repression", p. 4.

10 Several police officers are killed in the camp and during the following riots; among them at least one had his throat cut.

11 Among the buildings worst damaged in the riots are the Court of appeal, the Energy and Metals Office, three schools, a clinic and the Investments Centre.

destruction of shops and houses belonging to the Saharawi population. The brutal onslaught on the camp and the subsequent repression of the riots at El Aaiún by the security forces led several Saharawi members of CORCAS –consultative organism on issues related to the Sahara created by Mohamed VI–, to complain against the management of the crisis by the Moroccan government.

The human cost of the operation of dismantling the camp and the subsequent riots at El Aaiún is clearly excessive. At the end of the day the number of injured, mostly Saharawis, was of several hundred, while the number of casualties rose to 13 –11 members of the Moroccan security forces and two Saharawis. On the other hand, the search of the instigators of the revolt engulfed El Aaiún in a non-declared emergency state. Assaults on houses without court order, beatings and mistreatments in police stations, extra-judicial arrests, etc. lasted for weeks after November 8. Although most arrested people were released a few hours later, around 130 persons were transferred to the Black Prison at El Aaiún¹² and another group of 24 persons to the military prison of Sale (Morocco). All people belonging to the first group were released on parole within the first six months of their imprisonment. However, more than one year after the revolt, all members of the second group are still in prison waiting for military trial, accused of formation and integration of criminal band, possession of weapons, take of hostages and attack on the State security.

Consequences of the 2010 revolt

Gdeim Izik can be considered as a rupture with the previous situation, especially concerning the organisation of the Saharawi population and the emergence of new forms of struggle, but also regarding the opening of a breach in the community coexistence of Saharawis and *Dakhilis*¹³, on which the Moroccan authorities had prided themselves in the past.

On the other hand, Gdeim Izik also shows continuity in the way the Moroccan State addresses the Sahara conflict. Despite the serious social problems which explain the unrest of the population and led to the camp protest, the approach of Rabat has been putting security on top of any other measures which could have helped to escape from the usual deadlock of this conflict.

A few weeks after the dismantling of the camp Khalil Dkhilm, of Saharawi origin, was appointed new *Wali* at El Aaiún. However, this measure was not accompanied by deeper reforms which could have solved the problems at the heart of the unrest, e.g. facilitating access to housing and employment to Saharawis, and implementing measures of social pacification such as creating joint spaces to promote mutual respect and knowledge between populations.

Therefore, the importance of Gdeim Izik does not lie in how the camp protest developed, but in the changes that this action triggered *a posteriori* in the Saharawi population and in general in the Western Sahara. Here, it is necessary to distinguish between four different effects:

1. The renewal of the collective awareness of struggle, and the use of new strategies complementing the

12 The figures of arrested people are not accurate either. According to workers of the Moroccan Foreign Affairs Ministry, the number of arrested is 77. However, the Ministry of Justice reports 138. The director of the Penitentiary Administration speaks about 117 arrested, while the Crown General Attorney at El Aaiún reports 115. A.I. report: ‘ Morocco/Western Sahara Rights trampled amidst protests, violence and repression ’.

13 Any non-Saharawi person settled in the region.

traditional political claims.

2. The inrush in the public scene of a generation of young people suffering alarmingly high unemployment rates and lacking a promising outlook, that without being politically organised tend to come together and carry increasingly radical actions.
3. Break of the fragile coexistence between *Dakhilis* and Saharawis, as demonstrated by the successive clashes between the two communities from November 2010 on.
4. Gdeim Izik impacts similarly the Saharawi refugee camps at Tinduf, exasperating those (specially young people) who, for years, had been demanding to resume the armed struggle, but also conveying to the Saharawi leadership democratic claims, which are also observed in other Arab revolutionary contexts.

Revitalisation of the struggle in Western Sahara

The development and the strength of the camp surprised everyone, including Saharawis participating in the protests. Despite the lack of infrastructures and resources, as well as the chaotic situation characterising the first days, the displaced population managed to organise a large scale event and coordinate in record time with the objective of solving the most elemental organization problems. Gdeim Izik represents, in this sense, an instrument which allowed them to gauge their strength and, simultaneously, revitalise the foundations of the citizen mobilisation, which had been restricted to a few groups still active since the 2005 'Intifada' and whose new referents were the Human Rights activists.

From 1975, when Spain abandoned Western Sahara leaving the territory to Morocco and Mauritania, many Saharawis who stayed in the occupied territories acted as combatants or supported the Polisario Front in its struggle against Morocco. The construction during the 80's of the defensive wall separating the Western Sahara between the occupied zone and the so-called 'liberated territories' controlled by the Polisario Front isolated the Saharawi cities and population from any contact with the guerrilla, and therefore the leading role of the resistance was centralised on the other side of the wall, Ruíz Miguel (1995). The 1991 peace agreement opened a new phase characterised by a tense calm in the refugee camps. All the attention still converged on Tinduf, although the Saharawis in the occupied territories were the ones who, with a minimal organisation, continued with their particular resistance. During the last ten years, recurrent unrests both in the cities of Sahara and Morocco have been staged by the Saharawi population, students and Human Rights activists. Together with these frequent protests, three critical moments separated by 5-6 years can be distinguished, when the conflict was reanimated and mutations in the struggle strategies took place.

The first and less well-known event took place in September 1999, and was named by the Polisario Front as the first Saharawi 'Intifada'. The protest rallies at El Aaiún were harshly crushed by the security forces under command of Briss Basri, Home Minister and strongman of the late Hasan II. The claims of the population focussed mainly on economic issues. In fact, at that point, problems such as unemployment, lack of housing and concentration of wealth in a few hands sparked off the social conflict, Sobero (2010). However, the political question was also at the core of the protests. The crisis exploded just a few weeks after the crowning of Mohamed VI, and can be considered as a warning to the new king that the situation

in the Sahara was still as explosive as during the harsh years of repression experienced under his father Hassan II.

In May 2005 a new series of protests started in Western Sahara, which continued until the end of the year. The so-called second Saharawi 'Intifada' had a clearly political nature (the claim of the self-determination right and independence for Western Sahara) and a larger international impact. The crushing of a demonstration against the transfer to the Agadir prison of a Saharawi prisoner accused of drug dealing and abusing the Crown triggered a wave of demonstrations proclaiming independence slogans, which were in turn severely repressed at El Aaiún, Smara and Dajla. The unrests extended to several Moroccan cities such as Agadir, Casablanca, Rabat or Fez, where the police clashed violently with Saharawi students¹⁴.

Finally, 40 demonstrators, and among them some well-known Human Rights and activists like Ali Salem Tamek, Brahim Noumria and Aminetou Haidar, were violently arrested and tried under the accusation of breaching peace, illegal association, unrest instigation and damage of public property. They were sentenced to 6 months in prison, although the intense campaign of political pressure from abroad forced their release in early 2006¹⁵. During this period, the imprisoned activists and several Human Rights organisations denounced the practice of torture in police stations and prisons, arbitrary transfers of prisoners, inhuman arrest conditions and systematic mistreatment¹⁶.

After the 2005 events, Western Sahara disappeared again from the headlines of the international media. However, the decrease of the intensity of the protests does not mean its end, mainly because the serious political, social and economic problems persist, and the only measures undertaken by the Moroccan administration consist on reinforcing security and repression machinery. The Western Sahara did not come back to the international headlines until 2009, when the Human Rights activist Aminetou Haidar began a hunger strike at the Lanzarote airport¹⁷, showing again that despite of the external invisibility, the conflict continues and is far from being solved. The visibilisation of the conflict at international level broke with four years of oblivion, causing a reactivation of the struggle in Western Sahara. In fact, during 2010 and thanks to the momentum generated by the Haidar case, the protests resumed with renewed intensity. Such is the case for example of the trial against seven Human Rights activists –the so-called 'group of the seven'– arrested on October 8, 2009, at the airport of Casablanca after visiting the Tinduf refugee camps, accused of "attempting on the integrity and sovereignty of Morocco". The trial was delayed throughout 2010 as a result of numerous clashes between Saharawis and *Dakhilis* during the hearings, Gomez Martín (2011: 159).

The hunger strike of Haidar caused an acceleration of events. The intense social unrest originated by socio-economical discrimination and the deadlocked political conflict, besides classical demonstrations and rallies, gave rise to new forms of protest such as the one at Gdeim Izik. Be failed or successful attempts, the construction of camp-cities in the outskirts of the large urban centres of the Western Sahara managed to effectively attract the attention of the world, question Rabat's 'development' policies and shed light on

14 In October 2005 a student was killed in clashes with the police. The Moroccan authorities reported the killing as an accident, whereas the Saharawi Human Right groups denounced police brutality during the arrest as the cause of death.

15 More information about the 2005 protests can be found at www.arso.org/intifada2005.htm.

16 AMDH- Rapport relatif aux événements qu'a connus la ville de Laâyoune à la fin du mois de mai. 15.10.2005. Can be accessed at: www.arso.org/AMDH2005.htm.

17 After having his passport seized and being expelled from the airport of El Aaiún, Haidar was forced to enter Spain through the airport of Lanzarote. Her decision of carrying out a hunger strike, which will last for six months, causes a major diplomatic crisis between Morocco and Spain, which reanimated with full intensity the sleeping Saharawi conflict.

the deep corruption of the local Saharawi and Moroccan elites, for decades one of the major curses of the Sahara, (Berona Castellanda (2011: 6). Gdeim Izik succeeded in encouraging new forms of struggle with a socio-economic leitmotiv. However, these questions did not only impact the occupied territories¹⁸. These are intrinsic problems of the Moroccan State, as shown by the claims of the young men and women taking part a few months after the Gdeim Izik events in the demonstrations that shook the Moroccan society within the context of the so-called ‘Arab revolutions’.

Finally, the Western Sahara 2010 revolt also brought new behaviour dynamics and relational attitudes, which to date had not been taken into account. The unrests were more and more frequent and are accompanied by intense violence. Now it is not just about Saharawi demonstrations harshly crushed by Moroccan security forces, but also direct clashes between different communities coexisting in the territory, caused by the development of an unprecedented tense atmosphere between Saharawis and *Dakhilis*.

Role of the Saharawi youth in the new wave of protests

One of the most relevant characteristics of the democratic revolutions across the Magreb and Machrek from the beginning of 2011 is the massive participation of young people, acting as the driving engine of the protests and spreading the unrest among other sectors of the population. The major role played by the middle and low class youth is not random. As pointed out by Khader (2011), together with the demographic factors (important decrease of the birth rate from the 80’s and an extremely young population¹⁹), there has been an increase in the educational levels, leading to the formation of a large working force with an important consume potential, which could contribute to the economic development of these countries. However, this reality is in open conflict with the productive structure of decadent and corrupted regimes governed for decades by oligarchs who amassed huge fortunes and kept their power through the use of force with the approval of the West. Thus, the current situation in the Arab countries cannot be disconnected from the context of global economic crisis, nor from the social contradictions generated by the neo-liberal system, which in the case of the Arab countries has allowed, among other consequences, the plundering of natural resources and the deepening of serious social fractures between the working and middle classes and the elites controlling power, Massiah (2011). The crisis of the familiar economies, which hardly supported the labour market in these countries, the huge weight of the informal sector, the incapacity of adapting the employment offer to the increasing educational level of the working force, the barriers set by Europe to migration, etc., constrain the landscape of a young population who has identified the destruction of the old regimes as the only way of transforming their own future.

In Western Sahara, the 2011 protests were organised by unemployed youths, in contrast to the 2005 unrests, when the Human Rights activists played a leading role. The lack of information about the Saharawi youth does not impede to establish common characteristics with the youths of neighbour countries. Up to a point, and taking into account the specificities of each country, it can be stated that the Saharawi youth suffer from the same problems than the youths of other countries of the region: a not very promising outlook, high unemployment rates, poverty, political repression, etc. All these issues add to the Saharawi national issue and the ethnic discrimination, which has been continuously increasing during the last decade.

18 The difference between the Saharawi revolt and the one happening months later in Morocco lies precisely in the complexity added by the unresolved national question to the Saharawi claims of social and economic reforms.

19 45% of the population of the Arab countries is under 20 years old, in contrast to 25% in the European Union.

On the other hand, and similarly to neighbour countries, this generation grew in a cultural context marked by strong changes, by which the traditional representatives (political parties, unions, etc) have lost their appeal and capability for mass mobilisation Massiah (2011). However, despite the pretended spontaneity of the protests highlighted by the media, a careful analysis of the events shows more complex scenarios in which the masses playing the leading role have been supported by -or sought support from- traditional sectors of the dissidence such as opposition parties or trade unions.

The marginal presence of the Polisario Front in the occupied territories and the ban of political parties with discourses opposed to the interests of the Moroccan state regarding the territorial dispute, forced the Saharawi youth seeking to participate in the decision making processes to join local regime-friendly or simply tolerated parties, or Human Rights associations, which are also banned but have some operational capability and external support, Veguilla (2009: 106-107). The current important social support for Human Rights associations and the transformation of its most charismatic members into icons of the resistance against occupation, has finally given them a political specific weight, thus opening the political representation to other actors and displacing the Polisario Front from the hegemonic role that it had played between the mid 70's and the end of the 90's.

Repression has played a key role in the reorganisation of the Saharawi political space during the last decade, training its participants in distinguishing clearly the frontier between what is considered as a forbidden and a tolerated protest, that is, susceptible of not causing a repressive response from the Moroccan authorities. This is where the contribution of the Saharawi youth to the reconfiguration of the resistance political field has been most significant: the replacement (only apparent) of ethnic and political references by others linked to the territory and the right to economic and social development of the region, Veguilla (2009: 97-98). Thus, during the last few years a number of associations have been created by Saharawi youths with the objective of defending specific interests or denouncing particular situations of injustice²⁰.

Gdeim Izik was also one of such apparently non-political mobilisations considered by the social actors as legitimate, although carrying an underlying political component evident both to the participants and to the Moroccan authorities, thus causing that many actions ended up in riots and repression. As pointed out by the Organisation marocaine des Droits Humains: 'It is not possible to speak about social claims of citizens ignoring their political claims. Indeed, the social issue in the background is political, because is a direct consequence of the damage caused in the region by social discrimination and plundering of natural resources'²¹.

Finally, another important element characterising the development of the protests during the last decade in Western Sahara, with a direct link to the participation of young people, is the use of the new information and communication technologies: Internet, blogs, social networks, etc. Such technologies allow the participation of the citizenry in the construction of news in real time and the exchange of information through personal testimonies, videos, pictures, etc., facilitating the rapid diffusion of events without intermediaries which could adulterate the news.

20 Such is the case of the foundation in April 2005 in Dajla of the association called 'La liste pour l'égalité', created by unemployed Saharawi youths in order to denounce the reduction of the fishing licenses and the lack of access to them by the local population. Despite the evident identity component of this protest, the Moroccan authorities and press interpreted it as a sectorial conflict far from any political or territorial claim (Veguilla, 2009).

21 AMDH report : 2005, « Rapport relatif aux événements qu'a connus la ville de Laâyoune à la fin du mois de mai », p.8.

The use of this type of instruments in the Sahara makes possible –specially from the 2005 ‘2nd Intifada’ on–, a better coordination of the actions, reinforcing the discussion and exchange of ideas between non-conformist youths or establishing links with the exterior to by-pass the informative blockade set by Morocco. Although the use of Internet, social networks, YouTube, etc. is still limited due to the lack of resources, these tools were key during the weeks of protests of Gdeim Izik in organising the camp and also in providing the only alternative information channel to the official Moroccan media.

The rupture of the coexistence myth: ethnic tensions and racism

The unrests at El Aaiún the same day the camp was dismantled had a profound impact on the relationship between the populations settling the Western Sahara. Actually, the clashes between communities on November 8, 2010, were the result of a situation that had been developing for a long time, and question the artificial nature of a coexistence which the Moroccan authorities have been trying to mythicise over and over again.

The breach in the population goes beyond the Western Sahara independence issue and its total annexation by Morocco. From the occupation of the territory in 1975, the Moroccan State implemented a series of economic and social policies which on the long term have generated a number of perverse effects. In this sense, with the objective of ‘moroccanise’ the territory, Rabat promoted the transfer of population from Morocco by means of incentives and generous welfare policies. On the other hand, measures were adopted to offer important positions in the Moroccan public administration to those Saharawi ex-combatants abandoning the Polisario Front discipline from the 90’s on. Finally, a third group, the so-called inhabitants of Al Wahda (‘Union’) complete the populations subsidised and supported by the Moroccan State in the occupied territories. This group is composed by several tens of thousands of members of Saharawi tribes living outside the territory under dispute, which from 1991 on have been encouraged to settle in provisional camps in the periphery of El Aaiún, Smara, Bojador and Dajla, with the objective of being integrated in the identification lists of MINURSO, Bennani, (2011). Since the referendum never took place, such camps have turned into permanent dormitory towns perpetually subsidised by the Moroccan State.

Such biased welfare policies finally convinced the native Saharawis that the access to decent housing, state subsidies or basic services completely depends on the ethnic origin or opinion about the Sahara conflict. Therefore, the usual political tension and the permanent feeling of injustice regarding the distribution of resources have been joined in the last year by ethnic and tribal tensions promoting dangerous racist attitudes between communities. A proof of this are the clashes at Dajla between young *Dakhilis* and Saharawis during the celebration of the ‘Mer et désert’ festival in February 2011, or the riots after an amateur football game in the same city in September 2011, where 7 people were killed.

As stated by the Moroccan journalist Driss Bennani (2011), “the total absence of mutual understanding –which was never promoted by the Moroccan authorities–, increases the impression that violence, more and more raw and intense, can reappear with the most insignificant incident”. The violence between communities results, therefore, from the total lack of understanding between populations, but mainly from prejudices promoted during three decades, and from the policies implemented in the Western Sahara by the Moroccan authorities: exploitation of natural resources without profit for the native population, introduction of new populations encouraged by generous subsidies, segregation of populations, transformation of

the Saharawi population in a marginalised ethnic minority, use of subsidy policies as a coercion to force Saharawis to assume the Moroccan presence, state subsidies not driven by socio-economic criteria, etc. In summary, the rise of the ethnic factor as a new variable in the conflict is an additional danger which could contribute to destabilise the region permanently.

Effects of Gdeim Izik in the refugee camps

Gdeim Izik created a double tension among Sahrawi refugees in Tinduf (Algeria). First, the protests and the violent dismantling of the camp in Western Sahara reinforced the pressure of Sahrawi refugees on the Polisario Front. The Sahrawi population demanded stronger action and giving up the unsuccessful diplomacy way. From the beginning of the 2000 decade, an increasing number of Saharawi refugees have joined their voices to those of the people who as early as in the 90's already questioned the peace process opened in 1991, openly criticising the deadlocking of the conflict generated by the fruitless negotiations between the Polisario Front and Morocco. Similar to what happened in Western Sahara, in the last ten years several events sparked off the indignation among the population of the refugee camps, leading to more and more critical stances against the action of the Saharawi authorities. These events can be considered as moments of rupture or loss of hope.

The first of these events took place in 2001, when the organisers of the Paris-Dakar rally decided to pass through the liberated territories without consulting the Polisario Front. The Saharawi authorities reacted promptly spurred on by the critical views within their population, threatening with taking arms again and mobilising people with an unmatched intensity in a decade. Later, the Saharawi government thwarted its own call, coinciding with the collapse of the 1st Baker plan. Thus, the freezing of the belligerent actions and the new failure of the diplomacy caused a deep frustration and unrest among the population.

The second event happened in 2003. The Polisario Front accepted, with the frontal opposition from a sector of the refugees, the conditions imposed by the 2nd Baker plan²². However, it was this time the Moroccan government who incomprehensibly rejected the settlement. The diplomatic way lost its appeal for the Saharawi population, and the discourse favouring taking back arms was embraced by a majority.

The third event was the so-called second Saharawi 'Intifada', beginning in spring 2005 and shaking the Saharawi society as a whole. The repression in the occupied territories gave rise to additional tensions in the refugee camps, where the young population demands the Polisario Front a convincing response. The mobilisation of troops and reservists in the liberated territories was quick, but the Polisario Front was in a difficult situation. On one side, it was not convenient calling to arms, considering their scarce military resources and international support; but on the other hand they feared losing support among their own refugee population, exasperated of living at the Hamada and ready to go to war if that could break the deadlock. From 2005, a new development took place with the coming into being of loosely organised groups of young people, both within the migratory context and in the refugee camps. Such groups tried to offer support to the demonstrators in Western Sahara, and made use of blogs and social networks to convey their ideas

22 After the blockade of the process of identification of the Saharawi population, which should have led to the celebration of a self-determination referendum, United Nations tries twice through its former special envoy to the Sahara, James Baker, the approval of two frame agreements for the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict: the 1st and 2nd Baker plans (2001 and 2003). Both plans propose a two step process: in first place, a 5 year transitory period in which the territory could enjoy a provisional autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty, and a second phase when a referendum could be celebrated about the self-determination of the Saharawi people.

about the need of rising in arms again, Gómez Martín and Omet (2009: 210).

Between 2005 and 2011 the tension in the camps escalated considerably. The lack of future perspectives pushed many youths to join the Polisario army, while others drifted between idleness and participation in smuggling networks, Caratini (2007). Considering this distressing scene, it is understandable that every time that unrest emerged in the cities of Sahara the young people reacted by putting pressure into their own government to finally break with the pacifist stances it has defended from the beginning of the 90's. In this sense, the resumption of negotiations with the Moroccan representatives at Manhasset (New York), just after the dismantling of Gdeim Izik, meant a big blow for many, a non understandable action lacking any logic an reinforcing the total divorce between part of the Saharawi population and the foreign policy of their government²³.

However, the discontent of the Saharawi population with the political direction of the Polisario Front was not new. The critical voices rose for the first time during the previous decade, in a context of a series of desertions of former cadres of the Polisario and external and internal discrediting campaigns orchestrated from Morocco. Thus, the suspicion of betrayal impregnates any criticism exerted against the actions of the government or the direction of the Polisario. Gdeim Izik and the revolutionary context in the Magreb and Machrek encouraged some shy criticism within the camps. With the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in March and the start of the protests in Morocco by the 'February 20' movement, on March 5, 2011, a demonstration was organised at Rabuni, political and administrative centre of the refugee camps. The call was made by the self-denominated 'Revolutionary Youths' group, who did not claim for the resignation of the prime minister Mohamed Abdelaziz, but asked for a stronger support of the Polisario Front to the Saharawis living in the occupied territories and reforms in the government. Among these demanded reforms were changes in the administration of the State and the Judiciary, putting an end to the corruption in the government institutions, fighting misuse of public funds, participation of the youth in the political activity and a reform of the electoral law allowing voters to have a stronger influence in the election of the MPs and the president of the Republic²⁴.

Although the Saharawi authorities did not forbid the demonstration, the official propaganda against it and the suspicion of manipulation by Morocco to create internal disputes, discouraged the participation of young people in the event²⁵. Simultaneously, the demonstration call was endorsed by the Jat Achahid movement, formed by a group of dissident Saharawis based outside the camps. Their support increased the suspicions, and even more when they sent a letter to the Algerian government asking for authorisation to access the camps accompanied by independent journalists and members of Human Rights groups to prevent a potential repression by the Saharawi authorities – a repression that, however, never happened²⁶. In view of so much pressure, it could be expected that those seconding the call carried with them all sorts

23 The spokesperson of the Polisario front in Spain, Bucharaya Beyoun, confirmed in an interview in Madrid on September 21, 2011, the difficulties of the Saharawi authorities to convey the reasons for such stance to the population. The Polisario Front considered that not attending to a negotiation round programmed much in advance would benefit Morocco in a moment when its international allies were criticising its approach to the Sahara issue and its questionable Human Rights record. Accordingly, the Polisario Front understood the meeting at Manhasset as a political manoeuvre with two objectives: certifying the compromise of Saharawis with the negotiation process and second, forcing Morocco to explain to the international community what happened at Gdeim Izik. In his own words: "In politics you have two know how to work. I think that what the Polisario Front did was well studied, well measured and was right for the future. That is, not breaking with the negotiation process as Morocco wanted us to do, and force them to face in the United Nations the consequences of what happened at Gdeim Izik".

24 www.afrol.com/es/articulos/37531.

25 The most optimist attendance estimations are of 150-200 people.

26 *Ibid.*

of nationalist paraphernalia and pro-Polisario symbols. Such behaviour looks like a clear attempt to reject any attempt by Morocco of manipulating the rally, but at the same time, was a way to rebut the official accusations of being pro-Morocco or trying to support the Moroccan discourse about the existence of internal dissent among the Saharawi refugees.

This serves as an example of the difficulties of organising a protest movement inside the refugee camps. In this sense, the democratic character and the importance given by this society and its government to freedom of speech have been damaged by the presence of the bitter enemy, Morocco, whose omnipresence has finally favoured the perpetuation of the old elites in power. Despite the failure of the demonstration on March 5, the history leading to this event should not be missed, nor its future consequences underestimated. This is indeed a proof of the tensions and internal debates within the Saharawi society both in the refugee camps and the occupied territories, as well as within the migration (mainly in Spain). The voices claiming louder the need of adapting to new times and giving a democratic impulse to the Saharawi State clash with the evident existence of destabilising groups, but mainly with the fear of a critical interpretation of the official discourse favouring Rabat's interest, or simply of a breakdown of the status quo maintained during more than 35 years in the power circles of the Saharawi movement.

Conclusion

After a detailed analysis of the events and the aftermath of Gdeim Izik in the occupied territories and in the Saharawi society as a whole, it can be observed that this way of protest, although innovative, is the logical product of a process of political and social transformation which was on its way from the beginning of the 2000 decade. In other words: instead of a rupture with the previous situation, it would be more appropriate to speak about an evolution to a new scenario culminating in the 'Dignity' camp and marking the approach for the next years in Western Sahara.

The camp introduced three major innovative elements. Regarding the participant subjects, it confirmed the irruption of new actors, led by the unemployed youths and the Human Rights activists, who enriched the Saharawi nonconformity. Regarding the struggle instruments, the jaima (tent) emerges as the principal element of the pacific protests²⁷. The jaima turns this way into the symbol of the Saharawi culture, an element anchored to the land, its most visible and exportable identity sign. Innovation also shows up in the methodology of the protests: camps are placed in spaces close enough to cities to facilitate the supply of essentials, but, on the other hand, free and outside the urban orbit and the control of the local and even the state authorities, Berona Castañeda (2011: 6). Such strategy allows large people gatherings, creates actions with significant internal and external impact and, most importantly, implies at a symbolic level the use of a fundamental space, which defines the Saharawi identity and culture: the desert.

The marginalisation in wealth distribution, the corruption of a local elite emerged from non transparent elections and controlling all the sources of funding, which impedes a real participation of the Saharawi society in the decision making processes and the distribution of resources, are key elements to understand Gdeim Izik. But another key factor is the displacement of the nonconformist actions from the political to the socio-economic sphere wherever they are more tolerated and even legitimate. This does not mean that

27 Already in the 1999 crisis a camp had been built at the Echdeira Square of El Aaiún.

the political issue is no longer present, but that it appears surrounded by new discourses and new forms of social nonconformity, which make the conflict even more complex if possible.

Although it can be stated that Gdeim Izik generated a multitude of changes in the Saharawi society, at the same time the basic problem persists. A proof of this is that the Moroccan regime has made the same mistake of imposing stability in the region by only reinforcing the security and repression machinery. But the deadlock of the conflict also shows in the lack of convergence between the Moroccan and Saharawi nonconformity, which would have had important consequences. What would have happened if the Saharawi youth would have joined the 2011 Moroccan protests led by the 'February 20' movement? This movement, together with the experience at Gdeim Izik, could have made the common interests of the Saharawi and Moroccan youths converge, facilitating an approach of the two populations. However, this did not happen, and it is not even considered as a possibility. Neither the Saharawi population felt concerned by the youths demonstrating in Morocco, nor any of the reforms claimed by the 'February 20' movement mentioned the solution of the Saharawi conflict –since as a matter of fact the Moroccan youth considers Sahara a part of Morocco. Nevertheless, the total lack of connection between both movements is remarkable, since together with the autocracy, corruption, social inequality and lack of freedom denounced by the Moroccan youth, the heaviest burden compromising the future of Morocco both at economic and political level still is the undefined delay of the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict.

Abbreviations

ASVDH: Association sahraouie des victimes des violations graves des Droits de l'Homme

AMDH: Association marocaine des Droits de l'Homme

CODESA: Collectif de défenseurs Sahraouis des Droits de l'Homme

CORCAS: Conseil royal consultatif des affaires sahariennes

FRENTE POLISARIO: Frente de liberación nacional de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro

MINURSO: United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

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15M AND “INDIGNADO” MOBILIZATIONS

Antecedents, Achievements and Challenges of the Spanish 15M Movement

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Abstract

Historical antecedents of the sociopolitical participative movements in Spain since the early seventies of last century. Though without trying to be very exhaustive, we will present some of the social movements which have used methods and action strategies that, by their form or contents, we can consider as a precedent of the ones used by the present protest movements that we denominate collectively as “indignados” - indigneous movement”, indignant movement, or “15M movement” (the plural-international and restrictive-national versions respectively). Emergence of the 15M movement: differences and similarities with historical and modern social movements. Achievements and failures of the 15 Movement. Some of the consequences that have affected the democratic political system and more specifically the social movements, trade unions and left winged parties. Future scenarios and challenges.

Keywords

15M movement, citizen involvement, nonprofits associations, social movements.

Immediate causes

My intention is not to carry out a profound analysis of the causes of the birth of the 15M movement, why it came up just in a particular moment – in the middle of the campaign for the municipal and autonomic elections in May 2011, but I do want to focus on the confluence of particular factors and situations that made its appearance in Spain possible. Here are some of the most significant ones:

1. The feeling of “having enough”, of bearing an almost four year lasting crisis that is causing ever bigger hardships for a growing part of the population (growing structural unemployment, a society under home mortgage and debt).
2. The general perception that the crisis has been caused by sectors and economic groups (Bank Entities and international speculators...) that are still leading the economy and getting richer. All this allowed, if not fostered by, governments and main political parties. By the political *establishment*.
3. Discredit of the “political class” in the power, which connects with certain “anti-political” roots (against political parties) of the Spanish society which date back from the Franco regime, but which also have its antecedents in historical anarchism, libertarian communist, or revolutionary traditions. This “political class” has become, according to the CIS (Official Sociological Investigations Centre) surveys, the third most important problem for the Spanish population for the first time after the demo-

cratic transition. This bad reputation of the political class has also been favoured by the emergence of numerous instances of corruption, favoritism and waste of public spending... an image that has been distorted and magnified by the mass media oriented to a neoliberal discourse or by extreme right positions. When the economy is growing and the general perception is that it is going well, these aspects can be tolerated, but with the crisis they can't.

4. Some sectors were observing with admiration or envy the mass mobilizations in Arab countries, the changes in Iceland, the general strikes against social policies reductions in France and Greece.
5. The new technologies, ITCs and virtual social networks have eventually enabled the visualization of unfair events and situations, a quicker and sometimes also better communication, specially in the case of "airing the dirty laundry", such as the uncovering of confidential papers by Wikileaks. They also have provided a better access to the knowledge of alternatives, proposals and calls for mobilisation... even though all these are mixed with the intoxication of information.
6. They have also been the tools that have enabled the development of unitary movements' platforms and the immediate precedents 15 M movement in Spain: Social Movements of the Madrid Social Forum (2005-11), *V de Vivienda* (Housing Movements, 2005- 2007), Anti-Boulogne students' Movement (2007-09), Youth without future/without fear (2010-11), *Mesas de Convergencia Ciudadana* (Citizen Convergence Board, 2010), *Democracia Real Ya DRY* (Real Democracy Now, 2011).

The 15M movement goes beyond its first organizers of the 15th of May demonstration. There is a before and after in the political and social movements since the 15th of May, 2011, in Spain at least. The m15M inaugurates a new cycle in the history of protest movements. Internationally it will probably write a page in the history of 2011 or "the Arab Spring" just as "May 68" was identified with the social movements of that year.

Among the roots of the m15M we should also take into account some generational changes: a new generation of young people, the most qualified and technologically skilled of Spanish history but, with the fewest resources, the fewest professional and future perspectives and the fewest possibilities to carry out their independent life projects.

We have to bear in mind that the economic crisis was during the first years bearable for the most part of the Spanish population. Why?: it was alleviated by family support, savings, mutual support, subsidies and public aid (unemployment subsidies, Agreements between Companies and Trade Unions for *Expedientes de regulación de empleo* - ERE – Employment Regulation Agreements, early retirements,..). But when the situation remains a long time these resources are diploid and unemployment becomes structural, massive and permanent, without any visible future exit, the support networks begin to break and the situation gets even more unbearable and explosive. For instance some figures reveal that the number of people living under poverty rates has increased from a 19% in 2007 to over 21% in 2010 (data from Caritas, always referred to relative poverty: population with an income under 60% of national average, a inequality index), and according to some studies, we would have reached a 23% of the population in 2011. In any case these are the highest poverty and inequality indexes of the recent Spanish democratic period since the 70s. The recent results of the researches carried out in the OCDE countries reveal the gradual increase of inequality during the last 30 years in most of them....

We should also ask ourselves why during the years of high economic growth and the *Spanish miracle* the relative poverty index was never under 19% (from 1996 to 2007 the GDP and the employment did not stop growing). But this question is not the subject of this article.

Good ideas and virtues of the 15M Movement

Though without trying to be very exhaustive, we will present in the next section some of the social movements which have used methods and action strategies that, by their form or contents we can consider as a precedent of the ones used by the present protest movements that we denominate collectively as “indignados” - indignez-vous movement”, indignant, the plural-international versions which include with all its differences, particularities and similarities from Occupy Wall Street to all the occupations of public squares throughout the world. The international mobilisation on the 15th of October, 2011 constituted their common nexus. And we use the term 15M to refer to the restrictive-national version. The so called Arab Spring, despite of being a clear precedent of the 15M and sharing some common characteristics, like the occupation of public squares, mobilisations with a pacific intention, cannot in my opinion be included in the “Indignados” movements without any clarification, due to their different contexts and objectives, as in these countries the activists and demonstrators are fighting for a minimum formal democracy. The evolution of these Arab movements, which have caused hundreds of victims, killed by their own government security forces, and which in many cases are still bearing a brutal criminal repression, differentiates them from the movements in the western countries or those countries with formal democracies, where they have focused on the fight against the crisis and the complaints about the crisis management, with the characteristics that will be later described, a lot of them common to the different *indignant* movements and copied from the Spanish 15M. We can affirm though that all these movements, from the Arab movements to the 15M, coincide not only in formal aspects but also in their vindication of a more extensive and better democracy.

Before comparing it with other social movements of the Spanish recent history, we are going to have a look at some of the “good ideas” and virtues of the m15M:

1. To draw the people disappointed with the system towards ideas and values from the left, or progressist and democratic ideologies. The population is tired of seeing how the social and economic inequalities, unemployment, evictions are increasing while those who provoked the crisis are not punished and the wealthy get richer. Until the emergence of the 15M the increase of reactionary ideas and xenophobe actions was evident. This trend was at the peak: extreme political parties, *independent* electoral platforms or associations, positions shared by some sections of the Partido Popular and CiU....
2. The 15M has drawn a great part of anti-system groups to more pacifist positions, showing the effectiveness of the joined action of active and pacific civil resistance.
3. The successful spread of the movement to neighbourhoods, villages and towns expanding it and enabling a reconstruction of the first 15M action, the Sol occupation camp site, in the outskirts and suburbs.

4. As a unitary movement, the camp sites and the assemblies in Sol and the neighbourhood communities have contributed to improve the relationships between the different progressist social movements (feminist, ecologist, neighbours, anti-evictions). These actions and performances have shown them that it is more what joins them together than what moves them apart.
5. Joined action and political, social and generational pluralism "fostering the joined action over ideological debates" (Naredo and Villasante, 2011). The never-ending ideological debate so popular in the left-winged environments, is a paralyzing handicap. The ideological plurality is essential to the left.
6. The demand for the first time of a Participative Democracy, as one of the main claims of the movement (from the 4 initial claims), and what is most important, its implementation through real practices, showing that their claims (other forms of doing politics) were directly related with how these practices are implemented. Organization in assemblies, direct participation and internal participative democracy have been the identity signs of the new movement from its origins. This has been one of the major achievements of the 15M movement, although it also has its pros and cons (operative difficulties and slow decision taking)
7. The successful use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), even the development of new "mass self communication", according to Castell's terminology (2010:25).
8. The creation of a new sign language (based on the sign languages used by deaf communities) which makes dialogue and participation in assemblies easier, providing a more pacific form of public expression
9. The capacity of the movement to organize big mobilisations (for example the 15j and 15-O with hundred thousands of demonstrators) with few economic resources and without trade unions delegates with time-off rights. It has succeeded in bringing as many, if not more, people to demonstrate in the streets than any General Strike, even though when these are organized with the participation of thousands of workers' representatives, members of political parties, councillors, etc with time-off rights.
10. The origins of the movement, *apartidist* (even apolitical according to first statement) cast a good image in the mass media. The movement appears as something new, fresh and, what is more attractive, "unexpected" and "spontaneous", in the middle of an elections campaign predictably boring and flat. Its appearance on the front covers of the main mass media has also its pros and cons, as in other movements we will analyze later (apolitical, unexpected and spontaneous respectively)
11. The emergence of 15M movement would mean a *new dawn of the spring*, where new ideas, alternatives, creativity and art would bloom....As someone said "there were more ideas and debates in a single tent in Sol camp site than in the whole election campaign"

Antecedents, differences and similarities with other movements

The citizenship movement of the 70s. Assembly organization, participation and positions on institutions in the residents associations.

The citizen movements of the Spanish democratic transition (1973 – 1979) were characterised by an homogeneous social and association network in each town or territorial space (village, neighbourhood, etc), organized around a unitary formal association in each neighbourhood, created in that decade which deals with the institutions.

In most cases the cohesive actor of the citizens' movement was a neighbors' association (*Asociación de Vecinos, AA.VV.*) which was aware of its participation in the movement. Within the neighbors' association it was common to find work teams and youth, women and cultural groups (theater, music,...) with an ongoing relationship with the few organizations existing in each neighbourhood, mainly the associations of student's parents (later called AMPAS), some independent cultural or youth associations, housewives and family associations (some of the old "head of the family" associations were changed into neighbours associations). These had also good, although scarce, relationships with associations in other neighbourhoods. In many cases the Association provided the neighbourhood with an identity. Until the 70s they were neighbourhoods without history, as they were created by emigrants from the villages (we use the denomination most commonly used "barrios" – neighbourhoods- for the territorial unit in general. Thus the term in these sense also includes districts, towns, villages, etc). The associations "created history" in each neighbourhood, organizing cultural, social, sports events, creating new festivities and patrons, and internal educative and solidarity networks.

There was a clear division between the autocratic power (the political class of that time) and the citizens. The social and associative network was intermingled as most associations were created from a local social network and were, at the same time, social movements. The neighbours' associations (AA.VV.) were set up to improve the conditions of these new neighbourhoods which had scarce and poor facilities and services (bad urbanization, lack of public transport, schools, social, medical and cultural centres... Its emergence was relatively spontaneous and *apartidist* (not associated to any political party), as many other social movements that have succeeded. *Spontaneous* because neighbours joined to solve real problems and *apartidist* because they gathered militants from different political parties (illegal until 1977) without being used by any of them. Relatively because it was evident that militants and affiliates of the left political parties had an interest in the creation of those associations. Although there were few of them, their presence was significative and growing. They knew that, as it eventually happened, in a dictatorial regime these associations will end up confronting the power, due to the nature of their reivindications or their repression (prohibited in some cases, tolerated but controlled for others, assemblies dismantled...). The police repression would cause indignation among the neighbours and an increase in the number of supporters not only of the associations but also of the social movements themselves and the political parties fighting against the dictatorship. The transition from micro-changes (improvements in my neighbourhood) to macro-changes at a political level (to achieve a democratic system), would be bound to come naturally.

The AA.VV. strived to have the highest number of associates possible but the most significative aspect in most of them was the call for assemblies. In the neighbourhood assemblies any neighbour could participate without distinction from the associates. The social movement went beyond the narrow frame of

the association. And the associations operated in most cases within the limits of legality or even outside the law, calling assemblies without permission of the civil government. (Doesn't it remind us to the 15 M assemblies held in the street and the official term of "occupy the square"? – Press office of the 15M, communicated on the 05.22.2011)

The social movements of these years succeeded in identifying themselves as part of a global movement, a citizenship social movement, and in establishing a solid relationship, even in articulating those movements with the technical experts' teams, the left parties and the mass media, an articulation that is not always easy. Something similar to what has occurred with the alter globalization movements against the Irak war and the movements of the "indignados". Using the terminology of Manuel Castells (1986) we can resume its characteristics in the graphic bellow.

Second and third scenario: from the crisis of the citizen movements of the 80s to the new generation of the association movements of the 90s

The first democratic municipal elections (in 1979) inaugurate an irreversible process of social change. The neighbours associations lose their role as a main agent against institutions. The change in these is also visible at all levels (state, local, new autonomies). At the same time the institutions have taken over part of the management of the social identities, which have become mayors, councilors, full time delegates of political parties or institutions. The decade of the 80s is identified with these changes which provoke an irreversible crisis in the citizenship movements that we can summarize not in just one or two of the points already mentioned but at least in fourteen (see full description in Alberich, 1994, 2007a: 199-201): socio-economic and social structure changes; desertion of the management and most active sectors of the associations, political sectarianism; competences of the new City Councils that see the associations as competitors and dispensable structures; crisis in the left political parties; fear from those entities to be controlled and distrust towards political parties; lack of new political and global horizons; believing that formal democracy would resolve everything (causes of the so called "discontent" of the 80s); organization weaknesses in the associations; lack of training in participation techniques....

During the 80s there was a change from an *irruptive* to a "by invitation" participation: the new organizational structures create restricted, burocratic channels to lead the eager need of participation of the citizens. In these structures, copied from the political administrative logic, with numerous closed sectorial councils, of a consulting nature, without capacity of action, less of decision taking, inefficient, most of the citizens give up participation.

In this context only some neighbours assume the new administrative and burocracy rules and keep their activism in organizations during the 90s. The sectorial division, fostered by the new administrative institutions which did not understand of global associations (one councilor for each sector: urbanism, education, culture, sports, youth...) provoked a fragmentation in associating entities. The neighbours' associations lose their identity as "the association of the neighbourhood" and turn into just another association more. There is a progressive increase in the associative fragmentation during the 90s. Moreover, the neighbours' associations are increasingly seen almost as another institution by the young people from the working districts: both the municipal district boards and the neighbours' associations run and manage centres, services, deal with complaints, requests...

In each neighbourhood a greater number of associations, requiring just a single and direct action to achieve specific objectives in the short term and for a concrete place are created following the new model of volunteers' NGOs, whose members want to perform visible and direct actions to "help" other people. The distrust in the ideological debate and in politics is ever more evident.

However the 90s will see other changes. Spain has gradually turned from a country receiving developing aids into a state that creates programs of international aid cooperation. This increases the development of the international cooperation associations, promoted also by some conservative solidary groups: we have to "help" the third world, not to analyse the inequalities here, or ask ourselves about the reason why they are caused there. The combination of these factors (improvement of internal economy, awareness of the international poverty,...) provokes some mobilisation movements, sometimes even "spontaneous" and "explosive", not bound to any political party and gathering people from different ideologies in the solidarity organizations (religious and left), such as the 0,7% movement, which claims for the fulfilment of the United Nations' agreement bounding the developing countries to provide the 0,7% of the GDP to international cooperation programs. This will be later known as the "0.7 and +" (adding other claims such as the condemn of debt to the poorer countries and the improvement of social justice, although these remained always in the background). During 1993 and 1994 pacific and direct actions of non violent civil disobedience including camp sites and occupation of public spaces claimed simple and minimum requirements until they achieved a state commitment to increase gradually the budget provisions for the cooperation programs. As in the 15M, the camp sites began in Madrid, in Paseo de la Castellana, and from there they spread to other towns and cities.

Since 1994/95 the movement loses gradually its global mobilising power and turns into new cooperation and social action organizations, with an international or local projection.

To sum up, the associative tendencies of the 90s in Spain are generally bound to very different factors such as (from Alberich, 2007b:81):

1. "Smallholding" and subsidized associations, which have already overcome their most sectarial tendencies. Penetrated by political parties (they have always been) but with less political management than in the former decades.
2. The combination of old and new radical and social movements (okupas, anti-fascist, gays and LGTB, free and communitary radios...).
3. The supply of new services from the associations, together with new minority and administrative "associations of services", which leads to the emergence of a new "association-business" model (registered as an association but working as a trading company, a co-operative or asset communities). The public administration starts to outsource some services using social organizations.
4. Creation of new Management Boards. A higher professionalization in the associations. Increase in the number of affiliates with different motivations.
5. Constitution of new associations self-called "Non Governmental Associations", NGOs, in order to give an independent but more institutional image

6. Volunteering: After their successful participation in the organization of Barcelona 1992 Olympics, the public administration creates new departments to recruitment for cultural and social projects. It has to be said that volunteer participation, even when it turns into a fashion or in a way to initiate a professional career, is a complex and diverse social phenomenon which cannot be accepted or rejected in general terms.
7. Penetration of unsolidary values in some old and new movements (an ill use of *Not in My Back Yard* – *NIMBY* movements), which become anti-social movements, representing the new middle class which want to move away from the socially excluded and marginal population, in the society of the three thirds (some instances are the citizens' patrols, protest against rehousing, anti-drugs campaigns,... although we cannot make any general statement, since each case is different)
8. The localist, atomized, even corporative character of associations, which eventually is disappearing in some movements, in favour of new unitary currents."

New associative federations and platforms and new forms of communication had already increased the mutual knowledge and improved the relationships between associations and social movements in the 90s. The number of Congresses and Meetings of citizens, cultural, aid cooperation movements multiplied... Linking the particular to the global is shown as a social value since the end of the 90s, against the individualist particularism, hegemonic in the 80s. Although it should be clarified that there are two different phenomena developing at the same time:

- A great number of micro associations are still being set up. The information given by the figures of the national register offices and the Autonomous Communities shows a persistence of a "smallholding" tendency in the associativism. In 1978 there were already 18.000 associations registered according to the 1964 Law of Associations, in 2003 their number had increased to 230.000. Local associations with a real or pretended apolitical intention that in the 90s decade are self-denominated, as we explained before, NGOS, "non-lucrative associations" or "volunteers' association", when in fact all associations are, by their own definition and legal status non-governmental and non-lucrative and have volunteers
- There is, in contrast, an increase in the number of associations becoming aware that the solution to the social problems cannot come only from the local action. The idea is spread that even the most particular and local problems are directly created or influenced by the global ones. At first the ecologic vision of a need for "local action with a global thinking" becomes gradually established. Then, the need of "global action with a local thinking" also becomes evident. Human rights, environmental movements emerge. The new proposals and approaches set during 1992 Río Summit, the first world conference on development and environmental issues, are going to be introduced at a very low pace and it is not until the 2000 decade that "sustainable development" approach becomes predominant - although it is in many cases a false etiquette. In the same line we find the 0.7% movement, other solidary movements and mobilisations for the condemn of the debt, the anti-Maastricht movement and the natural merging of all them with the anti globalization movements at the end of the 90s. All these constitute not only global resistance movements, but also alternative movements or movements calling an "alter-globalization"

Since the end of the century a more global, and thus political, approach is adopted by many associations and movements, due to the global nature of the main problems affecting the population directly: on the one hand the energetic crisis and global contamination, with damage the environment and the life quality; and, on the other hand, the international economic change originated by the neoliberal globalization which had as a consequence an increase in the internal and external inequalities, forcing many emigrants out of their countries.

Diversity and plurality has been a constant feature in the associative movements. However, there is also a gradual awareness of belonging to a common culture of altruist values and that achievements will only be obtained with a united action.

However, whereas in the middle of the afore mentioned profound crisis of the 80s a mobilisation for a referendum and anti-NATO movements emerged, during the 90s, the antecedents of the alter-globalization movements were among others the Anti-Maastricht movement, whose full name was precisely Movement against the Europe of Maastricht and the Economic Globalization. With an assembleary and participative nature, it lasted longer than the anti OTAN movement, since it only had a specific objective and a fixed caducity: to achieve the celebration of a referendum and “win it”. After managing to achieve the referendum (which they lost) the movement was dissolved into small platforms, which gave continuity to the old reivindications of the retirement of the North American troops and the elimination of the military bases (with the slogan “OTAN no, Bases fuera” -NATO No, Bases out). These movements lost intensity when the elimination of the military bases in Spanish territory was included as part of the government agenda (only partially fulfilled)

Some associations and anti-NATO organizations participated in the creation of the Anti-Maastricht movement, which introduced a new significant debate in the Spanish society:

What kind of European community do we want to build? The Europe of the traders, led by the capital?. The Europe of free movement for capital (now we would say speculators), the Europe of the growing de-regularization of the markets, following the trail of the neoliberal globalization proposals of the M. Thatcher – R. Reagan tandem? Or a Europe for the citizens? This debate was present in a great number of assembleary meetings in different European countries.

But the European governments negotiated the creation of a new “European Union” (until then “European Community”) and signed their Maastricht Agreement on the 7th of February, 1992. The main political parties coincided in defending the agreement as a necessary condition to the development of a new European Union and the anti-Maastricht movement was presented to the eyes of the public opinion as an anti-European movement (something similar would occur later with the project of the European Constitution in Spain, although not in other countries such as France).

However, we have seen recently (a decade and a half later) how a greater part of the criticism made by these “anti” movements coincide with what the experts call now the “defects” of the European agreements signed in Maastricht and in other summits: increasing de-regulation of the markets, freedom for the international financial speculation (without taxes), independent power of the European Central Bank (BCE), which aims just at the control of the inflation (in contrast with the Federal Reserve Bank which also aims at the reduction of unemployment), the creation of a new monetary union without a common fiscal policy

or economy management authority, which allows disparate and opposing fiscal policies, competing between them, tax havens, ...without granting any minimum common social rights and Welfare State conditions for the whole Union.

Finally a great number of meetings and new social movements critical of the prevailing development model took place in this decade. For instance, the first unitary International Congress of Social Movements (CIMS, 1992, later CIMS network) was celebrated, organized by 18 Spanish associative entities, with the participations of the main Trade Unions, cooperative unions, cultural and families federations, etc.. These constituted an antecedent, in its form and content, of the alter-globalization movements and other social forums. It is impossible to list in this paper all the meetings and new movements that emerged with different ideas but with a similar formal approach (participative democracy, opposition against the prevailing globalization mode...), I will only mention two significant examples: the International Zapatista Movement (starting from the proposals of the Mexican movement led by *subcomandante* Marcos which evolved from the Guerrilla to more pacific alternatives) and the meeting held in Madrid in 1994, with the significant name "Alternative Forum the Other Voices of the Planet". A world meeting of social movements and NGOs on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the IMF, WB and GATT.

Fourth scenario. From 2000 until now. Alter world movements and social forums

At the beginning of this century some of the characteristics of the former decade are reproduced with greater intensity: over-professionalization and "over-management" of some non lucrative entities, with a high efficient management but with a few number of affiliates and volunteers, lack of participation and renovation of the management boards of some traditional associations (part of the AA.VV.), a lack of transparency and participation that emerges in the worst cases in the form of favoritism and nepotism in some contracts and even corruption scandals (Intervida, Anesvad, Arca de Zoé,... in 2006, 2007). These cases, though minority and more or less restricted to foundations, bring certain discredit upon the associative sector. Luckily enough most entities react on time, specially the bigger associations and the federations, improving their internal control procedures, implementing ethic statement policies and management transparency. Nonetheless some of the problems prevail: precarious employment, with contracts dependent on public subsidies, a management based on paternalism, hierarchization...The increase of private financing (with the development of the Corporative Social Responsibility) and the use of associations for the privatization of public services have contributed to make some problems worse (although they have also increased the financial resources) and to spread the idea that the Third Sector is just another way "to make a living" and that they have abandoned the ideals of a social change.

Quite an opposite case is that of the reivindicative sociopolitical movements which have emerged around the new alter-world movements and the social forums.

The nexus between the multiple groups with the slogan "Otro Mundo Es Posible" –Another World is Possible, and the Trade Unions, main NGOs and political parties of the traditional left, has been represented by the *social forums*, specially by the Social Forums of Porto Alegre in 2001 and 2002. These new forums have been developed from annual meetings into long term organizations, operating at different levels (national, local...) and with different forms: some of them are almost exclusively a combination of the acronyms of the organizations recognized by the institutions and others have succeeded in creating a movement-forum with a lot of people and collectives participating directly

The meetings of the social forums are not protest mobilisations, a response to the official meetings or counter-summits (as it occurred before), they are constituted by themselves as a nexus for the setting of local and global alternatives. One of these World Alternative Meetings is the Forum of Local and Regional Authorities in Porto Alegre, that since 2001 holds annual meetings at the same time that the Social Forum and, similarly, in different cities. This is a meeting point between local representatives that interchange experiences to generate processes of social inclusion, who think that metropolis and city networks can “counter” the States and the world organizations.

The success of meetings such as the counter-summit of Seattle (1999), Prague or Geneve (2001) has favoured the repetition of certain common characteristics among the participating alter-world groups. Their reivindications and operating procedures clearly remind us to those used by the 15M and other “indignates” movements. Many of the innovations and new ideas attributed to the 15M were already present in these groups. Thus, already in 2007, we mentioned the following common features (Alberich, 2007a:207, 208):

1. “A more equalitarian and open ideology, admitting difference as an enriching feature, as far as there is a common agreement on the main objectives. A new ethic for *the groups in movement* is created.
2. New forms of internal organization, more flexible, non hierarchical, open and assembleary spaces, in line with the ideological approach adopted
3. Network and horizontal work. The positions change in a rota system ... Reivindication of internal and external participative democracy
4. Form local action, global thinking” and the action at a micro-level, to the global action with a local thinking.
5. Civil resistance, direct non violent Action (...).
6. To pay more attention to the analysis of the reality. Critical acceptance of the technological innovations, promoting a good use of the new technologies (specially internet, mobile phones...)
7. Pragmatic action. Search for an alliance between different types of organizations. Thus, movements considered as radical have coincided in the unitary movements and have set mutual support networks with more institutionalized and professionalized organizations, overcoming the mutual distrust...In many cases the roles are distributed as follows: the big NGOs carry out ‘reliable’ studies and proposals to the public administration, which will provide arguments for the activist movements, with which they will coincide in some demonstrations. Radical citizens’ movements (...) have publicly converged in the mobilisations, changing and overcoming to a great extent their bad social image”.

Similarly, there are some weaknesses in the alter-globalization movements that are reproduced by the current “indignates” movements:

- “The manipulation or the permanent attempt to manipulate information by the mass media (mass formation media, according to Agustín García Calvo), which amplify certain movements and situations: the violence, the paradoxical, the anecdotes, and what’s new and original according to fashion trends and leaves out others.

- “The lack of own mass media (or close to the movements) with social impact, apart from the use of Internet.
- The lack of a simple language, comprehensible for most citizens (...)
- The long term organization weaknesses
- Finally, movements have made a big progress in the denounce and protest aspects but not in the formulation of global, alternative and concrete proposals (such as the “Tobin Tax” proposal)” (Alberich, 2007a:208).

Most of these features, either positive or not, are present in the current movements. For instance the easy disposition to the critique, to disagree with the current situation, but the difficulty to seek alternatives and build a new credible project This was already noticed at the beginning of the movement, Ramón Cotarelo, 18th of May: “The negative side of this program is clear (NOT to the existing situation) but the positive side, the alternatives to substitute what is outdated, is not. It is necessary to elaborate new proposals and a devise to measure their possible social support. It is not easy to elaborate a program, but it is the only thing that can give cohesion to the movement” (Cotarelo, 2011:47).

The 15M and the differences with former movements.

One of the differences respect former movements is that the 15M is born with the intention to be a single unitary movement with capacity of action. The alter-world movements had been the sum of movements and entities that maintained their own names and characteristics within the movement. Something similar occurred with the platforms against Irak war and other social forums, which worked as the meeting point of different organizations but admitting individual participants, since with the time it was decided to expand these platforms, including collective and individual participants.

The 15M is not simply a sum of Spanish organizations such as “Democracia Real”, “Juventud sin Futuro”, No le votes, etc (movements that constituted at the same time unitary platforms and called for the 15th of May demonstrations). The 15M, since the same day of its official birth – with the first massive assemblies and the camp sites of May 17th, is created as a unitary movement in which each individual must participate in its own name and only in his/her own representation (one person, one vote, and if possible no voting at all). This operation procedures were present before only in some smaller entities, such as some social forums (for instance the *Foro Social de la Sierra de Guadarrama*) or in the recently created *Mesas de Convergencia Ciudadana* (in 2010).

Also from the beginning it is clear the intention to blend in the leading organizations calling for the mobilization with the 15M movement itself, avoiding the visualizations of any symbols (flags, organization names, signers, ...), although the organizations are not required to dissolve. This invisibilization is criticized by some participants, which reject statements such as “we are apolitical” and other statements implying that *this is something new, that has been born on the 15th of May (former movements are useless)*. Some of them publicly criticize the intention to forget or delete the history of a great number of alternative social or movements of resistance against the system. The answers given, little by little, were clarifying the process: the 15M is *apartidist* (not associated to any political party), but it is not apolitical, and it is something

“new” but it does not begin from scratch, we have previous experiences and we must take advantage of them. The participation symbol-individuals, with their own acronyms of each town, village, neighbourhoods are gradually admitted, overcoming old quarrels and stereotypes. But always with the prevailing of the individual participation. It is intended to build new bridges between the people who had previous, and sometime frustrating, experiences and the illusion of younger people,...

Another difference with the alter-world movements is that these managed to mobilise thousands of people and had the public sympathy during a lot of years. But the violent incidents in Italy, performed by the block black and police force repression against the Social Forum of Geneve, 2001 (one victim killed by gunshots) ; the violent police repression in Barcelona and the violent response of some demonstrators, identified with “anti-system” groups, which resulted to be infiltrated by the local police agents that acted as agitators (as it was later proved)... ended with the image of pacific mobilizations of the Social Forums and led to the identification of the anti-globalization movements as violent, and the gradual lost of public support. Now the 15M has managed to mobilize not just thousands but hundreds of thousands of people into the streets in a pacific way. In spite of isolated incidents and provocations. The slogan “pacifically we are stronger”, has caught on. According to some surveys an 80% of the Spanish population sympathise with the movement, and it has been so until the end of 2011 (in spite of the discredit campaigns of ultra conservative mass media that have labeled them as violent).

As other former movements the 15M emerges as a response to a negative situation (in this case the crisis) but it goes a step further towards positive action: it is not only an anti-crisis movement. Because one cannot be “only” against the crisis. We could say “not to the NATO”, “not to Maastricht (not to the signing or joining the organization) or “not to the Irak war (not to the Spanish participation in the Irak war) or yes to the donation of the 0,7% of the GBP to cooperation aids. But there is no sense in saying just “not to the crisis”. The socioeconomic crisis is a complex and diffuse phenomenon and the systemic and “cascade” nature of this crisis makes its analysis and the concretion of alternative solutions more difficult.

Some consequences and future scenarios

The 15M movement is set up and organized as a social and political movement since it recognizes itself as a transforming agent. It must be taken into account that:

- It has been able to establish guidelines in the politic agendas: debates about the change of the electoral systems, open lists, incompatibility of jobs, ...
- It has also managed to improve the internal democracy of political parties and trade unions forcing them to include internal referendums, primary elections, to increase their democracy and reduce their party machine.
- On the other hand, it claims for a “remobilization” in the national policy: more action and less off-the-record negotiations and *pactism*.
- The current political parties will continue in our countries but nobody can predict heir maximum and minimum electoral quota in the short term, or if new alternative parties will capture a great part of the

votes in the future (see changes that took place in Italy in the 90s. We have had in Spain a bipartidist and stable electoral map, until now).

The Future

- The m15M will surely produce a lot of things, as any other revolutionary movement or process. A greater part of the activists are not going to support the creation of a new political party or an electoral platform, although some may attempt it.
- From the internal debates and documents issued by the movement, we could deduce that most activists want to constitute the 15M as a socio-politic –and-economic pressure group, permanently active. Basically they want to continue as now, without rejecting some changes and supporting new initiatives (for instance new associations that will emerge from the 15M social networks).
- The 15M has crystallized in new ways of being and acting in politics, in society, it has changed the thousands of people's way of thinking... it has produced a "new social climate" (Fernández Savater, 2012) But How is a social climate created?

Challenges

- The 15M is a "long wave" movement; it is not just a particular mobilization. It is not going to disappear, since there are a lot of people interested in its continuation. But we should bear in mind that:
- Assemblies and permanent debate are tiresome. These have discouraged a lot of participants. It is necessary to seek more efficient formulas of work and action. This can lead to internal splits and ruptures.
- The movement has to create "self communication mass media" (Castell, 2010:25) in order to achieve a participative and democratic self-organization, essentially horizontal and consolidated as a unitary platform.
- The speakers of the movement should have continuity, although they have to be plural and elected in a rota system, in order to keep a fluent relationship with the mass media from different tendencies.
- The building of a new positive relationship with other social movements, associations and trade unions. The 15M has gradually changed from a "social movement" integrating all the activists, to be "another social movement". This demands moderation and to keep relations with other social movements at the same level. The 15M movement has already supported other mobilizations such as "the green tide" (teachers and students protests against sweeping budget cuts in education), which represents a step forward towards this direction.

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Continuities and Discontinuities in Recent Social Mobilizations. From New Social Movements to the Alter-Global Mobilizations and the 15M

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Abstract

Our paper seeks to analyze the novel and long-term characteristics of the recent mobilizations in Spain. Our main objective is to identify the defining traits of collective actions currently taking place as a consequence of the multi-dimensional crisis unleashed in 2010. We will focus on three main analytical axes -agents, identity and space-, trying to establish their historicity, that is, their presence or absence in both former social movements and current mobilizations.

The spatial dimension refers to the local versus global and co-presential versus virtual characteristics of collective action. This analysis implies a focus on the mobilizations' demands, the repertoire of actions, and the display of emotions. Emotions are also intertwined with the process of collective identity construction, and the conflictual relationship with agents and institutions identified as responsible for the crisis. Finally, we will give special attention to activists and social movement organizations, decision-making processes and adaptability and resilience of organizational forms.

Our data will come from newspaper articles, the Internet, interviews to participants, and graphic material collected during ethnographic observations in camps (*acampadas*) and assemblies. Data was gathered following the principles of theoretical sampling. Our analysis of these data is in exploratory phase, and is constructed in order to develop a preliminary analytical understanding of the phenomenon.

Keywords

social movements, 15M, identity, space.

Introduction

The global scenario of social mobilization is rapidly mutating. Periods of relative continuity and stability are being altered in an abrupt fashion by moments of effervescence that seem to be marking a point of fracture with the past. These recent changes in the dynamics of contentious politics are partly captured by the concept of "cycle of protest" (Tarrow 1997).

The year 2011 was particularly fruitful in the visualization of a series of mobilizations that meant to express a double discontent. First, with the collateral effects of the economic crisis, that is, the increasing levels of unemployment and the expansion of social inequalities. And, second, with the management of social life that was being performed by political élites. These élites were perceived as both reluctant to

deepening or expanding democratic procedures, as fossilized by the rising bureaucratization of political life, and as crippled and corrupt by world markets.

Given its multiple sources and diverse manifestations, the task of assessing and diagnosing the current state of affairs is especially arduous. The realities of countries in Northern Africa such as Egypt, Tunisia, Lybia, Morocco, Argel, or in the Middle East, such as Israel and Syria, show important nuances among themselves and profound differences with that of countries in Southern Europe such as Portugal, France, Italy or Spain. The Spanish case is particularly significant due to both the drastic consequences of the economic crisis on social life and the labor market, and to the progressive erosion of the maneuver capacity of governments and politicians. Moreover, the 15M movement has served as beacon for mobilizations in other European and American countries. These reasons alone would encourage social movement scholars to pay special attention to the characteristics and peculiarities of 15M.

If we however broaden our focus to the evolution of Spanish social movements in the last few decades, we find additional elements that give a patina of exceptional scientific attractiveness to the 15M. Among these traits are Spain's transition from a dictatorial to a democratic regime; the ensuing privatization of social life and political demobilization of the Spanish citizenry; the reconciliation between the Left and the Right in a (failed) attempt to close historical, heartfelt wounds; the process of institutional decentralization derived from the rising tensions between Madrid and the nationalist periphery (Basque Country and Catalonia, mainly); the practice of armed struggle or terrorism for political purposes, and the activation of a "social base" and a "political arm" to support, complement and legitimize that underground activity; and, finally, the emergence of an alter-global movement that, as in other countries, changed the rules of the social movement domestic game. We will analyze this complex and fascinating evolution in the first section of our paper.

Before delving into the analysis of the 15M we will offer a description of the socio-historical context and the cycle of protest amidst which it emerged. As we will show, this context presents notable specificities. Our study of the 15M will concentrate in two dimensions. First, the cognitive and emotional processes feeding the construction of a social movement identity, the establishment of identity boundaries between a "we" and a "them" against which collective action has been directed, and the symbolic and utopian elements condensed in 15M slogans and mottos. Second, we will focus on the spatial dimension of 15M mobilizations and, more specifically, in the tension between a "territorialized" way of doing politics from-the-bottom-up through the (re-)occupation of the public space, and a "disembodied" political praxis mediated by the possibilities and constraints offered by the Internet and online social networks.

Recent Evolution of Social Movements in Spain

The last few decades have seen significant transformations in the shape, content, and course of global mobilizations. In this regard, Spain has not been an exception. The democratization of political institutions, the fall of the Soviet block, the ensuing socioeconomic crises, the process of globalization, and the dissemination of new technologies have generated profound reconfigurations in the social movement field. In trying to grasp these transformations, international scholars have distinguished three types of social movements: the labor movement, new social movements (eg. feminist, environmentalist and pacifist movements), and the alter-global mobilizations (Calle 2005).

If we focus on these movements' scope, we observe a shift from a local level of action circumscribed by the nation state, to a hybrid local-global field of operation. We also see a passage from uni-dimensional identities to plural and multi-dimensional ones, no longer interpreted as mutually exclusive but as complementary (Tejerina et. al. 2006; 2008). In addition, several social movements have called the "citizenry" as a whole, and no longer a particular categorical group, to become the agent and motor of social change.

Solid, hierarchical organizations with clearly demarcated rules of belonging have also been replaced by networks with lax entry requirements and nodes with multiple and often overlapping affiliations. Additionally, the frontiers established between social movement organizations are no longer understood as insuperable antagonisms, but as lines demarcating highly specialized fields of action. These borders are nonetheless permeable, and they are trespassed whenever the diagnostic and prognostic analysis elaborated by militants deems it necessary.

Public discourse is, in turn, no longer inspired by a stiff and self-contained system of ideas focusing on material welfare, but by an open and flowing amalgam of ideological postulates increasingly centered on the deepening of democracy in daily life and everyday practices (Tejerina 2010a). Revolutionary goals inscribed in trans-historical narratives have been replaced by reformist and, lately, rebellious, reactive, short-term and geographically-bound strategies and actions. "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) social movements are perhaps the clearest example of the latter.

Strategies and tactics have been toned down and limited to an array of focal though highly spectacular interventions characterized by episodic actions of civil disobedience and the short-term occupation of the public space. If we count out the incorporation of new technologies (eg. mobile phones, electronic mail, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter), the repertoire of collective action has not observed major innovations. Massive demonstrations are now complemented by digitally-driven and thus less visible "soft actions", but the format of pedagogical, denunciatory or pressure-exerting actions has been inherited from previous militant generations.

The profile of activists has also suffered important transformations over the last few decades: they currently have higher levels of formal education, come from middle class households, have a tardier entrance to political militancy, and complement this type of engagement with various others. In addition, younger militants in the last few years have tended to give a political sense to their vital projects. Conversely, past activists used to give a vital meaning to their political engagement; politics was at the nucleus of their lives. This inversion between "life" and politics could be signaling a change in the processes of political socialization, and in the priorities between private life and public action.

Additionally, the generational relief of militants has been marked by a steep decline in their gross numbers. This is probably explained by the shrinking of organizational structures and spaces of interaction that used to facilitate the recruitment of sympathisers. Key periods of social conflict and effervescence such as the Irak war, the Prestige ecological crisis, and the terrorist attacks of March 11, 2004 in Madrid appear as punctual oases cropping up in long-term mobilizational deserts. This discontinuity could be partially accounted for by the gradual institutionalization of social protest and the progressive normalization of political life.

Context of Emergence of 15M

By 2007 Spain was blossoming: it had a public account surplus of more than 2 percent of the GDP, and the economy was growing by 3.5 percent. Just one year later, the surplus had become deficit, growth had fallen to less than 1 percent, and the Spanish economy was officially entering recession. Although the economic decline was related to a worldwide financial crisis, it also responded to clearly identifiable domestic facts: the bursting of a decade-long real estate bubble, and the implosion of the associated lending market. Following the lead of other developed countries, the government rapidly created a 99 billion-euro bail-out fund and began to rescue vulnerable banks. In addition, it urged the merger of savings banks that had lent heavily during the property boom; in less than one year the number of these banks was cut down to 17 from 45. In an attempt to weather the socio-economic effects of the financial storm, the government also adopted an economic stimulus plan. The pack included an 8 billion-euro investment in infrastructure, the extension of jobless subsidies to the long-term unemployed, and a 2,500-euro ‘Baby Check’ for each newborn child.

The recession ravaged most Spaniards, but had a particularly severe impact on the young. Unemployment rates soared to more than 40 percent for 20- to 24-year-olds -about twice the already alarming national average, and the highest for younger populations in the European Union-. Those with jobs were, however, not much better off; despite having one or more university degrees, many of them were caught in a system of temporary contracts, and poorly paid, low-status jobs completely unrelated to what they were trained for. As such, the Spanish young was forced to resign to a key trait of adulthood; in late 2011, almost 70 percent of the 18- to 29-year-olds still lived with their parents. This delayed independence was, in addition, putting further pressure on tight family budgets and overburdened support networks.

After initially denying the Spanish economy was in trouble, in May 2010 president Zapatero announced a slew of adjustment policies. The pack included wage cuts for civil servants, the end of the “Baby Check”, and the freezing of pension increases. As talks about Greece’s potential economic bailout began to intensify, attention turned on Spain amid worries over its public deficit (60 percent of its GDP). As a result, the government continued to pass austerity measures, combining them with a considerable rise in the Value Added Tax. In addition, a labor market reform was approved in September; presented as a necessary means towards reducing joblessness, the reform actually made it easier and cheaper for employers to hire and fire workers. In late September trade unions called for the first general strike in a decade to protest against the measure; despite the bleak state of affairs the mobilization’s impact was almost negligible. In January 2011, the government passed a pension reform raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 thus hindering the “replenishing” of labor posts. This time, surprisingly, the unions were on board.

In March 2011 university students called for a general strike. Thousands of students marched throughout the country in protest against the unemployment rate, labor precariousness, the rise in tuition fees, the Bologna Plan, and budget cuts in education. A few days later, the platform Youth Without Future (Juventud Sin Futuro) organized a demonstration against the economic crisis and the bipartisan “PPSOE partyocracy”. The slogan was: “Homeless, jobless, pensionless, fearless” (“*Sin casa, sin curro, sin pensión, sin miedo*”). The long-standing repudiation of the government’s socio-economic and educational policies was soon to be combined with a novel factor: the rage triggered by a measure that intended to suffocate the “free culture” of the Internet. In early February 2011, the Internet-based initiative #donotvoteforthem (#nolesvotes) called to withdraw votes from the political parties that had approved the so-called Sinde

Law (PP, PSOE and CiU) in the following municipal and regional elections. This “antipiracy” bill aimed at shutting down previously legal websites that enabled the free download of music and film.



Figure 1. Youth Without Future Demonstration on April 6, 2011.

Note: The placard reads: “Homeless – Jobless – Pensionless; Fearless Youth; Recovering Our Future!; This is just the Beginning”. The photograph is available online.

But Spain’s internal restlessness did not “act” alone; it was boosted by a chain of international factors. Among them were the Arab Spring mobilizations for political reforms and civil liberties, Iceland’s “silent revolution” against neoliberal adjustment policies, and the mobilizations of the Portuguese “Generation in Trouble” or “Desperate Generation” (*Geração à Rasca*), again, the young. The disclosure of WikiLeaks documents showing Spanish government officials to be less than forthright, and Stéphane Hessel’s book *Time for Outrage! (Indignez-vous!)* also collaborated in inflaming Spanish passions. There wasn’t a single or final straw breaking the camel’s back. This conjuncture of uncoordinated domestic and international events worked in a synergic fashion, prompting a collective outburst of indignation. In this combustible context, the call issued by the digital platform Real Democracy Now (DRY, *Democracia Real Ya*) to take the streets was “just” the spark that ignited the so-called “*indignados*” mobilizations.

Using Twitter and Facebook, DRY called “the unemployed, the poorly paid, the subcontractors, the precarious, the young people...” to take the Spanish streets on May 15, the week prior to regional and municipal elections. The protest was called under the motto “*we are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers*”. Despite being silenced by the corporate media channels, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in fifty Spanish cities; small supporting demonstrations were also organised in Dublin, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Bologna, Paris, London and Lisbon. Coherently with the “they don’t represent us” (“*no nos representan*”) slogan, the demonstrations were characterized by the absence of flags and political or trade union acronyms.



Figure 2. Real Democracy Now! Demonstration on May 15, 2011.

Note: The placard reads: “Read Democracy Now! We are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers”. The photograph is available online.

Triggered by the political and police mismanagement of the 15M mobilization, in the following evenings the calling for “Real Democracy Now” quickly gave way to an “Occupy the Square” (“*Toma la plaza*”) movement. Despite the explicit restrictions made by the electoral bodies and the constant threat of evictions, the *acampadas* held the squares in several Spanish cities until mid-July; these occupations constituted the movement’s most evident act of civil disobedience. Campers rapidly equipped themselves with organizing commissions, thematic working groups and assemblies. The commissions dealt with the day-to-day functioning of the *acampadas*; they concentrated on issues such as cleaning, infrastructure, infirmary, nutrition, respect, action (performances and civil disobedience activities), extension (art and placard-painting) and communication. The working groups, instead, focused on themes such as economy, sustainability, short-term and long-term politics, international liasons, etc.

Finally, the *acampadas* held their own assemblies, and also general assemblies for non-camping participants. When the camps could no longer be held in mid-June, they gave rise and passed the torch to decentralised assemblies in small villages and neighbourhoods of large cities. This movement towards “the local” was characterized by a steep decrease in the number of participants and, paradoxically, it was accompanied by an internationalization of the protest. The “15M Movement”, as it came to be known, or that of the Spanish “*indignados*”, as they were trivially labelled by the mass media, was rapidly copycatted in towns and cities all over the globe. On October 15, 2011, more than 1,000 cities in 82 countries took to the streets and squares in a global non violent protest guided by the motto “united for global change”.

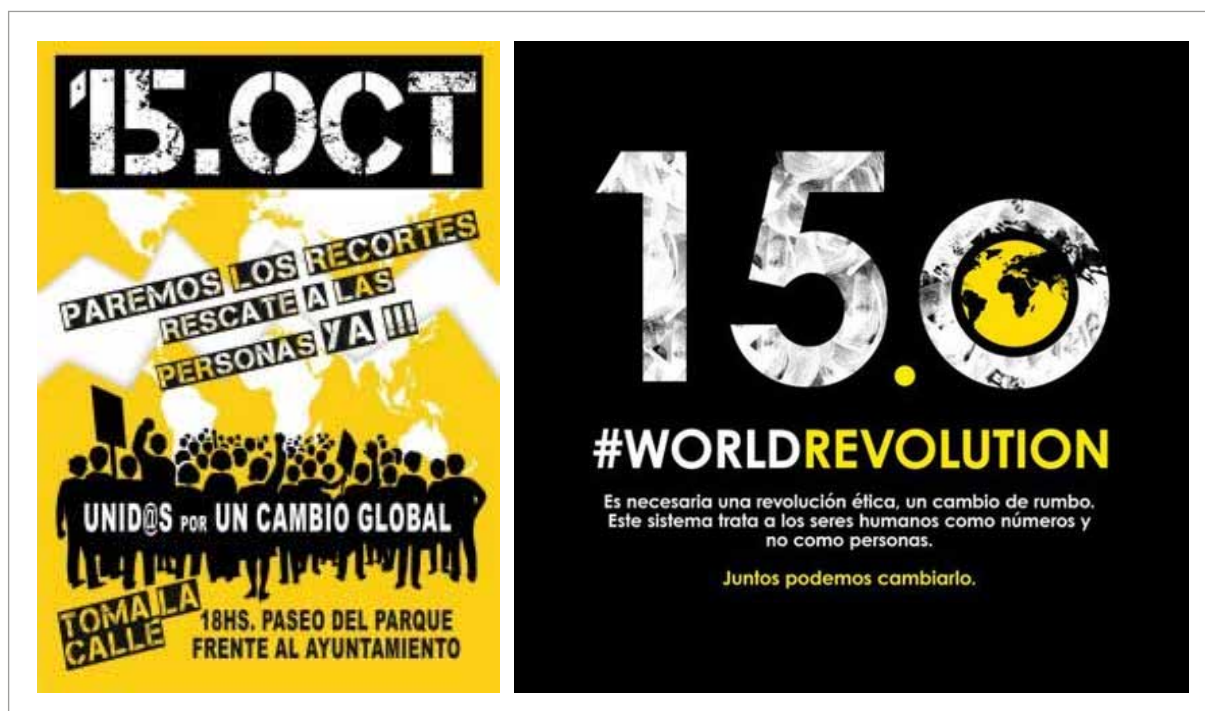


Figure 3. Banners Utilized in the “Occupy” Demonstrations that Took Place all over the World on October 15, 2011.

Note: The placard on the left reads: “Let’s stop the cuts. Let’s rescue persons NOW!!! United for global change. Take the street”. The placard on the right reads: “#WorldRevolution. We need an ethical revolution, a change of course. This system treats human beings as numbers and not as persons. Together we can change it”.

Despite these massive popular mobilizations, Mariano Rajoy’s right-wing People’s Party (PP, Partido Popular) won a landslide victory in both the May (municipal and regional) and November (general) 2011 elections. As voters punished the outgoing Socialist government for the worst economic crisis in generations and the European Union’s highest jobless rate, Rajoy declared that the public deficit for 2011 would come in at 8 percent of GDP, and that the government would be forced to pass new austerity measures. On December 30 the president announced a cut in the following year’s public spending by 8.9 billion euros.

Forging a 15M Identity

Previous studies (Freidin and Perugorria 2007) have pointed at the difficulties involved in forging collective identities amidst social movements composed of “publics” (Mische 2005), that is, of interstitial activist forums where participants build relations and pursue joint actions through the equalization and synchronization of multiple identities¹. Figure 4 shows a “*conceptual map of Acampada Sol*” elaborated by the hacker and 15M member Marga Padilla. Although the map is intended to “depict” Sol’s *acampada*, we will use it to delve into the process of collective identity construction that is being performed within the 15M. As Padilla puts it, “*This conceptual map (...) is only a help to depict what cannot be represented. It is a humble, unfinished map, precarious at its core. And needed all the same...*”

¹ We use “collective identity” and “social movement identity” as exchangeable terms; the latter is defined as “the collective identity based on shared membership in a movement” (Polletta and Jaspers 2001:289).

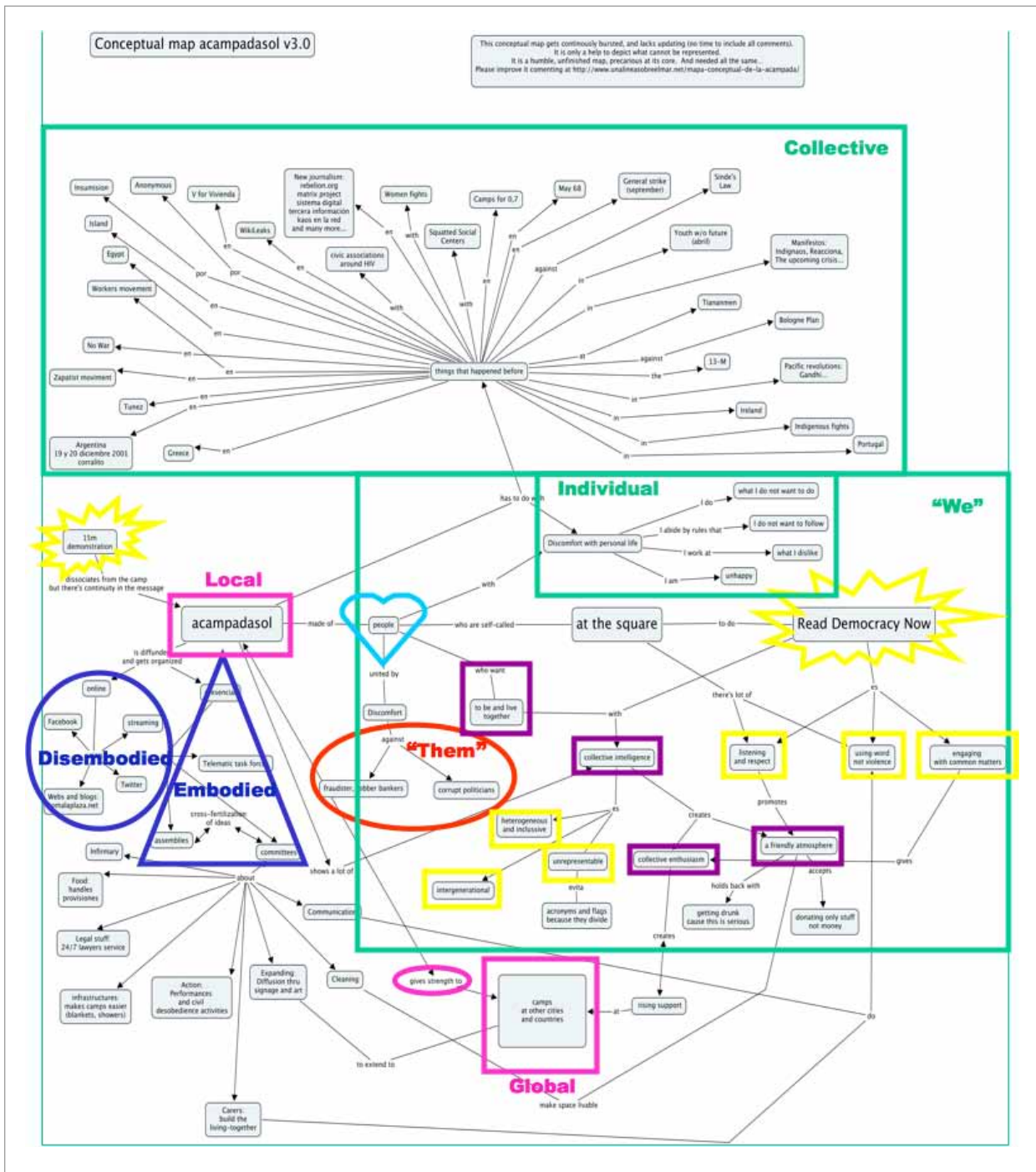


Figure 4. Conceptual Map of Acampada Sol, elaborated by Marga Padilla.

We understand collective identity as an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (...) concerning the orientations of their action, and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place (Melucci 1995; 1996). That understanding usually involves a definition of the problematic situation and an attribution of blame (diagnostic framing), the articulation of a solution to the problem and devising strategies to achieve that end (prognostic framing), and a “call to arms” or a fundamental rationale to engage in collective actions tending to remediate the situation (motivational framing) (Benford and Snow 2000).

As mentioned earlier, the 15M demonstration was the spark that ignited the *acampadas* and ensuing mobilizations. Although “DRY *decoupled from the acampada*”, according to Padilla’s conceptual map “*there is continuity in the message*”. The placards designed by DRY for the 15M march help us understand what that message was about: political corruption, capitalist greed, vital (not only labor) precariousness, and special “treats” awarded by the Spanish government to banks and big fortunes while “common people” suffer adjustment measures and the curtailment of their social rights. This diagnostic framing exemplifies what Gamson (1995) denominates an “injustice frame”, that is, an interpretive scheme that characterizes the actions of an authority system as unjust and legitimates its disobedience (Snow et al. 1997). As stated in the 15M manifesto *How to Cook a Non-Violent Revolution*: “*We don’t understand why we need to pay the bills of a crisis whose authors continue to enjoy record benefits. We are fed up of injustices*”. In words of a 15M member, “*The 15M has turned into a collective superheroe that goes wherever there is an injustice*” (Interview to Zulo). This framing of injustice provided a common language in which activists from different movements, and persons with no previous political participation, could communicate and find common ground.



Figure 5. Real Democracy Now! Placards for the May 15, 2011 Demonstration..

DRY encouraged people to put an end to cynicism and apathy. It called Spaniards to feel, and to act; its slogans read “take the street” (“*toma la calle*”), and “be outraged” (“*¡Indignate!*”). Borrowing from Stéphane Hessel’s viral manuscript, DRY utilized the emotion of outrage, or indignation, as a stepping stone for the construction of the movement’s collective identity. The formation of a collective actor not only involves cognitive agreements and negotiations –such as those entailed in the framing tasks mentioned above– but also demands affective or emotional investments. Passion and emotions, as much as ideology and interests, push people to mobilize and act together (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001:6). Several 15M members concur with Zygmunt Bauman’s controversial statement: “*The 15M is an emotional movement*” (Interview to Javier de la Cueva).

“A friend of mine said during the first days of the acampada: ‘There is no cynicism here. Everybody believes in what she is doing’. [...] Maybe that’s what Zigmunt Bauman meant when he said the 15M was, above all, emotion. [...] We are alive, and we are together! There is a change of atmosphere [clima], and that has a very strong emotional intensity. And you can sense that in the bodies, in the faces... But I wouldn’t say that it is just an emotional movement and that there is no thinking involved. There is thought in emotions, and we are thinking a lot.” (Interview to Amador Fernández-Savater).

“*The 15M is an emotional movement*” but despite the media’s trivial labelling this quote shows that outrage was not the sole emotion pushing it forward. Once the uprising was in motion, and people were taking the streets and occupying squares, indignation would be replaced, or at least complemented, by collective enthusiasm and joy. As a 15M member put it, “*The feeling during the 15M demonstration was of happiness*” (Interview to Leila Nachawati). Or, “*[the 15M] is a cry coming from a society that is tired, fed up. It’s been a cry, but a smiling one*” (Interview to Julio Albarrán).

Despite this strong emotional component, the 15M did not emerge to accomplish a “cathartic” mission. Social movements spring up to alleviate or alter situations that activists identify as problematic. Their direct action therefore depends on the identification of the sources of the problem, and relies on boundary and adversarial framing (Benford and Snow 2000:616). Marga Padilla’s conceptual map allows us to reconstruct the identity work through which 15M participants have crafted a “we,” and a “them” (Gamson 1995; Aminzade and McAdam 2001; Diani 2003). The “them” has included those antagonists identified as responsible for the situation of injustice: mainly thieving and swindler bankers (“*banqueros estafadores y ladrones*”) and corrupt politicians. 15M members are “united by their discomfort” towards these actors; these are the “enemies” against whom their collective action has been directed..

“We can vote, but we don’t have a voice, and we are frustrated by the politicians’ lack of will to develop mechanisms of direct participation in decision-making processes. Mechanisms that would put an end to corruption and to the lack of transparency in politics and public institutions, and that would place the citizen before the markets and other private interests.” (15M manifesto How to Cook a Non-Violent Revolution).

The “we”, in turn, has been synthesized in the term “persons” –not people–; this is key to understanding the process of collective identity construction within the 15M. Most 15M members do not portray themselves as activists or militants. In their viewpoint, these terms are associated to an “*old way of doing politics*” (“*la vieja política*”) based on ideological or partisan affiliations; 15M members reject these “*acronyms and flags, because they divide*” (Interview to Miguel Arana). In turn, they think of themselves as members of a community of “persons”.

“A movement whose protagonists were not militants, that doesn’t have a codified vocabulary of protest, that was very inclusive, that wasn’t just talking about the Left, that didn’t speak about revolution in a classical sense [...], that tries to have everybody, anybody, do politics... Some militant friends used to tell me ‘they are talking about ‘persons,’ and that is not a political concept. Persons.’ I, on the contrary, saw the power associated to talking about persons: we are all persons, and talking about persons and persons’ problems we can be together, and start talking.” (Interview to Amador Fernández-Savater).

As with injustice frames, talking about “persons” allowed both people with no previous political participation and with different militant trajectories to feel part of a same collective. This term “synchronized” different and probably opposing political ideologies; it also blurred other potentially alienating axes of dissent: gender, class, religious, and national identities, among others. The “we are the 99 percent” slogan issued by Occupy Wall Street activists synthesized this principle of “inclusiveness” in a brilliant fashion. So did the “united by common sense” (“*unidos por el sentido común*”) motto that could be seen in banners all across Spain..

“We are bringing up the fact that we are the 99 percent, that what unites us are problems and ways of thinking that are common to many people, in a very transversal way. [...] All these things can be common to many different people, people who do not have a clear identity. We need to start thinking over the basis of common problems, in lieu of identities. [...] 15M’s] Inclusiveness has to do with this: it is a movement that is based on problems, and not on identities. We want to begin with concrete problems, not with ideologies. We will arrive to that, or not, eventually. Concrete problems having to do with real life, with everybody’s life; this way the movement will become real, will have to do with the lives we lead and not with lucubrations about the world that then do not bear any relation to practices, to life.” (Interview to Amador Fernández-Savater)

Having “problems” instead of “ideologies” or “identities” as a point of departure marked a path of “inclusiveness” for the 15M since its inception. But these “transversal” problems weren’t limited to the “crisis train”, and weren’t just collective; they also had individual manifestations, and both levels seem to be intertwined in the perspective of 15M members. Marga Padilla’s conceptual map fans out these collective and individual experiences that “*have to do with*” the emergence of Acampada Sol and the 15M.

At the collective level, we find traditional social movements (eg. labor organizations), new social movements (eg. feminism, indigenous movements, squatter movement) and, using an interviewee’s terminology, “social movements that are not movements” (eg. V de Vivienda, Anonymous, #donotvoteforthem, Youth without Future) of diverse kinds. We can also observe “events” (eg. May ’68 and Argentina 2001) and even books or manifestos (eg. Indignez-vous!, Reacciona). This “*things that happened before*”-section of Padilla’s map can be interpreted as a social movement genealogy composed of both international and domestic progenitors, of remote, more recent and even contemporary ancestry. It is, according to Polletta (1998), a “narrative of becoming”.

At the individual level, in turn, the “we” crafted by 15M members is integrated by persons who feel “*discomfort with their personal lives*” for “*doing what they don’t want to do, abiding by rules they don’t want to follow, and working at jobs they dislike*”. As with previous ordeals, collective involvement has provided a mitigation to this individual distress. According to Padilla’s conceptual map, Acampada Sol is “*made of people who want to be and live together*”. In words of an interviewee, “*With 15M we have recovered that part of ‘person who is willing to share’, a part we had long forgotten*” (Interview to Carolina García). This

“sharing” or “being together” is at the core of the prognostic framing performed by 15M members; it is seen as a first step in the bumpy and sinuous road towards finding a solution to the multi-dimensional crisis (Benford and Snow 2000:617). It is, too, part of the motivation drawing 15M participants to get involved in, and sustain their engagement with, this type of movement; being together has given them a sense of empowerment, efficacy, and joy (Freidin and Perugorria 2007):

“[With the 15M] We have moved from powerlessness to power, from isolation and competition to being together; to discovering the other as an accomplice and no longer as an obstacle, from cynicism to ‘we can change things’ and we can be protagonists of that change. That generates a very strong emotion”. (Interview to Amador Fernández-Savater)

15M members do not “just” want to be together; this is not a “play date”. They see themselves as “self-convened” persons that “occupy the square” “to do real democracy now”. But what does “real democracy” really mean? In Padilla’s perspective, democracy is associated to “using words, not violence”, and to a “friendly atmosphere” promoted by the act of “listening and respect”. It is also tied to “engaging with common matters”, with problems that affect society as a whole. Real democracy is achieved with “collective intelligence”, described as “heterogeneous and inclusive”, “inter-generational”, and “unrepresentable” -that is, avoiding “acronyms and flags because they divide”-. As mentioned before, one of the outcomes of this from-the-bottom-up democratic praxis is collective enthusiasm. So is “growing support” in other cities and countries, which in turn, “gives strength to” Acampada Sol.

15M’s Social Space, Beyond Alter-Global Mobilizations

The participation of groups, collectives and organisations in multiple levels of action and more than one locale first emerged as a cardinal tension within the alter-global movement; a similar tension is present in the 15M. On the one hand, participation in global actions has allowed alter-global militants to experience (sometimes virtually, sometimes “presentially”) moments that were exceptional and spectacular, and to establish inspiring comparisons between them. On the other, participation in local actions has given them a stronger sense of coherence and unanimity. The local ambit is immediate, accessible, visible, and therefore apprehensible; it is the space in which demands are displayed, and where the “we” gets crystallized through face-to-face encounters and relationships.

In trying to resolve this tension between “the global” and “the local”, the alter-global movement has opted for pursuing “glocal” actions. As a consequence, it has been in permanent oscillation between the fixed (here and now) and the mobile (there and before-after). This option has defined the alter-global movement and given it specificity when compared to previous processes of mobilization. Many 15M militants, particularly the youngest ones, have shown a global or “international vocation”; they are aware of the importance of raising support in other countries, have participated in global actions such as the October 15, 2011 demonstration, and are in constant contact with their foreign counterparts through international commissions. They stress the “importance of thinking and acting globally” (Interview to Miguel Arana). However, the movement as a whole seems to have strengthened the bet for “the local” in detriment of “the global” after its “move to the neighborhoods”. The construction of this local space as a place of physical proximity has provided an open field for the interaction, exchange, and creation of organizational tools and symbolic challenges.

The space of social mobilization is therefore at one time social and symbolic. It is a practical field, a space for social experimentation, in which proposals are discussed, negotiated and rehearsed. In the case of 15M, it is the locale where real democracy "is done". As Padilla's conceptual map shows, real democracy is accomplished in two different ways: "*presentially*", in *acampadas*, assemblies, thematic working groups and commissions, and in a disembodied and deterritorialized fashion through the use of online media (see also Figure 6). The 15M manifesto *How to Cook a Non-Violent Revolution* (2011) alludes to this double embeddedness of collective action:

"We recovered and utilize the public space: we occupied the squares and the streets of our cities to meet and work in a collective, open and visible way. We inform and invite every citizen to participate. We debate about problems, look for solutions and organize actions and mobilizations. Our digital networks and tools are open: all the information is available on the Internet, in the streets and in the squares."

The 15M thus combines online activism with more "traditional" forms of militancy. On the one hand, it embraces the digital age sociability, where "everybody is getting together" in social media, and where groups can "operate with a multi-national's scope and a birthday party's informality" (Shirky 2008), and can "organize without organizations" in order to "change the world without taking power" (Holloway 2002). This form of activism is inspired by the idea that grassroots organizing no longer needs an organizer, a mediator; it follows the "do-it-yourself-with-others" spirit. On the other, the 15M is based on traditional repertoires: *acampadas*, assemblies and demonstrations are characterized by the physicality of bodies being present in a spatial meeting place (Gladwell 2010). 15M members create group commonality through face-to-face, "strong-tie" offline activism, but also through online "weak-tie" association. The two flanks strengthen one another; adding speed, a new dimension (Merrifield 2011). This mutual reinforcement is probably facilitated by the affinity of methods: assemblies and online networks are both characterized by direct participation, horizontality, and open deliberation.

continue to be, based on an encounter *somewhere*, for physical space is still a major battleground for political struggle (Merrifield 2011). 15M members seem to be aware of the importance of the spatial dimension of their praxis; this is evidenced by the “cartographic consciousness” (Anderson 2006) they have displayed in the almost compulsory design, re-design and refreshment (in the computer science sense) of two different types of maps: of the internal organization of *acampadas* (see Figure 7), and of the diffusion of camps all around the globe (see Figure 8). These maps have a “compass-to-the-world element”, but also function as “logo-maps”, that is, instantly recognizable, everywhere visible emblems that penetrate deep into the popular imagination and are available for transfer to political banners, webpages, etc. (Anderson 2006).

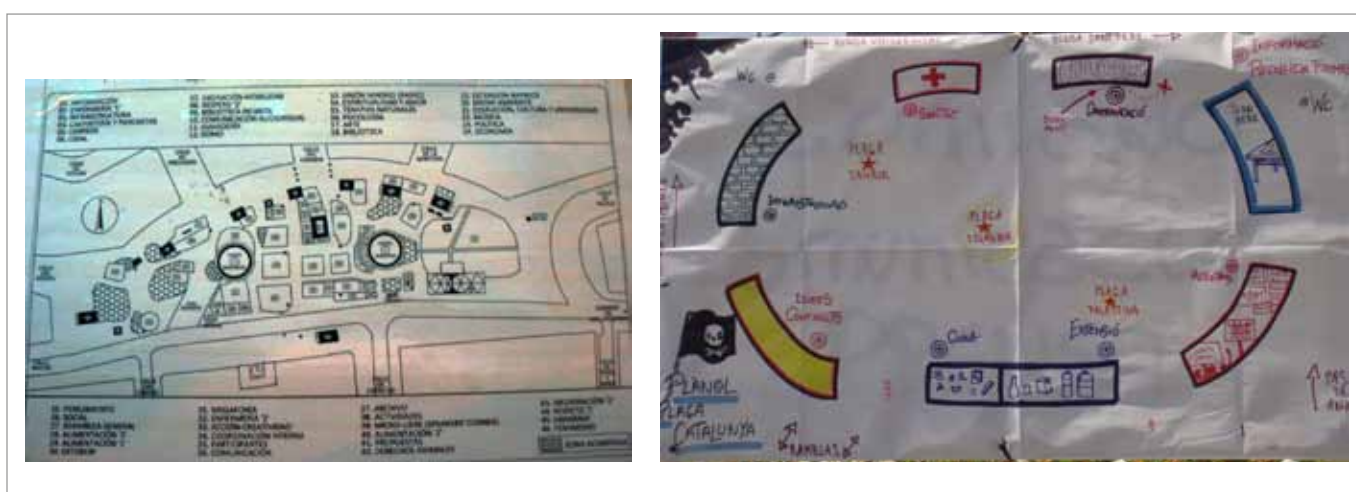


Figure 7. Maps of Acampada Sol and Acampada Plaça Catalunya. Note: On the left, a map of Acampada Sol, and on the right, a hand-made map of Acampada Plaça Catalunya. The photographs are available online.

The space of social mobilization is also a symbolic field, where the understanding of the public and private spheres is transformed and recreated. In a normative sense, the “politics of the encounter” can mediate between “the historical” and lived experience. As people find one another they start to piece together common notions, and common problems: they universalize what, on the face of it, seems only private, specific. The sense of affinity that emerges from this “*being together*”, in words of one interviewee, becomes the cement that bonds -perhaps only for a moment, but a moment that lingers-, people across barriers and frontiers (Merrifield 2011). The emergent “affinity group” (Bookchin, as quoted in Merrifield 2011) is characterized by “deeply empathetic human relationships-relationships nourished by common revolutionary practice and ideas”.

The aim of 15M *acampadas* and demonstrations was essentially symbolic; they were rehearsals for revolution, but not in a strategic or tactical sense, they were rather rehearsals of revolutionary (or perhaps rebellious) awareness (Merrifield 2011). 15M members were rejecting all that they habitually, and despite themselves, accept, and beginning to form a “cosmovision” that gave sense to the crisis and their generalized malcontent. They were identifying mechanisms of inclusion-exclusion (eg. lack of employment, conditions of exploitation, domination and inequality), mechanisms of imposition-repression (eg. concentration of power, privatisation policies, uncertainty and lack of control over important aspects of one’s own life, and repression of alternative lifestyles), and the practices, agents and institutions that were shaping the conflict at stake (eg. the unemployed, multinationals and financial groups, multi-lateral organisms, states and national institutions) (Tejerina 2010b). In these encounters, 15M participants were also discovering

their own creativity and power to change the problematic state of affairs. They were expressing political ambitions before having formalized them, and before having created the necessary tools -like structures or organizations- to make them real.



Figure 8. World Map of *Acampadas*, and Photograph of the World Map as Seen in *Acampada Granada*.

Note: The photo on the right is available in

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gorefacio/5741972227/in/set-72157626758531458>

Conclusions

The 15M movement counts on different organizational precursors in the process of social mobilization (Youth Without Future), and in the articulation of forms of online (#donotvoteforme) or hybrid (online-offline) protests (Malestar.org). As we have pointed out in this presentation, the movement has its immediate origin in the double discontent felt by numerous Spanish sectors with the socio-economic crisis and with the political management of collective life by the major political parties. However, the reason that triggered the process of occupation of Puerta del Sol, and later on of numerous squares in different Spanish cities, has its origin in the political and police mismanagement of the 15M mobilization.

The plural composition of the “*indignados*” reflects the rejection of the most negative consequences of the process of globalization: the increased levels of social inequality, and the precariousness of the life conditions of broad social sectors, especially, but not exclusively, the young. In addition, the 15M movement transfers to the public sphere a long-term discontent with the functioning of the Spanish democracy, and persistent demands for deeper democratization and transparency in the administration of public affairs. In the perception of 15M members, this situation and this authority system are defined as “unjust”, and it is precisely this “injustice frame” what has legitimated its disobedience.

Several members have agreed with the statement that the 15M is an emotional movement. The emotion

of outrage, or indignation, constituted a central stepping stone for the construction of a collective identity in the beginnings of the movement. However, once the uprising was in motion, indignation was replaced, or at least complemented, by collective enthusiasm and joy derived from the experience of "*being together*". As one interviewee put it, "[*the 15M*] is a cry coming from a society that is tired, fed up. It's been a cry, but a smiling one".

Although 15M members have tried to build on "common problems" in lieu of available "identities", they have nonetheless performed prognostic, diagnostic and motivational framing tasks that have begun to craft and shape their own, novel collective identity. Their boundary and adversarial framing has demarcated a "them" against which collective action has been directed: mainly thieving and swindler bankers and corrupt politicians. It has also forged a "we", composed of "persons" -not people, not militants- united by their "discomfort" towards these actors, but also towards the labels and methods coming from "old-time politics" ("*la vieja política*"). Talking about "persons" allowed both people with no previous political participation and with different militant trajectories to feel part of the 15M; it "synchronized" different and probably opposing political ideologies and blurred other potentially alienating axes of dissent.

15M members have also crafted a narrative of becoming; that "we" has a present and a future, but also has a traceable past. Participants have elaborated a social movement genealogy composed of both international and domestic progenitors, of recent and also far-removed ascent. This "family tree" brings together traditional and new social movements, and even "social movements that are not movements" -to use an interviewee's expression- that belong to the "progressive field". 15M members have also provided their narrative of becoming with an individual dimension. 15M members are persons who used to feel a discomfort with their individual lives, and who now want to "be and live together" in a friendly atmosphere.

"Being together", "sharing" has allowed them to universalize their personal experiences, understandings and emotions, and has given them a sense of joy, empowerment, and efficacy. It is thus at the core of the prognostic framing performed by 15M members, and of the motivation drawing them to get involved and sustain their participation. This "politics of the encounter" has been facilitated and boosted by a mutually-reinforcing offline, "strong-tie" activism and online, "weak-tie" association, both based on an open, horizontal and participatory philosophy. In words of Merrifield (2011), squares and digital media have provided a scenario for an illicit rendezvous of human bonding and solidarity, a material, virtual, and emotional topography in which something disrupts and intervenes in the previous paralysis. But 15M members do not "just" want to be together; they gather to "do real democracy". Real democracy is interpreted as an engagement in "common matters", an involvement thought of as inclusive, non-violent, and necessarily direct or "unrepresentable". This last element is probably driving the "move towards the local" in detriment of "the global".

15M participants may have expressed political ambitions before creating the necessary means to make them real. In the last few months, they have discovered their own creativity and power, and also their own limitations to generate the global and local change they demand. They have also begun to craft a cosmovision that gave sense to the crisis, their generalized malcontent, and their own purposes, actions and organization. 15M members appear to be conscious that: a) through their action they want to build the widest possible movement; b) that they personally mobilize to oppose economic domination, to affirm moral principles of equality and justice, and to transform the political structures and democracy; c) that their interest in uniting with others rests on the possibility of altering an unwanted social reality, generating solidarity,

constructing common interests and sharing demands; d) that the mobilization is effective because it is contributing to raise awareness of the risks of globalization and to change the perceptions held of it; and e) that the most problematic aspects of organizing this type of movement are precisely what make it most attractive: diversity and plurality of its components, its horizontal and democratic character, and the fact that it deals with “common problems”, that is, with questions that transcend social frontiers.

Abbreviations

PSOE: Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero de España), center-left wing political party in Spain.

PP: People's Party (Partido Popular), right wing political party in Spain.

CiU: Convergence and Union (Convergència i Unió), center-right wing electoral coalition in Catalonia, Spain. It is technically a federation of two constituent parties, the larger Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) and its smaller counterpart, the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC). It is currently led by Artur Mas, who is the current President of the Catalan Government.

DRY: Real Democracy Now (Democracia Real Ya).

Data Sources

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The Assemblies of 15th May Movement in Cáceres: An Example of Democracy School, a Road to Dialogic Society

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Abstract

This paper attempts to give a vision of democracy from dialogical perspective. From the 60's, new trends (participative, deliberative or radical democracy) have attempt to offer a renewal and to create a democracy that increasingly seem less representative of the citizenship. In a social context where people tend to adapt to the different aspects of reality (love, family or education) through dialogue, we would like to say that the dialogic trend, this time applied to politics, is reflected in the form of the links established in the 15th May assemblies. This study aims at providing an overview of some important features of the 15th May assemblies in Cáceres, and as well emphasizing the dialogical component that supported their proposals and discussions.

Keywords

15th May Movement, assemblies, citizenship education, democratic renovation, dialogic democracy.

Introduction

On 15th May 2011, thousands of people took to the streets to demonstrate under the slogan 'We are not merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers'. This event and the movement that emerged after, falls within a context of economic, political and social national and global response in a series of protests, most of them on mediterranean area. The main reason people hit the streets is reflected in the statement that has been heard at any point where a group of 'quincemayistas' met to talk, 'do not represent us'. This slogan points to politicians and their way of doing politics as one of the main problems affecting Spanish society today. This society is not represented by politicians who don't take into account the views of people, mainly because public opinion, the debate on the 'res publica' among citizens, is almost nonexistent. Bauman (1999:10) affirms that

"(...) the 'bridges' between the public life and the private life are dismantled or they were not even constructed ever; (...) an easy form does not exist not obvious of translating the worries deprived in public topics and, inversely, of discerning in the private worries topics of public worry".

From the beginning, this movement focused on recovering public spaces such as squares and parks, to occupy them otherwise. These squares move from being places of entertainment, to become places of political content, where everyone can discuss that approach as an equal on the different topics covered. Bauman (ibid: 11) notes that one of the possibilities of change for our democratic society and improvement lies in the recovery of 'agora'. For Bauman, the 'agora' is

“a space that is neither public nor private but, more exactly, publicly and deprived simultaneously. The space in which the private problems meet in a significant way (...) to look for levers that, jointly applied, turn out to be sufficiently powerful as to raise the individuals of his individual miseries (...) where they can be born and receive form ideal such as the ‘common good’, the ‘company jousts’ or the ‘common values’.”

This occupation of the squares is twofold: on a hand, it became an act of civil disobedience (very noticeable during the reflection’s day), a defense against the increasingly obvious lack of citizenship participation in public debate; on the other, becomes a kind of ‘agora’, a ‘bridge’ that connects private troubles that many were suffering and makes them public with the rest of the population, presenting them for public discussion. In Cáceres can point to the ‘Plaza Mayor’ as the most important place of 15th May movement, as its main ‘agora’. There they conducted the first concentrations of protests and later settled the camp. In addition, all assemblies have been developed there.

Work’s main issue

The purpose of this study is an analysis of assemblies that took place in Cáceres dealing with the 15th May movement, as these are the highest decision-making and expression of this new social movement, with the final objective of getting closer to the reality of this phenomenon and, taken into account of different theories, trying to provide the insight observed.

Kind of work/methodology

Our study is a qualitative empirical research. Ethnography based on participant observation and viewing, and further analysis through data dump cards observed, and videotapes about assemblies of the 15th May movement in Cáceres. The research will be followed by an exhibition and discuss of the results with the participant group in these assemblies in order to compare data and assess the opinion of the study for acting leaders. At this moment, we analyzed the videos of thirteen assemblies, which last approximately sixteen hours. In addition, we have participated in most assemblies organized, keeping track of what is observed in a notebook. We believe that a qualitative ethnographic research is the best choice for our work, because it directly involves research and acting leaders. We chose ethnography as methodology and results of the investigation. If the words make the speech of 15th May movement and one of its objectives is to regenerate democracy through social dialogue, we could make an analogy with the ethnographic method, because it is the methodological tool we used to analyze the reality of this social group and also the final product that gives us this analysis. The data on which ethnography is based are drawn from social interactions with members of that social group through dialogue.

After participating in assemblies we developed a card to registration system. Complete this card with the information extracted from the participation and viewing videos. In the card there are two columns: one with notes taken from the videos and the second to record comments on other aspects of work. Here we explain briefly the different sections that we used to record information.

Video identification name: Each video has an identification name with month and day with assemblies date. For example, the 18th May assembly has the 0518 identification name.

Video identification data:

Place: Is the place or space where the assembly is developed. Most of these developed in 'Plaza Mayor'.

Stage or time: Period to which the assembly. We have detected three stages or times.

Video length: The duration of recorded assembly video. Some assemblies aren't fully recorded.

Participants number: The participants number is very interesting to analyze the different stages and also to know the influence in debates development.

Assembly kind: We want to emphasize what is the assembly kind. We found different types linked, for example, the general subject to which they relate or at the time in which they happen.

Descriptive data:

Assembly content: contains the order day, the new proposals were added and who added this proposal.

Sociological profiles: On the one hand, in this section we have collected the different kinds of leadership that we observed in the assemblies, the nature and type of this people. On the other hand, we collected the citizenship type.

Motivation: We wanted to collect also what were the different motivations that people were approached to participate in the assemblies.

Assemblies structure and dynamics:

Moderation and registration: Which people take care of moderate and take note of the facts, their age and gender. We highlighted the moderator profile and how he acted

Intervention duration and relevance: We wanted to point out how there are interventions, the length of this and if in fact they are related or unrelated to the topic at that time being treated.

Regulation: We noted if people follow the assembly manual, if it really serve its purpose and if people take it into account when making their statements.

Proposals: We have analyzed and recorded the various proposals contained: how they do, how is it typography and if there are recurring themes.

Capture of agreements. Record and analysis of the agreements, how it could come near to them, what degree of execution they have.

Requests and questions. Which are the topics that treat each other in the last point of the agenda every assembly, that of requests and questions.

Content and symbols of the assemblies:

Not verbal language. In this space, there are gathered different aspects of the not verbal language: if it is in use or not the exclusive language, how the territory is distributed, if the persons are standing up or not, if groups appear, if solitary persons exist.

Capture of agreements. The typology of the different agreements, if there are agreements appellants which are often routinely get.

Debates and speeches. Which are the main supportive elements of the debates, if these elements belong to the popular culture, to the political theory or if they are simply occurrences or stereotypes it brings over of the topics that treat each other. What contradictions and coherences appear in the debates.

The individual thing, the collective thing. If the individual interests appear over the group or if it gives priority to the common interest.

'Gods, demons and ghosts'. To whom or who there are assigned the positive and negative values, that group of people or person turns out to be made responsible for the problems.

Analysis and discussion

We are still in phase of analysis, but we can indicate some aspects that we could have already observed. There are, from our point of view, three stages for which the movement has happened since it appeared. The first one of the stages would begin with the manifestation of 15th May and it would conclude with the choices of 22th May. We might name her as 'stage of explosion'. During this first stage they begin to take the first short-term decisions, like for example, to encamp in indefinite time in 'Plaza Mayor'. The assemblies of this stage will be very numerous in how much to assistants it recounts, but the persons who there come still do not have an active trend at the moment of taking part in the debates. It is a stage where certain importance receives the leadership that there exercise on the group those persons who organized the first one of the manifestations. During this stage, there is a great abundance of people (up to 1000 in some acts like the organized one the day of reflection), probably moved (also on the national level) for the boring electoral environment and for the media coverage that they all begin to have the encamped ones in Spain (Taibo, 2011). We believe that during this stage it takes priority over a clear feeling of necessary immediate change in the collective conscience, it probably moved by the feelings found in the squares in a moment of 'explosion of feelings'. The second stage, which we will name as 'stage of summit', from the choices, is a stage of public's minor abundance (between 50 and 150 persons), but in that there is increased the participation of a notable way, facilitated probably by this public's decrease. This stage would develop from 22th May, until 8th June, day in the one that gets up the encamped one of 'Plaza Mayor'. An organization appears concerning commissions and workgroups and a regulation at the moment of developing the assemblies. A manifest is also written by five points which will be the principal aims of the 15th May movement in a beginning, though later, they would meet extended. One starts leaving of side the initial spontaneity and the assemblies begin to be summoned in a more formal way, with one concrete regular recurrence, subject to an order of the day. In this second stage, the participation of the persons is major and more fluid and the debates stop being monologues, though they also begin to develop a cyst in topics that will be very appellants and polarized enough, for example, the discussion and

confrontation that for a few days it remained between members of ‘Democracia Real Ya’ and ‘Acampada Cáceres’. The decisions intend for actions in the short and medium term, in order to report of the following mobilizations and to develop actions of recovery in relation to the offers of change arisen. Finally, a third stage, which we will be call a ‘stage of ripeness’, which would begin after the raising of the encamped one, on 8th July, and it would coincide with the summer arrival and the exodus of very much students out of the city, until 15th October, day of the world manifestation ‘Global United for Change’ summoned from Spain. The abundance to the assemblies meets diminished in number up to the half (30 or 40 persons maximum). The topics to be discussed in the assemblies and decision-making will be focused on actions of a near future, following the summer, and the more organizational aspects of the movement. One begins to develop a flowchart in order to provide with a more consistent structure and one proposes the creation of a regional coordinator of assemblies of 15th May movement in Extremadura. This stage marks an end of distance, as we thought from here the foundations are laid to start covering a new way, in a context beyond the local and national borders, since ‘Occupy Wall Street’ demonstrates the persons’ massive abundance in diverse parts of the world to the summons, with a major act of presence and a popular support in The United States, across the movement.

Attending to his temporality, we can define three types of assemblies. The fixed assembly, ordinary call, with a periodicity of 15 days (the 1 and 15 of every month). There, it deal with the different topics that arise from the meeting coordination of groups and those that any person wants to contribute. The extraordinary assembly, without marked periodicity. It is realized out of the regular dates of the ordinary assemblies. It is summoned by the ‘Commission of Coordination’ or from the assembly, in order to treat some topic necessary for the good functioning. Finally, the urgent assembly, which is summoned by the need to take an immediate collective decision before a happened fact or for happening, as for example it was the case for the lifting of the camping from ‘Plaza Mayor’ on 9th July. In relation to the topics that are going to treat, we can indicate three types of assemblies: informative, deliberative and of groups or commissions. In the informative assemblies, it give any information about issues that are of interest to those attending. It is not taken decisions, rather they come to do the function of space of reflection.

An example of this type of assemblies are those that were celebrated in a beginning, as that of 19th May to read the constitution and to report on near actions or that of 7th June brings over of what the so called ‘Pacto del Euro’ was consisting. In case of the deliberative assemblies, which is tried is to discuss and to debate on different topics in order to take positions with regard to these or to carry out actions. In this typology there might be fitted the great majority of the assemblies that we try to analyze across this work. Finally we would think the assemblies of groups and commissions, they try to give response to the different topics that concern every group and that serve to formulate offers that will be later debated in the general assembly by the rest of the group. The content of the assemblies has been changing throughout these five months that we have observed. In a beginning, the topics from those who were speaking each other were coming marked by what the organizing persons of the first manifestation, belonging to the platform ‘Democracia Real Ya’, they believed more opportune, or for those civil offers that, shyly, began to appear. An agenda did not exist and the topics were not clearly marked, anything that was doing that the dynamics of the assemblies saw obstructed, appearing often speeches it brings over of the ‘sex of angels’: topics that could seem to be interesting for those persons who were debating them, they were not focused on the line of the central topic that was occupying in these moments the debate and that it could lead to the desperation and boredom of any of the persons assistants. The debates were dispersing that way and the marked aims were getting lost, for moments. Hereby and as a result of the excessive time the first assemblies could manage to occupy, in order to provide with a formal structure the same ones, it managed to remind a manual of assembly. In this manual order, it was

trying to put in certain aspects which could be considered to be slightly operative. This way, the figure of the moderating person appears there as those of the people who take the minutes. The agenda also appears for the assemblies, which it will make concrete which are the different topics that will be debated in the assemblies in order to publicize them to the whole citizenship which wants to take part and, also, to center the normal development of the same ones. Among the thirteen assemblies we have looked through videos, we are able to detect up to forty-seven items on the agenda of the day. The majority of the topics are focused on the own organization or on the capture of decisions it brings over of near actions. Inside these topics we can indicate the debates it brings over of the positioning before certain aspects from 15th May movement, as what to do with regard to the unions or how to focus the possible appearance of political prominent figures in an assembly. Also topics have treated each other it brings over of the opportune thing or not of creating a new workgroup, the creation of a flowchart to provide with a stronger structure or the definitive raising of the encamped one in 'Plaza Mayor'. Also appear purely informational topics, such as the story by one of the participants worked in the different meetings at the level of national, or only organizational as the modals to the creation of a regional coordinator of assemblies. A social movement that comes spontaneously can be found (and he has been) with the difficulty of being organized on the march. The regulation used for the organization in Cáceres does not come in view of before it is born this one, but it is through this action, as this regulation was born. This turns it into something informed by all the persons who come and form a part of this social movement, something that we believe him meets great more for the capacity of identity on the same one that attracts this participative form of creation. It is not this regulation designed by a group of persons in order that to him a major group adjusts, but it is a group of persons that it agrees on a few basic procedure of conviviality inside a social space. The first 'legislation' that developed was 'Assemblyism's Manual'. It was trying in his moment to finish with certain chaos that was coming happening in the assemblies. A few points were marked in an agenda in order that the assembly was following a pace and an order. Later the flowchart of the movement will appear. This flowchart will not try to establish already only certain procedure at the moment of speaking during the assembly or how they must be organized, but it tries to provide with a fixed structure to the commissions and workgroups that are conforming. There are reflected in him the different aims and competitions of every commission, trying to bureaucratize in a more serious way something that it was born in a spontaneous way.

This process of bureaucratization was already described by Webber (1977) as that one that does the systems and the structures are colonizing the social life of the individuals, starting taking decisions that were taken in an individual way before. According to Webber, when this happens and they are the systems those that organize the form of life of the persons, these begin to lose freedom and sense. Hereby, the flowchart will lead to the confusion often and it will prevent the capture of decisions. One of the participants in assembly of 15th September will indicate "excessively articulated" that this flowchart has and what to his to deal, it is a "way of creating a few rigid structures" that might in a future without open way to other forms of organization that were necessary for what is a social group as flexible as this one.

It is the 15th May movement a social typical movement for his leaders' lack. But as in any social group, it is undeniable that appears, though these act in the main in a democratic way. We can see like along the assemblies, and during his evolution, these leaders have been appearing and disappearing: there is no a person or concrete group that exercises the paper of 'total leader', but leaders' different typology appears which acts depending on the moment. In the beginning, the leaders form a part of the group of persons that it organized the manifestation of 15th May, belonging to the platform 'Democracia Real Ya'. We might name or catalogue them as occasional leaders them. In a moment of explosion of the movement, in which even Assembly and participative dynamics that are so typical to it had not appeared or the bulk of the population who participated

were encouraged to speak, this group of people is taking command of the assemblies and it rallies to boost these acts and it begins to organize themselves. Leaders appear who are not so much for his personal abilities but rather induced by the general withdrawal of people who were coming to the square during the first days. After these first days in those who excel themselves the moments of few participation and increase increasingly the debates, it comes the hour of taking decisions. In this point, there is what we will call 'leaders of the consensus'. These persons, in general, inform little of the constant debate that is created on the topics, but they are attentive, since we can observe in the different videos, to everything what one speaks. When it seems that the debate is too much polarized or it is difficult to manage to take a decision, these people act realizing offers of consensus that basically gather everything controversial and look for an agreement that does not leave dissatisfaction anybody. These people are recognized by the rest of participants, since some phrases extracted from the videos demonstrate it as "Tomás, for the consensus Tomás" (assembly of 2th June) or "If it was not for Tomás we are discussing until 3 a.m." (assembly of 13th October). Similar to this kind of leader it turns out to be different, the 'peace leader'. In some occasions, some debates take to personal clashes beyond the assembly, as for example the one that was kept on the relevancy or not of continuing with the camping in 'Plaza Mayor'. Some people took beyond the debate after the decision, but these leaders about whom we speak, it acted in this example in order which both parts understood the position of other one and the discussion was not beyond. Finally, there appears another leader's typology that takes this status as the knowledge that it hoards. In this respect, we might put as example the persons who shape the commission of legally. We can see how these persons, during his interventions, catch the attention of the rest of participants and his contributions are valued and estimated by the rest of the group. They are even asked to take charge organizing different informative assemblies in order to put jointly this knowledge that they hoard, useful in moments in which certain doubt exists before the actions of the police, since after the eviction of the 'Foro de los Balbos' (another square) and capture of information on 9th June. Another example of this type of leadership is the fact that they exercised a participants' couple in some assemblies during the summer. The fact of coming from Madrid and know the reality of the 'Acampada Sol', the first and largest of all organizations within the country, gave his proposals and speeches more attention and approval by the participants.

Marshall Ganz (2009), one of the most recognized and valued theoretical leadership in the last decade, makes a clear description of what from their point of view has to be leadership within social movements. In his own words, "leadership is accepting responsibility to believe yourself conditions that enable others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty". Taking this definition of leadership, we might affirm that inside the 15th May movement, this leadership is shared, it is constructed between certain persons who create, inside his field of action and on the basis of his personal qualities, a few conditions that allow to come to the concrete aims that the group has marked. It eliminates hereby the former conception of the leader at the head of the group; this leadership makes invisible, without disappearing, but to conform between the whole group, in order to avoid appear 'messianic' personalities and predominate over the personal horizontal and equal relations. The majority of the times, speaking about moderator is speaking about someone of the participants who fit in the profiles we indicate like of leadership, extending his profile of leader to the moderation of the assembly. This fact will take the participants, we cannot assure if conscious or unconsciously, choosing often a moderator on the basis of the topics that are going to treat. Let's put a couple of examples. The assembly in which it was decided on the raising or not of the camping, a topic that had led in occasions to debates that were extracting a slightly aggressive tone of some of the participants, was chosen to a moderator that had a type of 'leadership of pacification'. Another example (of which we lack video but which we take part in) is that of the informative assembly on so called 'Pacto del Euro', where there were chosen moderators that had a more technical profile.

To speak about person who moderates is to speak in masculine the majority of the times, as to speak about person who takes the minutes is to do it in femininely. Except in three occasions in the assemblies of which we have audio-visual record, not many more between those that we do not register on video, they are men those who have taken charge moderating the assemblies, especially in the first weeks. It is after the stability that brought to the assemblies the manual of assemblyism when the figure of moderator starts being rotary and when, in some occasions, women start moderating. In the beginning, young men exercised the function of moderator with certain political experience in unions or parties, more accustomed at the moment of speaking in public than the rest of the citizenship and that were forming a part of the group that took the initiative to organize the mobilization of 15th May. It is not until middle of June, it was already developed near twenty assemblies, when the women start taking part at the moment of moderating. Even this way, it is the slightly rotary post or function of moderation: they are, in relation to the number of participants in the assemblies, very small those that they have been busy in some moment with moderating. Something similar happens at the moment of taking minutes, where two women almost appear as the managers for this function.

In a text for the magazine 'El Viejo Topo' (2011), we can find a definition of what the teacher Rafael Díaz Salazar thinks that the social mass of this movement is: the 'precariado'. From his point of view "we are before the insurrection of the 'precariado', (...) term coined by Robert Castel to refer to the precarious worker, to the citizen who experiences living conditions increasingly damaged." This way, the 'precariado' would have come to substitute the proletariat of the centuries spent and it would consist of "unemployed people, workers with low wages, young women without access to the housing, pensioners with low pensions, exploited immigrants, university graduates without employment or with works badly full, pairs without perspective to form a family, early retired persons, inhabitants of working neighborhoods and of rural depressed regions". So far these people were contained to himself, trying to support networks of solidarity as the family or friends, but the outbreak of 15th May also meant an "explosion out of the humiliated ones and offended by the new social exclusion". If we have to look for a logic to the confluence of so many people and so different persons in this social movement, we have to look also in the contemporary history of every time for major precarious of the company.

The speeches of have turned concerning problems of economic, social or political type, which though individually they could be discussed, neither it had still hit the headlines of the public thing they had not even been discussed in a way joint and opened by the population. From the first day of camping, it could be observed different groups of persons, sat in circles, who were speaking about these offers (the elimination of the privileges of the political class or the control of the financial institutions were in mouth of all the persons), they were discussing his priority (for some persons the fight against the unemployment or for the access to the housing they were basic), were adding amendments, were proposing which was the following step ("it is necessary to take our recoveries to the party that gains " in assembly of 19th May) they were learning that they were meaning some of them ("it of the SICAV what is?" assembly of 20th May, one of the most repeated questions the first days) or they realized completely new offers (relating to subject matters like the environment or the equality of kind). In the nights of 21th and 22th May could be observed the first big groups that beside discussing different offers (as the withdrawals in urns in the on 20th May morning and in the evening) they were starting laying the foundations for the organization of a movement that already began to have form so much national as place. And these debates and this organization took a common element as a base: the word. Let's take as example the one that Elboj et al. (2009) to indicate since changes appear in our social relations across the dialog. Before, in the families, the main armchair of the house and the control of television were reserved to the father, who was the one who was deciding what one saw in every moment.

Nevertheless, in the last times, this decision begins to be negotiated by the rest of the family across the dialog. This one is alone an example of what to familiar level can be named as the draft dialogic of the company. This draft comes to underline the importance that takes the dialog in our company at the moment of taking agreements in important decisions in areas as the family, the school or the company. Hereby, we can indicate that this draft dialogic is the fact that one expresses across the 15th May movement, which there comes to question the traditional modernity reflected in the liberal traditional democracy, anchored relations of power of the governments and political groups that, though, they are legitimized by voting every four years, enter neither dialogs nor agreements with the thickness of the population. It is in opposition to the traditional democracy opposite to what 15th May movement are positioned, not in opposition to the democracy. And this movement in turn, it presents the characteristic of looking for the dialog in his relations, of coming to agreements and consensuses through social interactions in the public squares. From the 15th May movement, the squares have tried to turn into public spaces of debate and civil interaction. Habermas sets out one of the main constituent parts of the human experience is the communicative action, “that bases on last instance on the central experience of the force freely unifying of the argumentative speech to create consensus” (Radl, 1998). It is across the discussion and the dissent as the social assembled actors they can come to that one that joins them, since “they exceed their initially subjective views and ensure, through belief rationally motivated behaviour, at the same time the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of the context of life” (Radl, *ibid*). It is so the communicative competition creates consensus through the dissent. Habermas (2001) raises a discursive theory of the process of formation of the popular will that through the democratic institutions, it is fed on the opinion and the space of the public thing, which legitimizes the political decisions by means of the reflection between all the persons who take part of the company and who in turn, he promotes a participative and critical spirit. In this respect, we can affirm that the assemblies that have developed search and they are based on this spirit. We are not talking about a group of people that it meets to discuss it brings over of political expositions of big thinkers. We are talking about people who bring to these assemblies their vital experience and it is on what they know it brings over of the world what stamps the personality on his speeches. There is not mention Locke, Montesquieu or Rousseau. The discussion is established on a dialog of equally to equally and it brings over what other people think about the topic that it is treating itself in these moments. There are the “generating topics” about which he was speaking Freire (1995), topics that are given from the reality that surrounds the pupil (who in this case would be the person participant of the assembly) in order that it manages to know the place that occupies the above mentioned topic in his social context, who or what processes they control and what purpose is achieved on having developed the topic. These topics well might be, for example, eight points of Democracia Real Ya’s offers. What there is debated there as the democracy influences to a personal level inside the life of anyone of the people there present and which are the different problems and situations that turn out to be troubled. It splits of a critical analysis of the reality to put it jointly with the equal ones and from there developing different actions that lead to the improvement of the company. These speeches look for an action after the reflection. Following again Freire (1995), exposes us in his ‘Pedagogy of the oppressed’ that the search of the word “leads to us to surprising in her two dimensions -action and reflection- in such a form solidary and in an interaction (...) radically. There is no real word that is not an unbreakable union between action and reflection and that is not practice. Hence the true Word is transforming the world”. And this radical connection between the word and the action has followed the dynamics of the assemblyist process in the 15th May movement. If at the beginning the debates appeared as form of expression and of reflection on the problems, then these debates had an evolution towards the reflection it brings over of how putting a solution to these problems. After of the reflection of the beginning, which different offers part with, it goes away towards a practice in order to transform the reality, a practice that departs from the organization of the persons concerning assemblies of debate and capture of decisions. This way, the word, the speech, turns into

the transverse axis that crosses the process, so though it splits of the discussion of a series of problems, the majority of the offers of solution of the same ones are directed to a major democratization of all the aspects of the company where it takes in it counts much more the word of the citizenship.

They have turned out to be great and different offers that we might typify as offers of action (that have as aim give a response in the shape of protest) of organization (those that seek to provide with an organization to the movement) or with information (that to seek to offer information to create debate brings over of different topics). The latter offers are those that focus towards the creation of a debate on the basis of the different sources of information that the participants have, and promote, on the other hand, the possibility of facing different ideas and of creating a common consensus of between all of them. The capture of agreements takes on the basis of the explained in the title 'Phases of capture of consensus' of the flowchart. In the agenda the different offers come defined. The person or commission that threw the offer explains of that it consists in order that the group could do an idea to him about what it treats itself. After this it begins the debate, where every participant will rest or the offer, adding shades, discussing weaknesses or rejecting it completely. The first poll of opinion is realized to see which is the support that has the above mentioned offer, which precedes an argumentation of those persons who do not agree with the above mentioned thing. With these argumentations the offers are re-elaborated and are synthesized, coming finally to a voting. It is in the capture of agreements that from 15th May movement in Caceres and for extension, on the national level, where his more important particularity appears. The assemblyism that takes this movement as a form of organization drinks, between others, from the anarchistic labor movements (Romanos, 2011). It is undoubted to admit that this one is not a new formula invented by this social movement.

What if it is necessary to stand out and the really important of this type of capture of agreements is the diversity of opinions and ideologies that face. If in the assemblies of the anarchistic movements we can affirm that the ideology that was assembling all, with all the differences that could still distinguish, was the anarchist, in the assemblies of the 15th May movement there take part people who have an ideology that crosses the whole spectrum of possibilities, enclosed the absence of her. Hereby, the capture of agreements on the basis of consensuses that one produces is much richer as for debate and especially, we believe that it is very different as for democratic content. Though about the first ones (those of anarchistic unions) would have to be decided on aspects that concern only a line of thought (we do not believe that this one is not rich in shades), in the assemblies of 15th May movement there develops a democratic exercise that it has to see even with the vision that in a beginning can turn out to be slightly reconcilable but that across the transfer of certain individual trends, can come to a common confluence of thought and action. In the capture of agreements vital cobra importance the idea of what we have come to call leaders of the consensus, people who through their capacity of synthesis and scout, are able to making come together the different ideas that treat each other in the debate. We can observe as one of these people, in different assemblies, he is kept silent after expressing his opinion and in attitude of scout, as compiling the different voices that express. After this, it throws an offer of consensus that gathers the different shades that have been listened, modifying the initial offer. This way, we can relate these captures of agreement to dialogic social theories. Aubert et al. (2010: 30), indicate since increasingly we tend to find consensuses in our relations across the dialog in all the areas of our life, from our relations in day after day (with the family, the friendship or the pair) up to more institutional levels (as the international politics or the labor relations). The same authoresses and authors highlight like from the social sciences, across the theories of Beck (1998), Giddens (1995), Habermas (2001) or Flecha et al. (2001), there is discussed increasingly that the former authoritarian relations of power do not serve inside a social context in which the dialog at the moment of the capture of decisions is every time major, tending to positions and communicative relations, where the language receives a fundamental importance.

Conclusions

Despite not having completed the research work, we can anticipate some of the conclusions which we reached after the analysis of the data. The 15th May movement in Cáceres (and we believe that for extension, on the national level) comes to raise a series of needs and changes that the citizenship believes necessary to have a better coexistence and to solve certain problems of the current importance. These offers of change come given from the joint dialog of the citizenship in the public squares, which from 15th May have filled with a major political content. These manifestations and public debates form a part of a new form of social relations between the individuals and there exists in them an intention of democratic improvement and an important step towards a company increasingly dialogic.

The assemblies of 15th May movement turn this way into spaces where the citizenship, beside expressing, learns and develops these forms of interaction, it comes to consensuses and realizes offers of change. We can affirm that these assemblies are also educational spaces, where the meeting of the persons and the public debate helps to understand in turn that the consensus between the different positions and you design only it is possible if all the persons who of them take part can express in a free and equal space. If the authoritarian relations of power that were given during the former industrial company are believed by us that they are already obsolete, that they do not help to the improvement of people's life and that they cannot continue existing in a company increasingly plural and complex, we must open ourselves towards this type of dialogic relations, where the power of the arguments is over the arguments of the power.

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Entre los militantes y los laboratorios deliberativos: el 15-M

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Resumen

Con la emergencia de “nuevos movimientos sociales” en los años 1970, luego del movimiento por la justicia global a finales de los años 1990, la democracia participativa se hace un principio superior de la acción colectiva, que queda no obstante restringido a una práctica militante. El 15 de mayo de 2011 emerge en España un movimiento que no sale directamente de los movimientos sociales y pone la deliberación al centro de todas sus acciones, en relación con el “giro deliberativo” en la acción pública local y el creciente uso deliberativo de Internet y las redes sociales. Nuestro artículo trata de este pasaje de la deliberación de las microesferas de los movimientos sociales a la esfera pública ciudadana, cuestionando los orígenes, las especificidades y el impacto de las prácticas deliberativas experimentadas en las asambleas populares del 15-M. Con relación a otras movilizaciones, tres elementos diferencian el 15-M: la participación individual, la ausencia de un programa y de líderes, y el lugar central dado a la deliberación. Si otros movimientos ya reivindicaban los principios de horizontalidad, de inclusión y de transparencia, el 15-M se distingue tanto por el lugar de la deliberación como por la instauración de técnicas disciplinarias, que garantizan su aplicación. Mientras que los modos tradicionales de movilización están declinando, los indignados podrían aportar un nuevo soplo a la acción colectiva en España, renovando a los militantes y poniendo la cuestión de la deliberación en el centro del repertorio de acción.

Palabras clave

Democracia deliberativa, espacio público, España, movimientos sociales, 15-M.

Introducción

La organización y las formas de democracia interna son centrales en la sociología de los movimientos sociales. Plantean un reto nada despreciable. Cualquier movimiento social que procura inscribirse en el tiempo para alcanzar sus objetivos tiene que dotarse de una organización propia, con el fin de coordinar sus acciones, de reunir recursos y de defender de manera eficaz una causa (Neveu, 2002). El problema es que según la “ley de hierro de la oligarquía”, planteada por Robert Michels (1912), las organizaciones evolucionan siempre hacia una formalización interna (oligarquización) que concentra el poder en manos de unos pocos profesionales y convierte a los socios en agentes pasivos. Al analizar el fenómeno de la delegación política, Pierre Bourdieu (1987) identificaba un “efecto oficina”, según el cual los *profesionales* monopolizaban progresivamente el poder dentro de las organizaciones. Y según los estudios sobre los movimientos sociales, esta formalización suele además empujar las organizaciones a la utilización creciente de formas

convencionales de presión política, así como una moderación de las demandas del movimiento (Meyer y Tarrow, 1998; citado en Jiménez, 2003).

Los movimientos sociales no son sordos a este dilema. Por ello muchos tratan de buscar alternativas que permitan conjugar la consecución de objetivos estratégicos con un grado de organización más participativo. El recurso al consenso más bien que al voto mayoritario, la importancia concedida a la deliberación o la ausencia de portavoz son prácticas antiguas, que marcaron los movimientos de protesta desde los grupos anarquistas europeos a finales del siglo XIX hasta las coordinaciones que se multiplicaron en Francia a finales de los años ochenta, pasando por los movimientos americanos de los derechos civiles en los años cincuenta (Agrikoliansky, 2007). Sin embargo, no es hasta la emergencia de “nuevos movimientos sociales” en los años setenta (ecologistas y feministas principalmente) y el movimiento por la justicia global a finales de los años noventa, que la democracia participativa se convierte en un principio central de la acción colectiva y el discurso de los movimientos sociales.

Los teóricos de los “nuevos movimientos sociales” muestran que una de las especificidades de las movilizaciones sociales de los años setenta residía en la promoción de estructuras de funcionamiento autónomas y descentralizadas, denunciando con ello la organización centralizada y representativa del movimiento obrero y el sindicalismo (Touraine, 1978; Offe, 1985; Melucci, 1989). La desconfianza con respecto a la delegación de autoridad a representantes lejanos se hacía en provecho de asambleas generales y de una valoración fuerte de la democracia interna. Los trabajos sobre el movimiento por una justicia global (o movimientos alterglobalización) muestran que las lógicas participativas respondían no sólo a la adhesión a un sistema de valores específicos como la democracia participativa (della Porta, 2009), sino también a problemas prácticos que encuentran los actores al movilizarse (Agrikoliansky, 2007; Aguiton y Cardon, 2005; Sommier, 2003). Al revés de lo que pensaba Michels, para algunos las lógicas oligárquicas y burocráticas no se revelan siempre más eficaces que los procedimientos participativos, que presentan también intereses prácticos para los actores (Polletta, 2002). Si la deliberación se vuelve, por razones en parte estratégicas, un principio de la acción colectiva de los movimientos sociales, ésta ha estado, no obstante, restringida siempre a una práctica militante.

La importancia que ha adquirido la participación y la deliberación en los movimientos sociales no es de todas formas una cuestión aislada. En las esferas institucionales se multiplican los dispositivos de participación basados en principios deliberativos. Con ellos muchas administraciones intentan ampliar el sujeto político de la participación, contando con los ciudadanos “ordinarios” (ni elegidos, ni expertos, ni asociados) en la elaboración de las políticas públicas. Estos procesos se difunden desde los años noventa bajo formas muy diversas (consejos de barrio, presupuestos participativos, jurados ciudadanos, etc.) a escala local en todo el mundo¹. No obstante, la idea no viene de ahora. La importancia de implicar los ciudadanos en las decisiones que les afectan, más allá de las elecciones, surge en los años sesenta y setenta (Kaufman, 1960; Pateman, 1970; Barber, 1984), bajo la influencia de los movimientos sociales urbanos que preconizan la autogestión y la democracia directa (Castells, 1973; Borja, 1975; Cherki y Mehl, 1976).

Al igual que ocurre en los movimientos sociales, estos nuevos dispositivos administrativos, puestos en marcha desde los años noventa, tienen como objetivo la conciliación de la toma de decisiones con una organización más participativa de la sociedad civil. Esto supone introducir una lógica deliberativa en el espacio de relaciones

¹ Sobre estos dispositivos participativos, ver particularmente: Font, 2001b ; Santos, 2002 ; Fung y Wright, 2003 ; Bacqué et al., 2005 ; Blondiaux, 2008 ; Sintomer et al., 2008 ; Smith, 2009 ; Bacqué et al., 2010.

políticas que se daba entre los equipos de gobiernos y los representantes de los movimientos sociales urbanos, ampliando el sujeto político hacia la globalidad de la ciudadanía. La mayoría de estos procesos procura movilizar el "saber de uso" de los habitantes o el "sentido común" de los ciudadanos ordinarios (Sintomer, 2008; Nez, 2010), de tal modo que las asociaciones tradicionales las perciben como un espacio concurrente, o sea, un medio de rodear su peritaje colectivo y su capacidad de contrapoder (Rui y Villechaise-Dupont 2005; Hendriks 2002; Ganuza y Nez 2012). En general, estos dispositivos participativos, puestos en marcha por los poderes públicos locales, se encuentran hoy ampliamente desconectados de la dinámica de los movimientos sociales y no son objeto de movilizaciones fuertes (Blondiaux, 2008), aunque estén volcados en la deliberación y una organización más horizontal de los espacios públicos (Ganuza y Francés, 2011; Talpin, 2011).

En este contexto, marcado por una creciente consideración de la deliberación tanto en los movimientos sociales como en la acción pública local, surge el 15-M que sitúa la deliberación en el centro de sus acciones con una organización basada en asambleas abiertas a todos. El análisis del 15-M representa una contribución interesante a la literatura de los movimientos sociales, como a la democracia participativa y deliberativa, por la capacidad singular del movimiento en articular ambas dimensiones. Con relación a los procesos participativos institucionales, los indignados presentan un fuerte carácter *bottom up* (desde abajo hacia arriba) – al revés de los dispositivos *top-down* de las administraciones – y una dimensión de movimiento social, que se encuentra desconectada de los dispositivos de participación en Europa (Sintomer y Ganuza, 2011). Con respecto a los movimientos sociales, los indignados parecen distinguirse por la importancia central de la deliberación en el proceso de elaboración y de toma de decisiones, así como su capacidad para sobrepasar la barrera de la militancia sin perder los rasgos participativos de su organización. El 15-M permite analizar bajo un nuevo prisma la cuestión de la deliberación en un movimiento social, dado que la deliberación no se limita a una organización o a un conjunto de organizaciones (como en el caso de los foros sociales en el movimiento por la justicia global), sino que se despliega ampliamente en la esfera del espacio público, lo que incluye a los no-militantes. Como subraya Eduardo Romanos "el 15-M ha impulsado el traslado de las prácticas de democracia deliberativa desde recintos más o menos limitados (e.g., campamentos, foros sociales o centros autogestionados) a las plazas, y esa parece ser una diferencia importante" (Romanos, 2011: 9).

Nuestro artículo analiza este paso de la deliberación de las microesferas de los movimientos sociales a la esfera pública ciudadana, analizando los orígenes, las especificidades y el impacto de las prácticas deliberativas experimentadas en las asambleas populares del 15-M. ¿De donde vienen los métodos de deliberación puestos en ejecución por los indignados? ¿Se pueden notar filiaciones con movimientos sociales precedentes o dispositivos participativos institucionales? ¿En cuál medida se distingue el 15-M de otros movimientos sociales y de sus prácticas deliberativas? ¿Cómo se percibe este movimiento en las esferas militantes y qué impacto tiene sobre la acción colectiva en España?

Para responder a estas preguntas, nuestro análisis se apoya en una investigación etnográfica realizada desde finales de mayo de 2011 en Madrid. Hemos observado la dinámica de la acampada, las asambleas generales y las reuniones de comisiones y de grupos de trabajo llevadas por los indignados en Puerta del Sol como en varios barrios de la capital, así que manifestaciones y marchas. En la óptica de analizar las interacciones entre este movimiento y las organizaciones sociales y políticas existentes (partidos políticos, sindicatos, asociaciones de vecinos), hemos seguido en particular las actividades del 15-M en Carabanchel y Vallekas, dos barrios populares al Sur de Madrid caracterizados por una tradición política fuerte enraizada en el movimiento obrero. Hemos realizado entrevistas semi-directivas con diferentes actores implicados en el 15-M: participantes activos de una de las plataformas que lanzaron el 15-M (Democracia real

ya!), miembros activos de otras organizaciones y participantes que no pertenecen a ningún movimiento. Finalmente, hemos seguido regularmente la comunicación que se efectuó en Internet a través de las redes sociales (principalmente Twitter y Facebook), periódicos en línea y blogs políticos.

Los orígenes de las prácticas deliberativas del 15-M

Las prácticas deliberativas del 15-M no son espontáneas, pero tampoco pensamos que haya que remontarse a la tradición histórica de los concejos abiertos, que datan de la Edad media (Botella et al. 2011), para dar una explicación plausible de su emergencia. Además de un entorno económico que ha catalizado las protestas y un movimiento similar en los países árabes meses antes, la desafección ciudadana hacia la política es un elemento transversal al movimiento, pero que lleva presente en la sociedad muchos años. La crisis económica y política no es patrimonio de la sociedad española, sino algo muy presente en las democracias contemporáneas. Los movimientos similares al 15-M en Europa (Inglaterra, Portugal, Grecia o Francia), en EE.UU o Israel comparten estas motivaciones. Por eso, la singularidad de los indignados pensamos que descansa en otras latitudes, pues no es un simple movimiento de protesta más, sino que ha planteado una forma diferente de entender la protesta y con ello una manera distinta de concebir las relaciones políticas 1) entre los poderes públicos y la sociedad civil y 2) dentro de la sociedad civil. Esta singularidad descansa sobre todo en su propuesta de plantear un movimiento deliberativo estructurado en el espacio público, cuando gran parte de la teoría política contemporánea aboga por un espacio público desestructurado, solo articulado mediante la acción estratégica de las organizaciones sociales y los partidos políticos (Habermas, 1996). La propuesta del 15-M plantea por ello un modo distinto de protesta, que presupone una sociedad civil diferente a la que ha sido habitual hasta ahora. Se rechaza la imagen de una sociedad civil liberal, aislada del devenir de la política; pero también se niega la posibilidad de una sociedad civil republicana, basada en valores comunes. La individualidad en el 15-M, más bien, la pluralidad, es un prerrequisito. Se piensa la sociedad civil desde el individuo, pero, al contrario de los planteamientos del giro deliberativo de la teoría política, los intereses y las estrategias son pensados de forma colectiva en un medio público, fuera de las organizaciones. Desde el punto de vista del giro deliberativo de los movimientos sociales al final del siglo pasado, el 15-M ha fracturado las fronteras en las que se insertaba la deliberación en los movimientos y ha sido capaz de empujarlas hacia fuera para implicar a la ciudadanía en la deliberación.

Esto ha hecho que la deliberación sea un elemento medular del movimiento, que ha generado reacciones contrarias en otras organizaciones y a su vez ha disciplinado todos los actos públicos desde una perspectiva concreta. En el 15-M, hay reglas claras de comportamiento político y de diálogo. La presencia de técnicas y procedimientos deliberativos es tan dominante en el movimiento (sus informes, sus actas, sus reuniones, su organización, sus estrategias, sus conversaciones, etc), que la pregunta por sus orígenes pretende dibujar algunas hipótesis viables que nos permitan comprender mejor el desarrollo deliberativo del movimiento. Si nos atenemos a las técnicas deliberativas utilizadas dentro de las asambleas del 15-M, que son quizá las más emblemáticas por las implicaciones que tiene (asambleas multitudinarias, ley del consenso, coordinación entre asambleas, etc), proponemos rastrearlas desde cuatro recorridos distintos: 1) la cultura política de los centros sociales autogestionados, 2) una generación de profesionales formados en cursos universitarios especializados en la participación; 3) los modos de discusión en Internet a través de las redes sociales digitales y 4) una cultura política de la ciudadanía abierta al diálogo.

- 1) Si no ha sido impulsado por los movimientos sociales tradicionales, las asociaciones o los sin-

dicatos, ni tampoco por el movimiento alterglobalización, el 15-M está impregnado de una fuerte cultura política autónoma, que se desarrolla particularmente en los centros sociales autogestionados, multiplicándose desde los años ochenta con el impulso del movimiento okupa (Adell y Martínez, 2004; Martínez, 2007). Según una de las personas que iniciaron la toma de la plaza la noche del 15 de mayo, las dinámicas deliberativas de los centros sociales se convirtieron en una referencia en la organización desde el principio. "La gente de los centros sociales" no acudió hasta el jueves, cuatro días más tarde, cuando ya había cientos de personas en la plaza y una organización incipiente en comisiones y grupos de trabajo. Ya se habían organizado asambleas y se había adquirido el consenso y la no violencia como principios organizativos. Pero es allí, en los centros sociales autogestionados, donde se aprenden tales técnicas. El apoyo directo de los centros sociales no se hizo presente hasta que aparecieron los problemas logísticos del movimiento en sus inicios.

El 15-M no se inventa la deliberación, más bien vive inmerso en un contexto en el que está constantemente a debate. Tanto los movimientos sociales como las administraciones llevan tiempo hablando de regenerar la política, de incrementar la participación y el debate público. Los movimientos alterglobalización la han teorizado y pretenden infundir a sus prácticas organizativas una lógica tanto deliberativa como participativa, por lo que sería fácilmente trazable su influencia en el movimiento de los indignados. Igualmente, no hay que olvidar las movilizaciones sociales recientes en España (como la movilización estudiantil contra el plan de Bolonia, el movimiento por una Vivienda digna o Juventud SIN Futuro) que también practicaron el funcionamiento en asambleas. Pero es en los espacios autónomos y autogestionados donde se experimenta con *técnicas* deliberativas dentro de las asambleas con el fin de garantizar el buen funcionamiento de un debate sin perder su lógica participativa. Si vemos la organización de un centro social autogestionado como el de la Tabacalera en Madrid, es muy similar al de la acampadasol, con asambleas generales, comisiones y grupos de trabajo (Botella, 2011). El apoyo logístico de los centros sociales fue el que además ayudaría a trasladar la deliberación de los microespacios militantes al espacio público.

- 2) Otra fuente de influencia viene de jóvenes profesionales formados en cursos universitarios especializados en participación. El primero aparece en 1996 en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid dirigido por el sociólogo Tomas R. Villasante (1995). Su objetivo era enseñar a estudiantes y a profesionales de los municipios nuevas metodologías de trabajo sobre la participación, basadas en la pedagogía de Paulo Freire (1974) y la investigación-acción participativa desarrollada en los años 1970 y 1980 en América Latina, para que los propios ciudadanos decidieran las alternativas posibles a los problemas que compartían. Si los cursos universitarios puestos en marcha en Madrid, luego en Barcelona, en Sevilla y en Bilbao, tuvieron una importancia considerable sobre el desarrollo de los presupuestos participativos en España (Ganuzo y Francés, 2012), también desempeñan un papel no despreciable en la organización y la moderación de las asambleas del 15-M. Esta influencia pasa por la implicación de antiguos estudiantes en las asambleas populares que ayudan en las dinámicas asamblearias, se implican en las comisiones de "dinamización" y no dudan en afrontar asambleas multitudinarias. Pero su influencia también pasa por la difusión que se ha hecho de la participación con libros, artículos, seminarios, conferencias, congresos y la confección, por ejemplo, de manuales gratuitos sobre métodos participativos (Lorenzana et al., 2001) que circulan habitualmente entre organizaciones y profesionales o de guías prácticas sobre la deliberación que circularon ampliamente por los medios autónomos durante los últimos años (Lorenzo y Martínez, 2001). La perspectiva de estos cursos suaviza el dilema con el que empezábamos este trabajo. Se plantean técnicas participativas sofisticadas que tienen el objetivo de garantizar debates

y toma de decisiones cruciales para las organizaciones sin por ello perder las dinámicas deliberativas, que implican la inclusión de todos los afectados y la consecución de alternativas razonadas.

3) El papel que tuvieron Internet y las redes sociales es crucial. Las plataformas que lanzaron la convocatoria para la manifestación del 15 de mayo (Democracia real ya!, Juventud SIN futuro, Nolesvotes, Anonymous, Malestar, etc.) se constituyeron por este medio. Numerosas personas que participan en las asambleas del 15-M están acostumbradas al espacio cibernético, cuyo modo de funcionamiento abierto y participativo (en el caso de los wiki, los foros, los blogs, las redes sociales, etc.) facilita concebir una organización offline participativa. Muchos participantes suelen ironizar con esto y hablan de la creación de un espacio offline a imagen de las redes online. “El espíritu de internet” que apunta, como los espacios autónomos, a experimentar sin tomar el poder (Cardon, 2010), pudo estimular una nueva forma de pensar y de actuar en la protesta. El éxito se refleja en la capacidad de movilización del movimiento. Joan Subirats (2011: 67) subraya este papel de internet en la emergencia del 15-M: “El movimiento generado por la posibilidad de compartir, de construir en común, de colaborar para generar bienes y conocimientos basados en la agregación y cooperación entre personas”. Más allá del aprendizaje de técnicas relacionales de debate y decisión que facilitaron la coordinación de la acción entre los participantes y la moderación de las asambleas, la utilización de las redes sociales fue esencial en la evolución de los modos de organización de las asambleas. La retransmisión de asambleas en Internet con millares de espectadores facilitó la adopción de innovaciones, amplió la audiencia y permitió la transferencia de técnicas deliberativas de una asamblea a otra de forma sencilla y rápida.

4) Por último, hay que mencionar la cultura política de la ciudadanía. Sería imposible pensar la globalización de un procedimiento tan exigente como la deliberación sin la existencia previa de una cultura política sensible a estos mecanismos. En términos racionales cuesta pensar que una asamblea de más de mil personas, como las que tuvieron lugar reiteradamente en Sol las primeras semanas, se pueda llevar a cabo deliberativamente. Como resulta ingenuo pensar que un movimiento puede alcanzar una audiencia física cercana a los 7 millones de personas simplemente porque ha acertado en sus estrategias. Lo crucial de este desarrollo fue la aceptación inmediata de la organización deliberativa por todos los presentes y la capacidad que tuvo para enrolar a nuevos participantes. Esto consiguió romper la barrera de la militancia y plantear un movimiento conformado mayoritariamente por no-militantes. Al principio, la deliberación generó reticencias entre los militantes tradicionales, pues implicaba un civismo y una cultura del respeto poco usual entre los movimientos de izquierda. Sin embargo, los conflictos alrededor de la disciplina deliberativa nunca supusieron un debate serio dentro del movimiento. Incluso cuando se retiró una pancarta feminista de la asamblea de Sol al principio, el problema nunca fue más allá de un debate en las redes sociales digitales. La deliberación y todo lo que ella supone, se aceptó tal cual: respeto al otro y a sus propuestas, no levantar la voz, siempre argumentar, lenguaje de signos para expresar desacuerdo y toma de decisiones colectiva. Se aceptó el hecho de que no hubiera líderes y que toda la estrategia se realizara de forma consensuada. La posibilidad de la deliberación se levanta en el imaginario de la ciudadanía frente a las actitudes no deliberativas de los partidos políticos o el sistema político en general. Una imagen que está bastante extendida entre la población española si vemos estudios de opinión pública del CIS a lo largo de los años². Frente a un medio caracterizado como

2 En los barómetros de opinión pública del CIS, la ciudadanía desconfía mucho de los políticos, piensa que no explican sus decisiones y que no se tiene en cuenta a la ciudadanía para tomarlas. En un estudio reciente con grupos de discusión en toda España sobre la calidad de la democracia, realizado justo antes del 15-M, en marzo del 2011, la mayoría de los grupos critican el escaso carácter deliberativo del sistema político y los partidos. Esto es lo que nos hace pensar que el 15-M haya alcanzado un grado de aprobación de más del 70% de la ciudadanía española (barómetro CIS julio 2011) y explica en parte el éxito de la movilización, así como los resortes de ese éxito.

elitista y oligárquico, ajeno al debate público y preocupado por sacar a delante sus decisiones antes que debatirlas en el espacio público, el 15-M reivindica el espacio público, el beneficio de debatir allí las decisiones que afectan a todo el mundo, proponiendo una organización plenamente deliberativa. Muchas organizaciones de izquierdas no tardaron en apelar el movimiento de reformista. Sin embargo, su capacidad de movilización, así como su presencia en casi todas las capitales de provincia y multitud de municipios, hizo que muchos otros defendieran ese civismo deliberativo.

De las organizaciones militantes a la esfera pública ciudadana

Si las prácticas deliberativas de los indignados vienen en parte de medios militantes (en general de los movimientos por la justicia global, en particular de los centros sociales autogestionados), aquéllas no se restringen a ese mundo y sobrepasan rápidamente sus círculos. El movimiento se distingue por su capacidad de crear un espacio deliberativo estructurado en el espacio público, pero además de los militantes, hay que considerar la presencia de una cultura profesional vinculada a las metodologías participativas y un uso colaborativo en las redes sociales muy extendido entre los indignados. En este sentido, el 15-M define un territorio nuevo a partir de esa confluencia que permitió la coordinación de perfiles de personas muy diferentes (profesionales, mileuristas, estudiantes y precarios). Con relación a otras movilizaciones sociales, hay tres elementos que diferencian el 15-M y que lo dotan de una fisonomía reconocible entre los propios indignados: la participación individual *vs* la de los colectivos instituidos, la ausencia de un programa y de líderes, y el lugar central dado a la deliberación.

Se puede vincular la valorización del individuo en detrimento de los grupos organizados con la individualización creciente de las condiciones de existencia y la elevación del nivel de estudios, que conduce los ciudadanos a privilegiar modos de compromiso más individuales, distanciados y autónomos (Ion, 1997). Los participantes de la acampadasol se presentan, en su manifiesto, como “personas que hemos venido libre y voluntariamente [...]. No representamos a ningún partido ni asociación. Nos une una vocación de cambio³”. La toma de palabra es individual en las asambleas del 15-M, como lo explica esta participante: “Cualquier persona puede hacer una propuesta a título individual, la asamblea es la voz de los individuos no organizados⁴”. Los indignados retiraban sistemáticamente las pancartas partidarias en la acampada, donde se expresa una creatividad individual a través de la profusión de pequeños carteles improvisados y escritos de puño y letra. Los participantes denuncian inmediatamente cualquier signo identitario, como esta pancarta instalada en la plaza para la primera asamblea del barrio de Carabanchel, el 27 de mayo de 2011: “Hay que quitar la pancarta Democracia real ya!, es el movimiento de todos, eso es el nombre de una organización!” Las personas encargadas del “respeto” en las manifestaciones son invitadas a evitar toda propaganda política, como lo explica el animador de un taller de respeto antes de la marcha del 23 de julio en el barrio de Vallekas: “Si se reparten panfletos, no hay que impedirlos porque no somos ninguna autoridad para hacerlo, pero hay que decirles a quienes lo hacen las razones de por qué el movimiento está en contra”. En las manifestaciones, también dominan los carteles escritos de puño y letra, preparados individualmente o en grupo. Los símbolos de partidos o de sindicatos están casi ausentes, mientras que las pocas banderas son las republicanas y palestinas. Si el movimiento se apoya así en las individualidades y no en los colectivos preconstituidos, estos últimos no se quedan completamente afuera. No sólo algunos de sus miembros

3 <http://madrid.tomalaplaza.net/manifiesto-2/> (consultado el 09.01.2012).

4 Observación en la asamblea general de Puerta del Sol, el 17 de julio de 2011.

se implican en las asambleas, sino que pueden también echar una mano para cuestiones organizativas. Por ejemplo, es el Ateneo Republicano de Vallekas, una asociación republicana activa localmente, la que se encarga de la sonorización para la asamblea general del barrio y para varios eventos en Puerta del Sol.

Por otro lado, mientras que un movimiento social se caracteriza tradicionalmente por la definición de objetivos a alcanzar y de un adversario común (Neveu, 2002), los indignados se niegan a elaborar un programa que pudiera reunirlos frente a un enemigo difícil de alcanzar – no sólo el gobierno, los partidos políticos y los sindicatos que “no nos representan”, sino también los banqueros, las instituciones financieras internacionales y el sistema capitalista. La necesidad de adoptar o no un “consenso de mínimos” se convirtió en objeto de numerosos debates en las asambleas de las primeras semanas de la acampadasol. ¿Hay que ponerse de acuerdo o no sobre una serie de propuestas que haga consenso en el movimiento y definir así un programa común de acciones? El grupo de trabajo de política a corto plazo defiende esta estrategia: “Necesitamos un manifiesto que nos represente, necesitamos unos pilares básicos presentando lo que somos, hay que elaborarlos⁵”. Poco después este grupo definió cuatro propuestas “de mínimos” enfocadas a reformar el sistema político actual: reforma de la ley electoral, lucha contra la corrupción, separación efectiva de los tres poderes, creación de mecanismos de control ciudadano. No obstante, esta posición estuvo lejos de causar consenso en el movimiento. Incluso la adopción de un “consenso de mínimos” no alcanzó nunca el respaldo de la asamblea general de Sol, en parte por el rechazo que generaba jerarquizar las propuestas: “Es muy difícil encontrar una metodología para priorizar, no somos capaces de desechar propuestas que otros encontramos justas⁶”. Estas dificultades para alcanzar consensos son, sin embargo, aceptadas. Implican aprendizaje y respeto, aunque lleve aparejado cierto inmovilismo. En el fondo, para muchos es la línea imaginaria que separa el movimiento de una organización, lo que supondría caer en la formalización interna. Por eso, muchos piensan que ahí reside la fuerza del 15-M. Como decía un participante en el primer foro social indignado, el 25 de julio de 2011, “el 15-M es tan plural que nunca podría ser un movimiento político con un programa político, pero podríamos tener aliados políticos que, dentro de las instituciones, defendieran lo que es el 15-M”. No obstante, cuando se acercaron las elecciones generales del 20 de noviembre de 2011, los indignados no sólo se negaron a adoptar un programa y a designar líderes, sino también a apoyar cualquier candidato u organización política.

La idea de consenso esconde las fibras del 15-M, pues es precisamente aquélla la que permite situar la deliberación como base de su organización interna. En Madrid, todas las asambleas respetan una serie de reglas comunes, resumidas en la propuesta metodológica transmitida por la asamblea general de Puerta del Sol a los barrios y los pueblos cuando se descentralizó el movimiento a partir del 28 de mayo de 2011: “El objetivo será promover en todas las asambleas del movimiento un funcionamiento transparente, horizontal, y que permita a todas las personas participar en igualdad de condiciones⁷”. Se ponen por delante cuatro principios fundamentales, en la óptica de definir una nueva legitimidad democrática: la horizontalidad, la inclusión, el respeto y el pensamiento colectivo. Frente a una democracia representativa que “no nos representa”, los indignados procuran así construir una voz colectiva que se apoye en la diversidad de las opiniones de la población. Se pone rápidamente en marcha un sistema de democracia directa, desde el primer día de la acampada la noche del 15 de mayo. Las diversas comisiones que se organizan (de infraestructuras, de alimentación, de salud, etc.) administran problemas prácticos de este espacio autogestionado, mientras que

5 Intervención en la reunión de los portavoces de las comisiones y grupos de trabajo de la asamblea general de Sol, el 27 de mayo de 2011.

6 Intervención del portavoz del grupo de trabajo sobre los derechos animales en la reunión del 27 de mayo de 2011.

7 <http://madrid.tomalosbarrios.net/metodologia-asamblearia/> (consultado el 06.01.2012).

los grupos de trabajo (economía, política, educación, medio ambiente, etc.) se enfocan más hacia la acción en la perspectiva de un cambio de sociedad. Se reúnen en asamblea pública, una o varias veces a la semana, en las plazas cercanas, para preparar los puntos que discutir y las decisiones que tomar en asamblea general. Esta estructura horizontal, que se mantiene en Puerta del Sol después del levantamiento de la acampada el 12 de junio de 2011 (con evoluciones en el ritmo de las asambleas, que de diario se vuelve semanal, y en las temáticas de ciertos grupos), es también adoptada en cada barrio y pueblo de la comunidad autónoma con la descentralización del movimiento (Nez, 2011). Si movimientos sociales precedentes ya reinventaban los principios de horizontalidad, de inclusión y de transparencia, el 15-M se distingue tanto por el lugar central que concede a la deliberación como por la instauración de técnicas disciplinarias destinadas a garantizar su aplicación.

Deliberar en el espacio público

El paso de la deliberación de las microesferas de las organizaciones militantes hacia la esfera pública ciudadana se traduce, en primer lugar, en una ocupación del espacio público, lo que tiene un impacto no despreciable sobre las prácticas deliberativas puestas en ejecución. A pesar de la escasez de investigaciones empíricas sobre la dimensión espacial de las movilizaciones sociales, el espacio y el lugar se perciben cada vez más como esencial en el análisis de la contestación (Auyero, 2005). Más allá de la ocupación de la calle, que constituye un modo clásico de protesta en las manifestaciones y barricadas (Tilly, 1986; Gould, 1995; Fillieule, 1997), diferentes trabajos mostraron cómo el espacio puede también constituir un recurso o una coacción en las movilizaciones colectivas (Zhao, 1998; Hmed, 2008). El análisis del 15-M nos invita a establecer vínculos entre la inscripción espacial de un movimiento social y sus prácticas deliberativas. Los trabajos sobre los procesos participativos se interesaron relativamente poco por su dimensión espacial – sólo mostrando que la elección de los lugares de reunión y la configuración de las aulas pueden estimular o no la participación, en el caso por ejemplo de los consejos de barrio en Francia (Blondiaux y Lévêque, 1999). No obstante, la guía metodológica sobre las reuniones y asambleas de Ana Rosa Lorenzo y Miguel Martínez (2001: 30) dedica un apartado especial sobre la organización del espacio: “No atender a la distribución espacial en las reuniones puede traducirse en que se entorpezca fuertemente su desarrollo. No sirve cualquier lugar, ni siquiera el mismo lugar puede ser apropiado para reuniones con distinto número de participantes”. En el caso del 15-M, la elección deliberada de la calle y de las plazas para organizar las acampadas y las asambleas aparece central en la promoción de prácticas participativas y deliberativas, por la apertura, la publicidad y la transparencia de los debates que estos lugares implican. Se estimula así la participación, porque ciertas barreras vinculadas a los espacios cerrados desaparecen – es posible, por ejemplo, asistir a una asamblea con los niños o los animales de compañía. Se reducen en este sentido los costes de la participación. El espacio público aparece pues como un lugar menos reglamentado que los generalmente utilizados en los procesos institucionales de participación, como las aulas de escuela, lo que atrae a nuevos públicos como los jóvenes, menos propensos a venir a lugares institucionales. El espacio público constituye pues un recurso para la acción colectiva, favoreciendo una diversidad de participantes, eliminando fronteras a la participación y dando una visibilidad al movimiento. Favorece también la efectividad del principio de igualdad, ya que todas las personas sentadas en el suelo se encuentran al mismo nivel sin que se establezcan jerarquías.

Además del argumento de la autonomía con respecto a los colectivos ya constituidos, los indignados se oponen regularmente a otras propuestas de lugares de reunión que no tengan esta dimensión pública,

como locales de asociaciones de vecinos, centros sociales autogestionados o instalaciones culturales de barrio. Los espacios públicos presentan no obstante coacciones, vinculadas a los potenciales conflictos de uso del territorio y a las condiciones climáticas. Acampar u organizar una asamblea en una plaza significa, en primer lugar, compartir el territorio con otras personas (comerciantes, vendedores o artistas ambulantes, transeúntes, persona sin hogar, etc.) cuyas actividades pueden entrar en conflicto con las del agora constituida. Lorenzo y Martínez (2001: 32), por ejemplo, advierten que las reuniones deberían “hacerse en espacios donde no se esté realizando al mismo tiempo ninguna otra actividad que pueda entorpecer”. Las asambleas públicas en las plazas se confrontan así con otros usos, particularmente comerciales y lúdicos. Las limitaciones de estos lugares públicos dependen también de las condiciones meteorológicas, por ejemplo, la lluvia o el sol puede hacer difícil o imposible el desarrollo de los debates. La llegada del invierno a Madrid forzó a los indignados a cambiar sus lugares de reunión, lo que tuvo un impacto sobre la amplitud de la participación y las prácticas de deliberación. Por ejemplo, el desplazamiento de varias asambleas de los grupos de trabajo de Puerta del Sol a casas okupa, como el Hotel Madrid ocupado al final de la manifestación del 15 de octubre de 2011, desanimó la participación de los que no estaban acostumbrados a pasar la puerta de tales lugares ilegales. Esta evolución espacial de los lugares de asamblea tiene también un impacto sobre las prácticas deliberativas, la configuración de ciertos lugares cerrados o privados incitan menos el debate y la discusión que los espacios públicos, donde se puede sistemáticamente organizar una configuración circular para facilitar la deliberación.

La instauración de técnicas disciplinarias

Además de la ocupación del espacio público, el 15-M se distingue de otros movimientos sociales por el grado de formalización de la deliberación, con el fin de evitar las tentativas de concentración del poder y la producción de jerarquías dentro del movimiento. El primer elemento es la rotación de todas las funciones, instituida en oposición a las lógicas de representación y de delegación política. Una comisión de dinamización asegura la preparación y la organización de las asambleas generales Puerta del Sol. En asambleas públicas abiertas a todos, define el orden del día y designa a las personas encargadas de moderar la asamblea, de tomar los turnos de palabra, de redactar las actas y de facilitar la moderación. En las asambleas más pequeñas, cualquier participante puede ser voluntario al inicio de la reunión para asumir estas funciones, que son todas rotativas. La rotación del moderador es particularmente importante, porque ejerce una influencia no despreciable sobre el desarrollo de las asambleas, decidiendo por ejemplo abrir o no un turno de palabra. Por otra parte, no hay representantes sino un sistema de portavocía rotativo, únicamente habilitados para transmitir las decisiones de la asamblea en otros espacios, particularmente mediático. Se organizan así rotaciones para responder a las preguntas de la prensa y representar el movimiento afuera. Este sistema de portavocía rotativo funciona también internamente, para constituir por ejemplo la asamblea popular de Madrid (APM) que pretende definir estrategias de acción común entre los barrios y pueblos de la comunidad autónoma.

Además, el desarrollo de las asambleas descansa en reglas claras, lo que evita que el equipo de dinamización tenga un peso desmesurado. Antes de empezar, los moderadores siempre exponen las reglas cívicas de un debate: respetar a la pluralidad, a los turnos de palabra, nunca elevar el tono de voz, siempre argumentar y evitar discursos autocomplacientes. Una vez iniciada la sesión, todos los participantes se convierten en vigilantes de la deliberación a través del lenguaje de signos creado para ello. En cuanto alguien levanta la voz, además del moderador, otros participantes suelen expresar directamente con sus manos el descontento con dicha actitud. La deliberación en el 15-M no es por ello un ideal de relación política, sino

un compendio de reglas que disciplina las reuniones abiertas y que ha sido aceptado por todos, convirtiéndose cada participante en un vigilante del civismo deliberativo.

Una de las principales características de las asambleas madrileñas es su funcionamiento por consenso y no según la lógica del voto mayoritario. Este modo de toma de decisiones ha sido objeto de debates amplios y reiterados en el 15-M desde su nacimiento. Aún hoy sigue siendo una línea de debate abierta y el movimiento en Madrid todavía no ha alcanzado un consenso a este respecto. A pesar de las situaciones de bloqueo que provoca, sus defensores señalan ardientemente el “espíritu del movimiento” contra “el sistema de siempre, del que no queremos más⁸”. Antes de validar una propuesta sondeando el conjunto de los participantes, el moderador pide sistemáticamente si hay una persona “radicalmente en contra” o que desea “aportar matices”. Si la propuesta genera oposición, se abren turnos de palabra (limitados en número y en duración), para escuchar los argumentos a favor y en contra. Para tomar una decisión, hace falta que sea aceptada por el conjunto de los participantes, es decir, que ningún disenso argumentado se exprese en la asamblea. Este método implica “intentar convencer al otro, y si no está de acuerdo, de presentarlo de manera constructiva”, como lo expresa un participante en una asamblea de barrio. Se trata pues de intercambiar argumentos y contra-argumentos con el objetivo de formular y de reformular las propuestas, hasta encontrar finalmente un acuerdo, lo que exige tiempo como lo sugiere la divisa del movimiento: “Vamos lentos porque vamos lejos”. El objetivo, siempre planteado al inicio de las asambleas, es construir progresivamente un pensamiento común que sea inclusivo, tomando en consideración la opinión de las minorías, y que busque el bien común. El lenguaje gestual ayuda a la inclusión, pues permite manifestar una posición sin perturbar la toma de palabra: levantando las manos en el aire, cruzándolas o haciendo el signo de una rodadura, todo el mundo puede manifestar su acuerdo, su desacuerdo o su cansancio con respecto a una intervención. Se invitan también a los participantes a utilizar un “lenguaje inclusivo”, sistematizando por ejemplo el género femenino (“todas [las personas]” más bien que “todos”), mientras que se generaliza la traducción en lengua de signos en las grandes asambleas.

Esta formalización de las reglas de participación y de deliberación en las asambleas logra evitar que unos grupos organizados monopolicen la palabra, como pudo ser el caso en otros episodios históricos⁹. Los miembros de organizaciones políticas, sociales o sindicales no llegan a imponer su punto de vista en las asambleas generales, porque la reglamentación de los turnos de palabra y la toma de decisiones por consenso no les da más peso en la discusión que a cualquier otro individuo. Por ejemplo, los miembros del grupo de trabajo laboral en Vallekas, que son miembros de sindicatos, intentan repetidas veces imponer una identidad (“el movimiento obrero”) y modos de acción, como la huelga general, que no consiguen alcanzar un consenso en la asamblea general. Si los debates son a menudo largos y agitados entre los miembros de este grupo de trabajo y los demás participantes, las reglas de la deliberación no les permiten imponerse en este espacio. Además, el principio de rotación de las funciones, particularmente las de moderador y de portavoz, evita que emerjan “cabezas visibles” del movimiento, que podrían otorgarse el derecho a hablar en su nombre. En la asamblea general de Puerta del Sol, a excepción del “abuelo de la revolución” que buscan a menudo los medios de comunicación por su implicación diaria con más de ochenta años, nadie se identifica claramente como representante del 15-M. Aunque la ausencia de reglas claras sobre la función de portavoz introduzca lógicas de representación y de delegación política en organizaciones que ponen en valor sin embargo la deliberación en su funcionamiento interno (Mouchard, 2002), la clarificación de las

8 Intervenciones de un grupo de jóvenes a favor del consenso en la asamblea general de Sol, el 3 de julio, dedicada al debate sobre el funcionamiento por consenso o por mayoría de cuatro quintos.

9 Ver particularmente, sobre la burocratización de los soviets en el momento de la revolución rusa, Ferro (1980).

reglas de juego por los indignados garantiza el respeto de los principios de horizontalidad, de transparencia y de inclusión.

Los militantes frente al 15-M

La deliberación así formalizada crea un punto de divergencia entre los indignados y los colectivos instituidos. Los representantes políticos, sindicales y asociativos sienten la concurrencia por la emergencia de otras fuentes de legitimidad en las asambleas populares, como ya es el caso en los dispositivos participativos fundados sobre una participación individual y universal (Ganuza y Nez, 2012). Los conflictos recurrentes que oponen los miembros del grupo de trabajo laboral a otros participantes de la asamblea general de Puente de Vallekas revelan las tensiones entre el 15-M y las organizaciones tradicionales. La oposición es sistemática, en las asambleas de este barrio, entre algunos hombres de sesenta años, que se implican en este grupo de trabajo a partir de una experiencia del sindicalismo obrero, y el resto de la asamblea que defiende una identidad más amplia, como lo expresa este participante:

“Lo que he entendido es que no se siente representado [el portavoz el grupo de trabajo denuncia las actas de la asamblea anterior], pero yo no me siento representado por vosotros. El “movimiento obrero” está bien, pero hay gente no obrera aquí, somos artistas, autónomos, etc. Estoy harto de siempre los obreros, no me siento representado por vosotros, lo siento¹⁰!”

Los conflictos se refieren no sólo a los medios de acción (la huelga general) y la identidad (el movimiento obrero) propuestos por este grupo de trabajo, sino también sobre el método deliberativo en sí. Los miembros de este grupo ponen en tela de juicio el hecho de tener que inscribirse para tomar la palabra y respetar la regla de los turnos de palabra limitados – a lo que los jóvenes participantes de la asamblea les responden que “pueden tomar la palabra, pero no en cualquier momento y siempre según las reglas definidas previamente”¹¹.

Estas tensiones entre dos generaciones de militantes traducen conflictos de legitimidad entre los modelos de democracia participativa y representativa. Puede que sean particularmente visibles en Vallekas por la historia del movimiento social en el barrio. Pero las encontramos también en otras asambleas de barrio del 15-M o en las asambleas generales en Puerta del Sol. Además, el civismo deliberativo de los indignados ha sobrepasado sus propias fronteras, contaminando otros movimientos como el de los profesores de la enseñanza secundaria. Estos se organizan desde el mes de julio de 2011 en contra de los recortes en el presupuesto de la educación de la comunidad autónoma de Madrid, inspirándose en el modo de funcionamiento de los indignados. Los intercambios entre una profesora de unos treinta años y dos responsables sindicales treinta años mayores, en una reunión de profesores en la corona metropolitana del Sur de Madrid, el 13 de octubre de 2011, revelan los conflictos de legitimidad y de poder vinculados a la adopción de un modo de organización más participativo que representativo:

La profesora: “Los sindicatos mayoritarios han decidido [el número de días de huelgas] sin consultar a los profesores. Se nos ningunea a los profesores. Están los sindicatos pero los profesores queremos un sistema asambleario, no todos estamos en sindicatos pero tenemos derecho a opinar”.

10 Intervención en la asamblea general de Puente de Vallekas, el 16 de julio de 2011.

11 Observación de una altercación entre los miembros del grupo de trabajo laboral y jóvenes participantes, al final de la asamblea general del 16 de julio de 2011.

La dirigente sindical: "Hablamos de mayorías cuando en Comisiones Obreras nos han votado 11.000 personas en las últimas elecciones, representamos a más de 14.000 afiliados. Las mayorías son muy relativas! [...] Somos los que que tienen más representación en la primaria para impulsar un movimiento fuerte. Tenemos la experiencia, sin nosotros, no tenéis fuerza suficiente".

El dirigente sindical: "Yo recibo muchas críticas contra los sindicatos y los partidos, pero han votado el 70% de los votantes, los sindicatos tienen representatividad. No se puede decir a los tres sindicatos que no nos hacen caso! Y los 18 000 que nos han votado, ¿quién les representa?"

Más allá de estos conflictos de legitimidad entre dos concepciones de la democracia, el movimiento de la enseñanza secundaria en la comunidad autónoma de Madrid muestra que el modo de organización de los indignados y las técnicas deliberativas utilizadas en las asambleas populares comenzaron a difundirse en otros sectores sociales. No sólo es el lenguaje gestual del 15-M que se adopta rápidamente en asamblea generales, por razones prácticas frente a una gran afluencia de profesores al anuncio de los recortes presupuestarios, sino también el modo de la asamblea a diferentes escalas (institutos, sectores geográficos, comunidad autónoma de Madrid) y las prácticas deliberativas que lo acompañan (moderación exterior a los sindicatos, rotación de las funciones, igualdad en las tomas de palabra, etc.). En esta movilización de la enseñanza secundaria, se pone progresivamente en marcha un sistema de democracia directa, en paralelo de la clásica representación sindical. Pensamos que el 15-M es así susceptible de abrir un nuevo ciclo de movilización, tal como lo define Sidney Tarrow (1995: 95): una "ola creciente luego decreciente de acciones colectivas estrechamente relacionadas y de reacciones a éstas", que se caracteriza por la intensificación del conflicto, su difusión geográfica y social, la aparición de acciones espontáneas y de nuevas organizaciones, la creación de nuevos referentes ideológicos y la extensión del repertorio de acción. Mientras que los modos tradicionales de movilización, como los sindicatos y las asociaciones de vecinos, están declinando (Navarro, 1999; Font, 2001a, Subirats, 2001), los indignados podrían así aportar un nuevo soplo a la acción colectiva en España, renovando a los militantes y poniendo la cuestión de la deliberación en el centro del repertorio de acción.

Conclusión

La extensión de la deliberación más allá de las esferas militantes se explica por la originalidad del 15-M, que se inspira en parte de los movimientos sociales existentes y de la cultura política autónoma, pero también de otras culturas profesionales y ciudadanas. Hay que relacionar así las prácticas deliberativas adoptadas en las asambleas del 15-M con el "giro deliberativo" que se produjo no solo en los movimientos sociales, sino también en la acción pública local (con las formaciones profesionales que le acompañan) y, más ampliamente, en el uso colaborativo de Internet y de las redes sociales. La genealogía muy específica de esta movilización, que no ha sido convocada por las organizaciones tradicionales sino por plataformas recientemente constituidas en Internet, explica sus principales características: la valorización del individuo contra toda forma de colectivo instituido, el rechazo de definir un programa y de escoger a líderes, y el lugar central concedido a la deliberación para toda acción y toma de decisiones. De este modo los indignados han hecho posible construir un espacio público amplio, incluyendo al conjunto de la ciudadanía, y un espacio deliberativo, es decir, atravesado por procedimientos disciplinarios orientados a proteger la deliberación. Esto ha sido posible porque lo realmente distintivo de sus planteamientos cívicos ha sido la ocupación del espacio público para transformarlo en espacio político y la fuerza disciplinaria, en términos

deliberativos, con la que el movimiento los ha llevado a cabo. El 15-M pone así en evidencia la importancia de formalizar las técnicas deliberativas para hacer efectiva la deliberación en un movimiento social y oponerse a la ley de hierro de la oligarquía, aunque se notan también formas de institucionalización del movimiento al paso del tiempo.

La permanencia en el tiempo de este sistema de democracia directa provoca inevitablemente formas de rutinización de las prácticas participativas y deliberativas, como lo hemos observado siguiendo durante más de ocho meses las asambleas madrileñas. La multiplicación de las asambleas, de las comisiones y de los grupos de trabajo, a todas las escalas, pone a prueba el principio de horizontalidad. Poco a poco se difunde la impresión en los barrios y pueblos que la asamblea general de Puerta del Sol se inscribe arriba de las demás asambleas, por su visibilidad popular: “Introducimos una centralización dentro de la toma de decisión cuando ponemos la asamblea de Sol como un elemento central en comparación con los barrios. Es el primer paso hacia una estructura vertical del poder¹²”. La disminución regular del número de participantes en las asambleas, en Puerta del Sol como en los barrios, dificulta también el respeto de la regla de rotación de los portavoces y de los equipos de moderación por falta de voluntarios. Los miembros de las comisiones de dinamización de las asambleas, conscientes de esta deriva, hacen convocatorias regulares para una rotación de sus equipos: “Que venga gente a dinamización! Hoy tuvimos por primera vez que repetir un moderador, no es bueno ver siempre las mismas caras, la dinamización tiene que rotar, para que no parezcamos como los dirigentes de la asamblea¹³. No obstante, nos parece que la disminución del número de participantes en las comisiones y los grupos de trabajo no está sin relación con el modo de decisión por consenso, cuya lentitud aumenta los costes de la participación y penaliza a los participantes menos politizados. En los barrios y los pueblos, las horas de debate dedicadas a la definición de la organización práctica de la asamblea, luego las discusiones interminables sobre tal o tal punto al orden del día, desanima a las personas menos acostumbradas a la acción colectiva. Paradójicamente, contra la identidad misma del movimiento, las asambleas del 15-M corren el peligro de transformarse en “asambleas de activistas” (Castells, 2012), mientras que sus técnicas deliberativas están difundiéndose en las movilizaciones de otros sectores sociales.

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INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PROTESTS

The notion of the Multitude and lessons from the present cycle of struggles: the case of Greece

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Abstract

The Multitude, as a concept analyzed by Hardt and Negri, has two meanings. The first is as a class notion describing the widened formation of the proletariat in the era of post-Fordist capitalism. In addition, it can be understood as the unmediated biopolitical production of a potentially revolutionary subject, which due to the socialization of production and the rise of general intellect as a driving force in today's capitalism, has constituted capital a parasitic relationship, useless in all parts of the productive schema and a soon to disappear degenerated antique. Both as a class description and as a political project, the Multitude seems to be based on an overly optimistic and incomplete analysis. The recent cycle of struggles, here exploring the case of Greece, has shown that even if the Multitude is indeed an existing social subject which is the potential bearer of post-capitalist emancipation, an unwillingness to engage with politics and the abandonment of some traditional forms of political organization, such as the party or a front claiming power, seriously hinders the prospect of real radical change and only ensures defeat.

Keywords

Greece, Hardt, Multitude, Negri, Syntagma

The notion of the Multitude as a social subject unifying those living and working under capital, which has the potential to become the bearer of social change in the globalized era of the 21st century, has been quite influential in academic and radical circles for the past ten years. Appearing as part of a chain in a long philosophical and political tradition which has its roots in Italian autonomist Marxism, it is supposed to keep the momentum of radical theory alive, while at the same time avoiding the dogmas of the past which are considered outdated and passé. The aim of this paper is to examine these assumptions through the prism of the cycle of struggles that the world has experienced over the last years.

From the large protests of the anti-globalization movement to the revolt in Greece in December 2008, and from Tahrir Square to the Occupy movements in the metropoleis of the western world, it has been argued by various scholars that what we are observing is the materialization, even in an embryonic form, of the radical potential of the Multitude. However, what seems to be missing is a pragmatic evaluation of these struggles. What conclusions can be drawn from such a rich experience? Are these movements to be celebrated as an explosion of energy and resistance from the grassroots level, or should their lack of tangible results alarm us that something could be inherently wrong with the way these struggles are fought and with the theoretical frameworks that underpin them?

I will begin my analysis by presenting a short review of the notion of the Multitude, its historical roots and how it has been articulated and presented as the radical concept *par excellence* for the struggles of the early 21st century. Then, its application will be tested in the case-study of Greece. The analysis will focus on the cycle of struggles of the last three years in Greece, beginning with the 20 turbulent days which followed the police shooting of a student in December 2008 and continuing with the multifarious struggles against the imposition of extreme-austerity measures by the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank (or the ‘troika’, as it has become commonly known) and the Greek governments. More emphasis will be given to the peak of this struggle which took place in the summer of 2011 with the movement of the ‘Frustrated’, the equivalent of the Spanish ‘indignados’, and the building of a movement centred in the occupied Syntagma Square.

It will be shown that while the notion of the Multitude can be a quite useful analytical tool for the understanding of the modern technical composition of labour and towards drawing a modern map of resistance networks, it is, at least for the moment, inadequate as a bearer of radical socio-political change. Thus, questions arise as to whether political concepts that have been long declared ineffective or even unwelcome, such as the party or the political front, should be re-evaluated in light of the current capitalist crisis and the inability of the social strata affected by it to build sufficient forms of resistance and counter-attack.

On the notion of the Multitude

Multitude as a class concept and as a political potentiality

Traditionally, ‘multitude’ has been used in a somewhat neutral way, similar to the word “crowd”, with its slightly different connotations from the more negatively charged ‘mob’, ‘mass’, ‘horde’, or ‘plebs’ (Douzinas, 2011: 193). For Hobbes, all of the above terms signify an apolitical situation of decadence, the only way out of which would be the unification of the amorphous mass into a unity, into the one of the ‘people’. The first one to see the creative and possibly radical potential of the Multitude¹ was Baruch Spinoza, for whom it was the only subject capable of realizing the democratic ideal (Hardt and Negri, 2011, p. 42).

In recent years a series of thinkers, some of whom had their origins in the Italian radical traditions of workerism and autonomism, have managed to re-invent the notion of the ‘Multitude’ and to bring it back to the forefront of contentious politics. A pioneer in this procedure has been Paolo Virno, mainly with his work *A Grammar of the Multitude* (2004). However, those to whom the notion of Multitude owes most of its popularity are Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, whose trilogy *Empire* (2000), *Multitude* (2006) and *Commonwealth* (2011) have been among the most influential theoretical references in modern radical movements. This paper will mainly focus on how the notion of the Multitude is conceived in the work of Hardt and Negri. This is because in Virno’s work, the Multitude is used more in a loose way as a substitute for the notion of the ‘people’, having as the main characteristic that links its subjects the symbolic common code that language offers. Virno also focuses his attention more upon the superstructure and the sphere of circulation, rather than the world of production (Virno, 2004; Aufheben, 2008). These reasons, in addition to his scepticism regarding the viability of any revolutionary political project, make Virno’s work less suitable as a starting point from which to assess the radical movements which have grown up in response to the present capitalist crisis.

¹ Multitude with capital ‘M’ refers to the philosophical-analytical concept, as opposed to ‘multitude’ referring to the normal use of the word

On the other hand, for Negri the Multitude is first and foremost a class concept (2003). For those who have followed the intellectual work of the Italian thinker, it is possible to understand the Multitude as the completion of his theoretical attempts to grasp the essence of the new hegemonic subject of capitalist production; an attempt which had begun during his years in the workerist movement. In the 1970s, he pointed out that the main figure in a capitalism that was re-organizing in response to a loss of control following the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s was no longer the industrial proletariat, or as Negri called it, the ‘mass worker’. As capitalism was strengthening its control over all aspects of life, expanding the sphere of production and exploitation from the walls of the factories to the broader capitalist metropolis, the archetypal figure of exploitation and resistance was the ‘social worker’. This new category included elements that were not industrial workers in the traditional sense; however they, directly or indirectly, were participating in the creation and realization of surplus value (Negri, 2008). For example, women or those in caring services facilitated the reproduction of the working class and therefore indirectly took part in the production and realization of surplus value otherwise produced in the workplace.

With the intellectual companionship of Michael Hardt, over the last decade Negri has developed the notion of the social worker towards the more multi-dimensional concept of the Multitude. Again, initially the Multitude must be realized in class terms. The definition of the Multitude can be straightforwardly understood simply as: “...all those who work under the rule of capital and thus potentially as the class of those who refuse the rule of capital. (...) The Multitude gives the concept of the proletariat its fullest definition as all those who labour and produce under the rule of capital” (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 106-107). Thus, the Multitude, as a class concept, is a broadened notion of the proletariat that specifically relates to the era of immaterial labour and biopolitical production.

By referring to an era where immaterial production is hegemonic, Hardt and Negri take a daring step. For them, labour has undergone an important transformation in the post-Fordist paradigm. The major characteristic is that although the production of material goods is still quantitatively dominant, there is a qualitative shift in the production of immaterial ‘products’, such as values, communication symbols, emotions and codes (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 108-109; 2011: 132). For Hardt and Negri, one of Marx’s greatest achievements was to see that, while in his own time the industrial proletariat constituted only a tiny minority compared to the peasants or the small craftsmanship, this class and its accompanying mode of production would become the dominant paradigm of capitalism. This means that a whole series of pivotal capitalist institutions, such as the school, the prison and the military, as Foucault has shown, would be organized, and would discipline their subjects, using the model of the factory. *Industry would, in other words, transform society according to its own image.* Nowadays, this hegemonic role belongs to immaterial labour. The main characteristics of this new model are the fragmentation of production and the simultaneous fragmentation of working class identity, the crucial importance of horizontal networks, the flexibility and precarity of labour, the importance of communications and the blurring of what constitutes labour and non-labour time. These very same characteristics seem to engulf social areas beyond the sphere of immaterial production, the military and its new network-like and flexible organizational model being a good example. It seems though that immaterial production is becoming the prevailing paradigm in the present stage of capitalism, transforming society according to its own inherent characteristics (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 107, 142-145).

Besides immaterial labour, what is really important to understand about the Multitude is how it is engaged in the procedure of ‘biopolitical production’. To understand the above term, one has to take a step back and see how Foucault described the ability of state and capital to discipline their subjects not only

through physical coercion (although this element is always present, only to flourish in periods of crisis), but also through 'biopower' (Foucault, 1994). Biopower is the ability to police one's own development of self, the way he thinks and the way he produces his social character and relations. Biopower is, in other words, the ability of the state and capital to produce social life itself, besides controlling material production (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 94). This brings us back to the Italian workerists and the idea that capital in the metropolis penetrates every aspect of everyday life and transforms it according to its needs (Curcio and Franceschini, 2007). *We are here dealing with the real subsumption not only of labour, but of life itself under capital.* The function of biopower is similar. Through biopower, the ruling elites of state and capital, or the 'Empire' as Hardt and Negri have put it, are trying to shape the individual, the Multitude and the whole world according to their own will.

However, the Multitude bears in itself the germs of resistance to biopower. It embodies a counterbalancing power, namely the ability for biopolitical production. Through its networks and through its collaboration, the Multitude creates, besides commodities, forms of subjectivity and even social life itself. Biopolitical production is thus "the power of life to resist", as opposed to biopower which is the attempt of the imposition of "power over life" (Hardt and Negri, 2009:57). Immaterial labour producing non-tangible 'products' such as relationships and codes of communication could be characterised as biopolitical production at its purest.

However, the Multitude is not only a class concept, useful merely for theoretical analysis to some diehards of Marxian sociology. Most importantly, for its advocates, it is also a political concept. It has to be understood that it is not a political concept in the way that 'class or 'the people' once were. This is because, according to Hardt and Negri, one preserves his individuality by participating in the biopolitical production of the Multitude. Instead of a homogenous mass, the Multitude in its potential as a political actor is better understood as a 'swarm', whose members are scattered, but who are effectively united in a functionally larger entity at the time of the attack (Kioupkiolis, 2011: 43). Following Negri's readings of Lenin in the 1970s (see his *Books for Burning*, 2005), he and Hardt argue that since the form of the political subject is in dialectical relationship with the technical composition of labour, forms such as the party or the trade union belong to the past. According to Hardt and Negri, in the era of the free and unmediated biopolitical production of the Multitude, its action must also be free and unmediated. How useful can a trade union be when most workers engage in short-term and unsteady employment or when a large part of the Multitude is not able to find a job at all?

The belief in the potential for autonomous and unmediated action by the proletariat that was present in the traditions of workerism and autonomism is still alive and kicking in the notion of the Multitude. Any idea of representation is objected to, since "...it eclipses or homogenizes singularities in the construction of identity, restricts the production of the common by undermining the necessary freedom and plurality" (Hardt and Negri, 2011a, p. 305). Accordingly, the Multitude is indifferent to the taking of the state, as its mechanisms can only hinder the free flow of its biopolitical production. Thus, while a form of communism could be an ideal destination for the realization of Multitude's freedom, socialism is not an option (idem: 269-275; more on this issue on Negri, 2009).

It is important to understand how, in the era of immaterial labour and biopolitical production, the terms of capitalist domination have changed. Hardt and Negri claim that the direct extraction of surplus value,

although it still takes place², is not the sole source of profit for the capital. What is also important is the exploitation of the commons (physical sources, knowledge and other elements once considered the ‘common heritage of humanity’) that are now privatized and the extraction of rent from them (Zizek, 2010). Thus, while in the times of the hegemony of industrial production the proletariat “needed” the bourgeoisie to provide it with the means of production, today the Multitude engages in production primarily in an autonomous sphere away from the control of capital, which later parasitically intervenes to impose its rule and appropriate the value of the product. The importance of this shift is enormous for Hardt and Negri. Since in Marxian terms the degree of the socialization of production is so high, it signifies that “the possibility of democracy on a global scale is emerging today for the very first time” (Hardt and Negri, 2006: xi). But how is this meant to transpire? Here, the problems with the notion of the Multitude begin.

Theoretical problems with the concept of the Multitude

For Zizek, Negri and Hardt’s notion that the rise of the general intellect at a hegemonic level will render it incompatible with capital is at the same time the strongpoint and the flaw of the theory of the Multitude.

“The problem with Negri and Hardt here is that they are too Marxist (...). In short, they rehabilitate the old Marxist notion of the tension between productive forces and the relations of production: capitalism already generates the ‘germs of the future new forms of life’, it incessantly produces the new ‘commons’, so that, in a revolutionary explosion, this New is simply to be liberated from the old social form” (Zizek, 2009a: 352).

The above scheme is problematic for Zizek. What if what Negri and Hardt consider as the coming triumph of productive forces against capitalism is actually capitalism’s triumph with a new face? For the Slovenian philosopher, it is possible that “the invisible relations between [immaterial] things [of Capital] appear as direct relations between people” (2009b: p. 141). In short, Zizek claims that Hardt and Negri have been bamboozled by a reversal of the fetishization process described by Marx, where now relations between things are being mistakenly understood as relations between people.

A fierce criticism by many radical thinkers and segments of the Left directed at Negri and Hardt has to do with their implication that a transition might arise somehow automatically; that is, that the capital, under the pressure of the productive forces will simply withdraw. In other words they accuse Hardt and Negri for an apolitical determinism that could create passivity. After all, what is the reason to engage in risky radical struggles and political projects if communism is already somewhere here, just covered under the cell of capital?

The above criticism could be considered a bit unfair. To begin with, on the political level, the Multitude is not a subject that is already existing. It is a procedure under never-ending realization. As the authors write, “the question to ask (...) is not ‘What is the Multitude’ but rather ‘What can the Multitude become?’” (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 105). On the criticisms for determinism in their work, Hardt’s and Negri’s answer is straightforward:

“No, crisis (...) does not mean collapse, and the contradictions of capital, however severe, never in themselves imply its demise or, moreover, create an alternative to capitalist rule. (...) We can bet on the rupture of the relation of capital and build politically on the emerging autonomy of biopolitical labour. The open social relation presented by capital

² However, there is some debate on Marxian circles on how, and if, this surplus value can be still counted in quantities of time, since labour time is difficult to be distinguished from non-labour time (Hardt and Negri, 2006:145)

provides an opportunity, but political organization is required to push it across the threshold.” (2011a: 151).

However, a theoretical fidelity of Hardt and Negri to political action does not prevent us from characterizing their actually existing perceptions of political action as extremely problematic. Having rejected the traditional institutions of radical politics and organization (the Party and the Union), they follow Virno in advocating the notion of ‘Exodus’. For Virno:

“The Multitude does not have the problem of taking power, it has the problem of limiting it and making the state decline, constructing new institutions and a public sphere outside of it. From this point of view there is an enemy, but it’s more like the Pharaoh in the book of Exodus in the Bible, who pursues an exodus, a flight. It is not a matter of a flight in space. It is a flight in the sense of exiting from the categories of state institutions (...) Perhaps we could do without the word revolution because this model was that of taking power and constructing a new State. It may be better to speak of exodus” (2004).

For Hardt and Negri, exodus is the class struggle in the era of biopolitical production; it is “a process of subtraction from the relationship with capital by means of actualizing the potential autonomy of labour power” (2011a: 152). Drawing on the Bible, they describe how the Pharaoh gave a desperate last fight in order to prevent the exodus of Moses and his people. This also signifies that violence will likely also occur in the present exodus of the Multitude from the control of capital (idem: 367). However, such vague explanations of the exodus concept are far from persuading.

The first question arising is the obvious one: exodus from where and towards where? Should we understand this exodus in spatial terms? This could be quite problematic, as Hardt and Negri are resolute in their claim that through the real subsumption of life to capital, there is no place that can be defined as “outside” the Empire (2000: 211). However, if the taking over of the state is not an option for Negri and Hardt, what else could this exodus mean, rather than, in the best case, the creation of zones that are out of capital’s control, ending in a peaceful coexistence with capital or with a privileged part of the Multitude managing to escape capital’s rule, leaving behind those who cannot afford living in the margins of capital? This brings to mind the exhausted notion of the Temporary Autonomous Zone, popular in countercultural anarchist circles since the 1980s, following the ideas of Hakim Bey (2003). This idea also comes close to the post-autonomist milieu and the analysis of John Holloway, who in his *Change the World Without Taking Power: the Meaning of Revolution Today* (2005) and *Crack Capitalism* (2010), argues that the radical potential today lies in the creation of ‘capital-free zones’ that will gradually expand and eventually push capital away. For Holloway, the example of a squat or of an occupied square signifies communism in the here and now. It is apparent how naive such an approach is. The gulf between occupying a square and the creation of an entire alternative social network incorporating millions is huge. In addition, Holloway has no answer on why the state and capital would ever allow the even evolutionary (as opposed to revolutionary) creation of such counter-social institutions. And there are always the big questions of whether or not these projects actually aim to completely overthrow the capital relation with all its characteristics, or whether behind a fancy wrapping there is only an imagined capitalism with a more human face.

Besides the problematic detachment of the Multitude to any practical political project, criticisms of Hardt and Negri go further to more theoretical aspects. How much is immaterial labour with all the characteristics attributed to it actually dominant in real life? True, someone working in a university or a lawyer might experience the loss of distinction between labour and non-labour time or has indeed a certain degree

of autonomy in his biopolitical production which is only later hijacked by capital. But what about various other members of the working class, such as the precarious workers in call centres? (Aufheben, 2008)? Indeed, the product of their labour is immaterial, but besides the obvious quantitative shift (a rapid rise in the creation of immaterial products), is there any real, qualitative paradigm shift? It has to be added, though, that Hardt and Negri have made explicit throughout their work that they are describing more of a tendency and a procedure, rather than a settled reality.

In addition, it appears that Hardt and Negri are overly optimistic in their analysis. By considering the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism a verification of working class' victory in the class struggles during the previous capital's cycle of accumulation, they are hinting at a possible victory also in the present time, where the socialization of labour is unprecedented, without, however, further explaining how such an outcome would become possible. Sotiris (2005) is right to point out how the two thinkers omit the dark side of this reality; that is, how the proletariat is now more fluid, more isolated, without a sense of identity and, in a period of crisis, struggling for its material survival. In addition, Sotiris says, the downgrading of the political under the economic and productive process, combined with an abstract description of the Multitude, detached from any national or cultural reality, actually distances even further the prospects of any radical rupture in the body of capital (Sotiris, 2005).

Last, but not least, Hardt's and Negri's overoptimism is evident in their claim that capital needs the totality of Multitude, as producers and as consumers (2006: 335). However, this seems to be evidently far from true. Due to many factors, ranging from structural tendencies such as the organic composition of capital to the decline in the welfare state and the rapid boost in capital's financialization, we experience globally the creation of a 'surplus population' that is of little use to the capital, as it needs less workers and also working class consumption is actually rather limited as a source for capital's profit making (Blaumachen, 2011a).

To sum up, few can deny that Hardt and Negri's notion of the Multitude, as well as their analysis in general, has had a revitalising effect on radical thought, especially in a period of relative theoretical 'drought' at the turn of the millennium. Drawing inspiration from Negri's Marxian background, they attempted a holistic systemic analysis based on historic trends. The Multitude as a class notion is an attempt to understand the current composition of labour and also the current stage of capital's cycle of accumulation, running from the 1970s until present. However, questions are raised as to how accurate the Multitude as a class description can be, when it could include everyone from a *sans-papiers* and an immigrant proletarian, to a low rank manager in a multinational corporation, as long as the latter also lives and works under the rule of capital creating, directly or indirectly, surplus value. Situation becomes even more problematic when the Multitude turns from a class concept into a political subject. But if things are unclear at the theoretical level, then perhaps the historical experience of the present cycle of struggles on the eve of and during the capitalist crisis could shed light on the Multitude's potential as an autonomous subject and as the potential bearer of post-capitalist emancipation.

The case of Greece: the cycle of struggles around the capitalist crisis

The object of this chapter is not to present a historical overview of the current circles of struggles in Greece. Instead it seeks to present a case-study of how the notion of the Multitude can be applied to struggles at the centre of the current crisis of capitalism. Greece is very useful as a case study for a number of reasons.

First, it is the country hit most fiercely by the crisis, at least in Europe. Having the issue of national debt at the forefront, in 2010 the social-democratic government of PASOK has asked for the intervention of the IMF, the EU and the ECB (the troika). The troika subsequently provided massive loans to the Greek government, mainly for the repayment of older loans, and demanded the imposition of strict economic measures, high taxation, severe cuts and general deregulation that threatens to seriously change the class composition of Greece, that has for the last decades been a nation of an enlarged petite bourgeoisie, mainly occupied in the service sector.

In addition, Greece has a long tradition of radical and contentious politics. From the communist-led resistance in the Second World War to the student uprising in 1973 against the military dictatorship and the presence of the largest 'orthodox' Communist Party and anarchist milieu in Europe in the last decades, Greece is considered one of the last places where radical politics and grand narratives of social transformation are still on the agenda. As Kouvelakis (2011) has pointed out, revolting is deeply part of the Greek national psyche.

The third reason that Greece was chosen as an example of testing the presence of the Multitude in today's radical movements is how polymorphous the struggle has been there, with a rich repertoire of action and the application of almost all possible means. Since 2007, when the financial recession began to materialize, to the present when it is at the centre of a massive socioeconomic crisis, Greece has experienced a huge and successful student movement opposing a reformation in higher education, three weeks of riots in December 2008 (considered by some commentators as a revolt), more than 20 general strikes, some accompanied by major violence and even the death of a protester in one case (October 2011), the reappearance of urban guerrilla groups, violent NIMBY local struggles and a multiform movement against the troika and the government-imposed austerity, having as its centre the occupation of Syntagma Square. From this rich repertoire, I will focus on December 2008 revolt and the movement of the Greek 'Frustrated' around Syntagma Square in the summer of 2011. The reason is that these two phenomena seem to comply more with the characteristics of the political action that the Multitude is able to undertake. It will be shown that the theoretical limits of the Multitude seem to correlate to the limits of the struggles which have taken its characteristic form.

The days and nights of Alexis

The December 2008 uprising started on the evening of December 6th, when a 15-year old student, Alexis Grigoropoulos, was shot by a police Special Guard without any evident reason in the libertarian/counter-cultural stronghold of Exharhia in the centre of Athens. Within hours of the shooting, the news spread via Internet and mobile phones, and the first spontaneous protests broke out in Athens and other Greek cities. People who had been enjoying their Saturday night drink in the centre of town took to the streets in anger. On Sunday, a protest at the police headquarters ended in rioting and shops-smashing that lasted for hours. On Monday, a qualitative shift occurred, when students began protesting and attacking police stations throughout the country. Occupations took place as well in universities, public buildings, such as town halls, and the trade union confederation's headquarters. There were interruptions in many theatrical plays, where students intervened and asked for solidarity in their uprising. Protesters even interrupted the TV news by entering the studio of the Greek public television station. A giant banner was hung over the Parthenon displaying the word "resistance" in several languages.

The international impact of the uprising reached even the Chiapas mountains in Mexico, where Zapatista's iconic figure Subcommandante Marcos gave a solidarity message in Greek. Closer to Greece, in France, President Sarkozy postponed his scheduled reform of the education system, fearing that the Greek phenomenon might extend to France where the memories of the 2005 ghetto riots and the 2006 anti-CPE unrest were still fresh. *Libération*, the historic progressive newspaper of France, took a clear stand in favour of the Greek rebellion, with a significant article entitled "We are all Greeks". However, as the days passed, the return to normality was more and more irreversible. After three weeks, there were few reminders left of the turbulent "days and nights of Alexis", as the events were popularly referred to thereafter.

December was a characteristic moment of what the resistance of a threatened and desperate part of the Multitude looks like. For some scholars, like Kioupkiolis, the first appearance of the Multitude on the public scene occurred one year earlier, in the summer of 2007. Following a huge environmental and social catastrophe that took the form of widespread fires sweeping across Greece which cost the lives of more than 80 people, bloggers and other parts of 'civil society', such as NGOs, called for and organized gatherings in the centre of Athens (Kioupkiolis, 2011:55-60). There, a multitude in the traditional sense of the term gathered in silence to express its grief and anger, in an atmosphere which was intentionally apolitical and forbade anything other than declarations of sentiment. However, I claim that the mere fact that a group of people is gathered in a place without mediation by traditional actors like a political party does not constitute an appearance of the Multitude in Hardt and Negri's sense, as elements lying in the core of their notion, such as the class dimension and the creative procedures of biopolitical production, were missing.

But why could the December revolt be considered an appearance of (at least parts of) the Multitude in the central scene? The first element has to do with the class formation of those participating in the events. The protagonist of December were those at the forefront of the new form of proletariat, those who are the weak link of the Multitude, but who are, for the same reason, also its heavy artillery: young precarious workers and the unemployed, young immigrants, students and only a marginal part of the traditional working class. By its action, this motley crew has challenged biopower in all its forms: the commodity (looting and attacks on shops in the centre of Athens), the state (the police as an obvious target) and capital in general (various arsons of banks) (Blaumachen, 2009).

Although the financial crisis was not still in its full expression, these parts of the widened proletariat had already sensed it. Young students and precarious workers could sense that there was not much future for them in a capitalism facing a huge crisis and reconstituting itself in such a way as to make the proletariat's own reproduction more and more difficult. Perhaps this is a reason why more traditional parts of the working class and 'stable' workers did not play such a large role in December, as they sensed that they still had things to lose, as opposed to the wild proletarians who had little or nothing to lose. All the above explain the almost complete lack of demands in the December revolt. The Multitude does not have many expectations from a state whose role is becoming more and more purely suppressive. December mainly denied also the notion of political mediation. Groups and parties of the Left played only a peripheral role in trying to give a narrative and legitimacy to the events, while from early on, the Greek Communist Party distanced itself from the events, considering them degenerative.

What about the activity of the Multitude? The main characteristic of the December revolt was its anarchistic nature and the fact that it was based mainly in the actions of small groups. These groups, however, somehow managed to synchronize their action, bringing back to our mind the notion of the swarm that

Hardt and Negri have introduced in explaining the combative marching of the Multitude. Douzinas also emphasizes how the Multitude in December organized its own temporal dimension, in an apotheosis of its capacity for biopolitical production (2011: 162). December was no longer about preparations for Christmas; there was a festive and orgy-like atmosphere in the centre of Athens, but now it was the uprising that was celebrated. Hence one of the most popular slogans of these days proclaimed “Christmas is postponed – we are on revolt”. The arson of the Christmas tree in the centre of Athens became the most famous image of the December uprising, declaring how the Multitude is setting its own symbols and rules.

Despite its imagination and determination, however, the political activity of the Multitude is concerned problematic at both the practical and theoretical levels. Besides the frenzied passion of these days, what did December leave behind? Was the situation any better in the “morning after”, as Žižek likes to refer to the situation concerning “the imaginary explosion of freedom in sublime enthusiasm, the magic moment of universal solidarity when ‘everything seems possible’, and the hard work of social reconstruction which is to be performed if this enthusiastic explosion is to leave its traces in the inertia of the social edifice itself” (2004:7)? Besides perhaps the symbolism of the first revolt in the Western world as a premature response to the crisis, did it produce any networks, institutions or forms of action that would guarantee a more promising outcome of similar events in the future? This brings us to what seems to be the main problematic of the Multitude: it is capable of creating situations that can even be considered to reach the level of a revolt; however, it yet seems completely incapable of transforming these situations into actual practical gains.

The Multitude meets in Syntagma Square

Hardt and Negri’s second book in their trilogy, the *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* was translated and published in Greek in May 2011. In June, it could be found in the window of almost all bookstores in Athens. The reason was that its publication was a marvellous coincidence with a rise of the Multitude not only in bookstores, but also in the squares of Athens and throughout Greece.

The background would easily foreshadow what would follow. 2011 began with uprisings in a series of North African countries, where Egypt’s Tahrir Square became a symbol of resistance and of popular determination. The baton was passed to Spain, where the ‘Indignados’ in Puerta del Sol square of Madrid camped for weeks, with unclear demands but with a determination to express claims for a change towards a more substantial democracy. With Greece experiencing an unprecedented financial recession and the imposition of the harshest austerity measures ever seen in a Western country in over half a century, it was a matter of time before a social explosion took place. Signs of unrest were apparent in violent clashes, sometimes taking the form of small-scale guerrilla battles, of the citizens of the village of Keratea for months against the riot-police guarding an illegal waste centre, the hunger strike of hundreds of illegal immigrants which ended in a victory for their demands for more humane conditions, and the numerous general strikes and marches which usually ended in heavy police repression.

In May, there was a general feeling that something more would soon happen. In late May, news began to circulate in social media and the blogosphere that one of the placards of the Spaniards in Puerta del Sol mentioned “shh...be quiet, we might wake up the Greeks”. This placard was proven never to have existed, but it was the sparkle that triggered a Facebook call for an *ala* Puerta del Sol gathering in Syntagma Square, opposite from the Greek Parliament, for the 25th of May. The estimated 20 000 people who gathered that evening at Syntagma was just the beginning of a movement that would last for more than two months, pos-

ing hard questions and almost forcing the government to resign. However, in the end it was defeated by its own inability to provide any answers to the questions it posed.

Here we will also follow the same method as for the December uprising above, that is, examining the appearance of the Multitude firstly in class and then in political terms. The first characteristic that defines the movement of the Greek 'Frustrated', as it became known, was its sheer mass. According to poll research, more than two million citizens (20% of the population) have participated in one way or another to the movement.³ As a result, its class composition was also wide, which produced a large amount of tension. Among the main figures in Syntagma were parts of the petite-bourgeoisie, which due to an exploding rise in the cost of labour reproduction (electricity bills, transportation, cut in social welfare), found themselves in a situation of imminent proletarianization. It is not a coincidence that many direct-action struggles in Greece around that time were focused on the issue of the high cost of the labour force reproducing itself, such as the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' movement, which engaged in actions like lifting up the bars on toll roads and damaging ticket control devices on the Athens tube. As the theoretical journal *Blaumachen* mentioned in its analysis of the 'Frustrated' movement, the Syntagma Square phenomenon was also a symptom of the changing class composition of Greek society, where a petite-bourgeoisie realizes that is about to lose the dominant role attributed to it for the last several decades (Blaumachen, 2011b). Class diversity had also a spatial element in the protests in Syntagma. The upper part of the Square was mainly occupied by these petite-bourgeois elements, whereas the lower part of the Square was mainly occupied by students and precarious workers or the unemployed.

However, some questions arise. Where was the motley crew of December 2008, that is, the young students, young immigrants and generally the outsiders of the proletariat with their destructive urge? And, more importantly for our case, who is then the real Multitude? The 'damned' of December, the petite-bourgeoisie of the upper square or the more politically radical 'precariat' of the lower square? And, finally, why bother struggling with a complex term like the Multitude when it analytically confuses more than it clarifies a situation? For Douzinas, this is exactly the importance of the Multitude, as while it gives a wider class identification (those working and living under the biopower of capital and are engaging in biopolitical production), it nevertheless goes beyond older typical class identification. For him, the whole Greek population is potentially the Multitude, as it is kept away from the exercise of any form of power (2011: 216). Such an approach seems quite problematic, as the Multitude, while initially appearing as a tool for a more accurate class analysis in the era of post-Fordist capitalism, now becomes a supra-class notion, flirting heavily with political idealism.

What about the biopolitical production of the Greek Multitude on a more political level? It has to be pointed out here that Hardt and Negri have been accurate to predict how capital today can actually produce social life in its own terms, and this became apparent in the case of Greece. What has taken place in the last two years is not only the imposition of harsh austerity measures and the eclipse of any notion of popular or national sovereignty (the imposition of an unelected banker as Prime Minister in late 2011 being only the symbolic completion). The procedure has been so holistic, grasping all aspects of social, economic and even personal life that it brings to mind the procedure of 'nation building' in cases such as Iraq, as the peak of the ominous capacities of Empire's biopower (Hardt and Negri, 2006: 23). The Multitude tried to strike back, setting ahead its capacity for biopolitical production, but has failed, however, substantially up to this point.

3 Research conducted by Public Issue company, <http://www.publicissue.gr/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/plateies-6-20111.pdf>

The action of the Multitude was not political in the traditional meaning of the word. Parties were ‘banned’ from Syntagma Square and people with experience in struggles of the past were encouraged to come as mere individuals. This was already the first defeat for any radical prospective for the movement. It gave an apolitical character to the movement in its initial phase, where most of the people were mainly cursing en masse the parliament and declared the ‘corrupt and traitor politicians’ as the root of the problem. The banning of party or other flags, made the Greek flag the only acceptable symbol, which provided a refuge for some, although marginal, nationalist tendencies, especially in the upper part of the square.

For the optimist Douzinas, such tendencies are natural for the individual whose existence has for years been completely bound up with capital, so that when this tie is brutally broken, as in the case of a crisis, he is left with his symbolic universe collapsed and retreats to spasmodic actions (2011: 91). Hardt and Negri never tire of reminding us how the Multitude is not the mere gathering of individuals, but on the contrary, the procedure by which these individuals interrelate. The dialectical result of such a meeting produces new forms of biopolitical production. For Douzinas, in Syntagma there was simultaneously a crowd, a Multitude and a demos, in the old Athenian sense, but not because different people in the apolitical upper or in the more mature lower section of the square were embodying these characteristics. According to his analysis, everyone in Syntagma was at the same time crowd, Multitude and demos, being constantly re-shaped by their interactions (idem: 221).

It is true that the Multitude in Syntagma not only managed to produce a turbulent socio-political situation, but also came closer than any other political movement in recent western history in overthrowing a government, leading even to the resignation of the then Prime Minister Papandreou on the 26th of June, which was taken back after some hours. Douzinas emphasizes how the Multitude took advantage of the temporal and the spatial dimension of the process. The gatherings took place every evening, when people were finishing their work. For Douzinas, there was an element of strong biopolitical resistance, as the free time of the worker, which in the post-Fordist metropolis is typically also indirectly subsumed into the realization of surplus value for capital, is now directed instead towards the creation of social life and political subjectivity outside and even against capital’s standards. The Greek squares possessed at the same time their archetypical meaning as a place of ease, ‘chilling’, flirting and ‘catching up’, while at the same time becoming the sites for the revival of the ancient demos, the gathering of the citizens in the open assemblies for discussion and decision-making based on strict rules of equality and a crystal openness of the procedure. Through this revival of direct democracy, the multitude is turned into ‘demos’, in the ancient Greek sense of the word (Douzinas: 2011).

The main political message of the Frustrated become clearer in the first communiqué of Syntagma’s free peoples’ assembly: “1) We will not leave the squares before those who led us here leave: Governments, the Troika, Banks, Memorandums and everyone who exploits us. 2) We say that the debt is not ours. 3) DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOW ! EQUALITY – JUSTICE – DIGNITY !”⁴ It was a message based on the imminent problems Greece was facing at that moment: the huge national debt, created, as people argue, by the elites and the rejection of the new austerity package (the Mid-term plan, as it became known), whose voting in the Greek parliament in late June gave to the movement a specific target and a landmark to look upon. These claims, however, were linked with the wider call for a real form of direct democracy.

4 <http://amesi-dimokratia.org/nl/psifismata>

As the Multitude gets unified through its action, so did the Greek ‘Frustrated’ gain momentum in time. The few thousands of people gathering in the first days became an unprecedented gathering of more than 300.000 on more than one Sundays, which were considered the peak days. The initially naive ideas about the role of the police and the insistence on non-violence quickly drifted away, when during the general strike of the 15th of June, left parties and trade unions met the ‘Frustrated’ in the square and faced a wild repression by the police. However, despite the tonnes of tear-gases and the batons of the riot-police, protesters managed to re-occupy the square. This was an important moment, as the ‘battle’ of the 15th gave the movement a new-born common identity (Frantzis, 2011).

As the day of the voting of the Mid-term austerity package was approaching, it was becoming more evident that Syntagma was now the centre of a class war—the epicentre of the collision between the state/capital and a population that was facing an imminent proletarianization and the loss of rights that had been taken for granted (Blaumachen, 2011). There was a 48-hour general strike declared for the two days of voting in parliament; everyone was in anticipation of what would be the most crucial day of the battle. This battle, however, was lost for the movement. The lack of a proper defensive plan gave space for the police to unleash an attack unprecedented in its violence for a western country (with possibly the exception of Genoa in 2001) that ended in more than 500 injured people, attacks on the ad hoc medical centres of the protesters and the hunting of protesters by policemen on motorcycles in all the neighbourhoods surrounding Syntagma. At the same time, the Mid-term plan was voted in by parliament. Although the gatherings in Syntagma continued for some time, for all practical purposes, it was the end of the movement.

The movement in Syntagma and other Greek squares has shown the limits of a doxa which is predominant in today’s global Left and which is also preached by the theorists of the Multitude: that of the spontaneous, non-mediated action in the non-political sphere. The ‘Frustrated’ proved what was already known: the Multitude is capable of producing inspiring events, to give determinate struggles and to make its presence perceptible. However, it miserably failed on two points. On a strategic level, it was never clear what the actual target was, besides the obvious opposition to the troika and the austerity measures. What would the next step be? Does the petite-bourgeois who was relatively well-off before the crisis have the same aspirations with the *sans-papiers* immigrants or the youth of the precarious proletariat? And if not, how can they find a common ground for political action? The most important problem, however, that also signifies the limits of the notion of the Multitude, is how this inspiring and passionate procedure in the squares did not produce almost any practical actions. The strikes and other activities were mainly organized by parties, trade unions and pre-existing groups. In addition, the ‘business as usual’ of state and capital stood uninterrupted. The December revolt did not manage to reach the workplaces and places where value is produced; it managed however to have a short-term but heavy impact on the field of circulation. The square movement did not even set these questions, as it did not practically question notions such as the commodity and other pillars of capital.

The resistance by the Greek people to the harsh austerity measures decomposing the Greek society has been powerful, determined and acquiring all possible forms of action. Mostly, it has been based in peoples’ spontaneous rage and their attempt at grassroots organization, at the level of civil disobedience movements (especially the “Can’t Pay, Won’t Pay” movement), mutual-help struggles in the level of the neighbourhood or the village and also more traditional forms of struggles, like the numerous general strikes. However, all these have failed to bring down the government or change their policy. In the numerous times when the PASOK government was collapsing (as eventually happened, giving its place to an unelected coalition

government with a banker as Prime Minister), the movement was not able to even utter a radical alternative political narrative, besides verbalisms for “direct democracy” and a full political catharsis. This should give rise to much critical thought and re-evaluation of existing practices.

Some general conclusions from the global present cycle of struggles

The historic momentum and the capitalist crisis has created an almost global unrest that is on the one hand unseen since the 1960s, and on the other hand remarkably inefficient. Movements around the globe, although different in character, massiveness and importance, from Egypt to Syria and from Greece to the occupied squares of Spain and of the United States, seem to be based in similar principles of spontaneity, horizontal networks and unmediated direct action.

In all of the above cases, the champions of the Multitude’s notion declare that its presence as a radical subject in the struggles of late capitalism has been confirmed (Hardt and Negri, 2011b). After a heroic struggle, costing thousands of deaths, the Multitude has managed to kick away the governments of Ben Ali and Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt, threaten the rule of Assad in Syria and put pressure on the Greek government with which it proved impossible to cope, leading it to an embarrassing transformation. Yet the biopolitical production and the spontaneity of the Multitude was not proven enough for preventing different governments, equally, if not more hostile to peoples’ interests, from rising to power. The Multitude at the moment seems too weak to establish its victories, let alone bring a prospect of a socio-political change beyond capitalism. *This makes clear the need for a political subject that will materialize and establish at a political level the victories that the Multitude achieves in the streets.*

This is why we need to think seriously about alternatives for this one final step that needs to be taken. Perhaps one idea would be that of a political front that has to be somehow formed from below and strike a fatal blow to the cracks in the system; cracks which will also become the factor relating the Multitude to the front. The capitalist contradictions that may become the crack at which the Greek Multitude will strike are already there. The complete overthrow of the government and of the austerity measures, a ‘default’ in the Greek debt, the breaking of the bonds with the European Union and the Common Currency, seem to be a minimum basis shared by most people who are on the streets and those troubled sitting at home, for the setting of such a socio-political alliance. Needless to say, the Left can and should play a hegemonic role in this procedure.

However, the political institution which will come out of such a procedure could be in constant and dialectical relationship with the democratic politics created at the grassroots level by the biopolitical production of the Multitude. There are cases, as even fierce supporters of the Multitude’s idea as political project claim, where the Multitude has operated satisfactory in supporting and at the same time being empowered by a progressive and in a socialist direction government, as in cases of Venezuela and Bolivia (Douzinas, 2011: 212). If the Multitude expresses a pure negation with its presence in the streets and squares of the world—a yell of “*ja basta*”—then a proper political expression will be the negation of such a negation, overcoming its limits and dialectically producing an unprecedented potential for radical social change.

Epilogue

The Multitude is a theoretical work in the right direction. It attempts to update the class analysis in an era of what has been widely called post-Fordism and in the times of the alleged hegemony of biopolitical production. However, there are questions concerning the accuracy of such an all-encompassing notion. On the one hand, the Multitude could be considered as a broadened ‘line up’ of the proletariat, in battle formation against capital. Another reading, however, would consider Multitude such a loose term that it cannot but belong in the sphere of a supra-class, or even worse, a post-class analysis.

On the practical level, the Multitude is proven also problematic and lacking the efficiency to ensure the establishment of its own street-victories. By flirting with an apolitical cult of spontaneity, the Multitude only digs its own grave and undermines its potential for a materialization of its mass-scale subversive action, as it has happened in the recent cycle of struggles in North African countries, Greece and elsewhere. How this political organization will look and whether it will be a new version of a party or of a popular front, can only be answered in practice and through the historic experience of the struggles to come; however, it presupposes a will to engage with politics on a central level.

Hardt and Negri never tire of reiterating the claim that the Multitude is always incomplete, always “yet to be”. We could argue that their attempt for a theoretical and practical guide for the struggles of the 21st century is also “yet to be” and needs more and difficult theoretical work, linked with radical political activity. Because as it currently stands, Žižek is right to point out that the limits of the concept of the Multitude seem also to be the limits of existing radical movements (Žižek, 2005).

Abbreviations

ECB: European Central Bank

EU: European Union

IMF: International Monetary Fund

NIMBY: not in my backyard (commonly referred to local protests against the imposition of an unpleasant project)

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Occupy: A New “New Social Movement”

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Introduction

How can we explain the recent wave of progressive social mobilizations from Tahir Square to Occupy Wall Street? Surely there are many factors, starting of course with the multiple structural crises of neo liberalism (inequality, wage stagnation/job loss, reductions in social spending, privatization). Moreover, small but core constituencies of young, college educated, typically underemployed/unemployed youth who with computer access and savvy, have acted as catalysts igniting but not really “leading” protests and mobilizations. The youth who first mobilized articulated wide spread grievances and soon attracted many other groups, classes and age cohorts. But this much is clear to most people who are experiencing the consequences of the adverse consequences of neoliberalism over the past few decades, the 2007 meltdown, and subsequent “global slump”-McNally (2010).

Many observers and journalists have said as much, indeed many ask what took so long for people to protest given the combination of declining mobility and greater disparities of rich and poor, governments that are indifferent at best-duplicitous at worst and closed to popular concerns or pressures. For the social scientist however, the questions of who, how and why mobilizations occur are not so simple, there are specific problematics of mediation between structure/structural conditions and individual or collective agency. In the essay to follow, I would like to argue that these new social movements, while clearly precipitated by specific issues such as jobs, opportunity, blocked mobility, privatization of resources/service etc. are best understood through New Social Movement theory, NSM. More specifically, while rooted in the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School, NSM does not see these movements as proletarian struggles with the bourgeoisie over wages, benefits and safety. Moreover, the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxism that may have been more relevant in earlier times, has less salience in the contemporary, postindustrial, networked world of global capital. Nor while prompted by the crisis, these movements are not simply issue driven per se. Rather, as will be argued, **these movements, of the excluded, if the indignant, as contestations over cultural meanings and recognition of new lifestyles and identities seek cultural transformations of identity-informed by participatory, democratic dialogues and with visions of alternative possibilities of subjectivity for the society.** Thus feminism or gay rights movements were not over discriminatory legislation, but granting the heretofore “subordinates” and indeed often marginalized if not scapegoated, recognition as dignified human beings equal to all others.

Part I: explaining social movements

What are the salient factors we need to explain social movements in general? Do we look at the structural factors and contradictions, or look at political opportunities and assume that there are always forces and pressures, and social movement entrepreneurs ready to lead mobilizations. As will be argued, these movements can be best understood by considering five moments that will be central elements in a theory

of mobilization, **1) legitimation crises, 2) identity, 3) emotions, 4) morality, and 5) vision-all of are located within spatial, interactional information and matrices.**

Legitimation Crises

For Habermas (1975) a crisis has objective aspect, the **system**, and subjective moments, the **life world** where motivated identities are experienced and performed. Thus, a political-economic legitimation crisis, such as the 2007 meltdown and implosion/stagnation, is not limited to the economy and/or polity, but leads to crises of culture and meanings as people withdraw commitment to the social order-creating spaces for alternative views and understandings. But, as will be noted, while the progressive movements of today are in response to the economic conditions, these conditions do not lead to social movements per se. Crises need to arouse collective emotions, they must be interpreted, alternative understandings and visions must be negotiated and if groups of people choose to act, strategies must be chosen. As will be argued, the concept of "moral shock" (Jaspers, 1997) can apply as much to political economic crises as human/animal rights.

Economic crises as structural problems such as contradictions and implosions of the economy that create unemployment or underemployment, sudden price hikes-especially of basic commodities (food, oil, utilities), retrenchments of entitlements etc, that threaten survival or maintenance of living standards, or social status, undermines the legitimacy of political leadership and legitimating ideologies. But at the same time, these macro conditions impact the "life world", the micro level of feelings, identities and values. As will be noted, identities, individually and collectively, mediate between structural conditions, eg legitimation crises and either social mobilizations (left or right), or retreatist escapism.

Times of crisis there are moments when new identities can be renegotiated. To paraphrase Marx, there come times when the old identities act as brakes upon the new political economy and must be discarded. Some may withdraw from the society and become depoliticized-as for example the myriads of youth who flock to the audienceships and fandoms of popular culture. Some may become politically mobilized and seek social change or transformations that may be reactionary or progressive. But the key factor here is that when the cultural system, qua frameworks of meaning and identity that typically supports and reproduces the system are undermined or challenged by crises in the system and becomes dysfunctional, there are often intense emotional reactions that are mediated by, interpreted through and reacted to on the bases of one's identity . Moreover, that identity is located at particular social locations and nodules of interaction chains (Collins, 2005)

Identity

Identity is a self-reflexive narrative of a social actor's continuity over time and his emplotment (Ricoeur) Within the flow of time, identity locates the actor in history, eg biography and collective history/memory, in the current moment, and envisions a future. It defines a person/group as distinct from others in norms, values, lifestyles, social practices and aesthetic tastes. Moreover, identity mediates between the larger society and specific thoughts and actions of the social actor. It acts as a filter that provides selective attention to external events; some people may pay attention to soccer, others to politics and still others to popular culture. But identity is not simply a set of cognitive processes, it is acquired through social interactions and ties to groups, it is anchored by powerful emotions. Thus, salient events mediated through identity can engender emotional reactions. (see below)

Given the limitations of RM theory, social movement theory began a move from class and interests to the salience of collective identity to consider, 1, why actors come into being, 2, what motivated them to act, 3, these concerns with selfhood/subjectivity and identity, rather than strategic choice emphasized culture and meaning rather than more “rational” concerns with policies, strategies and institutional reforms, and 4, concerns with identity were as much if not more concerned with their cultural effects than specific forms of legislation (Cf. Polleta and Jaspers, 2001).

Emotions

One of the great shortcomings of the rational choice/resource mobilization theories of motivation and mobilization has been the valorization of Reason as basis for social organization and social behavior. While the critique of the frailty “irrationality of Reason” can be seen in Nietzsche, Freud and Weber, not to speak of Lukacs and the Frankfurt School’s critique of “one dimensional thought.” Reason serves an important ideological function for economics and psychology. It justifies capitalism as based on self-interested “human nature” that rationally pursues maximizing his/her self-interest, as well as being the most rational way to organize an economy. **It offers a clear, simple and wrong understanding of motivation for sociologists and psychologists.** Rather, one could argue that understanding emotions is far more salient. Emotions are rooted in our very DNA, we are born with an “inherent affect system” that once served lower species as a means of communication. But given human consciousness, and in turn our socialization and internalization of collective norms, our cues or “releasers” to use the term ethologists like, are more likely to be symbolic than concrete, and thus emotions are social. So too does every society socialize the ways emotions may be experienced as feelings or suppressed-and yet influence perceptions, judgments and in turn actions. Gaining an identity, individually or collectively, is an interpersonal process and thus involves emotions. In early Freudian theory, identification was based first on separation anxiety, then it was based on identification with aggressor-in both cases, one’s character was informed by the alleviation of anxiety. Collective identities are also the result of similar processes. Moreover, collective identities mediate events that evoke many of the same emotions and individuals feel. For Durkheim, religion provided a collective efflorescence. The work of Jaspers (1997) Jaspers and Pollenta (2001), in reclaiming salient roles for emotions, identity and cultural meanings as essential to understanding the current wave of mobilizations.

Structural conditions that foster legitimation crises can evoke powerful emotions. This is especially clear in the notion of “moral shock” (Jaspers, 1997) in which certain cultural moments evoke strong emotions which in turn dispose joining social movements. When governments, whether elected or dictatorships, fail to provide the conditions for economic growth for its populations, and/or retrenches its programs from education to health care to retirement pensions, while the growing wealth and political power of elites is especially visible, people experience a “moral shock”.

a transgression of all the sentiments, values, beliefs, feelings, emotions and ideas that people hold about themselves, their leaders and their society. A breach, if you will, in the boundaries of what is collectively considered decent and courteous and an irreparable break in the routines of social relations (Jaspers, 1997).

As will argued, a central point of the new social movements is that the economic conditions are viewed through a moral prism in which the economic elites are directly to blame for the long term stagnation and short term crisis. The loss of work, underemployment and locked mobility, the crash of a market, a fallen government, an attack by an enemy can elicit very primal fears of one’s very survival and quite often an-

ger at those believed responsible-and often scapegoated targets to blame. **When people find themselves facing sudden economic reversals (job loss, foreclosure, bankruptcy), when they feel marginalized as either workers without work or underemployed and/or politically powerless, they are likely to be angry, frustrated, anxious about the future and impelled to seek amelioration.** In most cases, in late modern societies, people are likely to feel indignant, humiliated over the lack of recognition and in many cases, this is experienced as blow to one's self esteem. This is especially the case in societies in which there was a tacit social contract that is perceived as having been broken (Rubin, 1995).

While the cumulative effects of neo liberal globalization have been ever more evident for the last several decades, tens of millions of people have been lifted from abject poverty; it has still produced an exponential growth of the wealth and incomes of the elites. We live in a world where the 400 richest families have as much wealth as the bottom half of the world. But the inherent contradictions of global capitalism in the West were especially evident with its move to financialization ("casino capitalism" Strange") as its primary source of profits that culminated in its massive implosion in 2007. There followed a massive plummet in business activities, bankruptcies, huge layoffs of workers, and subsequent economic stagnation, if not decline for many of those in vulnerable positions who have been called the precariat. Many young people entering the labor force face unemployment and/or underemployment, massive debt and find the costs of living unaffordable. Many older people had jobs that have disappeared and will not come back. This has evoked a great deal of frustration, anger and resentment at those elites deemed responsible. Moreover, the extent to which the economic elites control the political systems has been rendered transparent between the US government bailouts of its banks (and some European ones) and the austerity measures of the Eurozone that attempt to save the bankers.

To paraphrase Marx, global capital has laid bare the domination of society by the capitalist class, it has stripped away any masks hiding the fact that relationships between people are based on the cash nexus. As will be seen, this is especially salient in democracies where "elected representatives" represent the "people". But as we have seen, today these "people" are the economic elites who fund elections, hire armies of lobbyists and otherwise select and elect those who would its bidding. The domination of the entire State, its legislative, judiciary and executive branches of governance are now beholden the captains of commerce. Otherwise said, we now live in a state of "inverted fascism" where democracy provides entertainment and carnivals to assuage the people (Wolin, 2008) and fragment the society that might offer resistance.

As will be noted, most NSM movements do not attempt to change or influence governments through electoral politics. Indeed, these movements consist of those who feel excluded from the political, de facto or de jure (Jasper, 1997). Thus, these movements do not seek to influence politicians or policies in the political sphere, they operate in the public sphere to attempt to impact the culture that in turn would to impact politics.

Morality

While little addressed by social movement scholars, contemporary social movements are less guided by particular interests than by moral claims. **These movements do not attempts to establish minimum wages, benefits, entitlements or job programs. Rather, they do not judge the contemporary social arrangements simply on interests of even fairness, but on the fundamental morality of the concentration of wealth and power that is so evident-and equally evident is the growth of poverty and degradation.** This is not a new observation; Jesus chased the hedge fund managers and venture capitalists out of the

temple and preached an elementary socialism-or at least a message of sharing.

Over and above these collective emotions of shock and rage is also a “moral vision,” which goes beyond consistent pressure to oust leaders and end regimes, and to propagate a social order that embodies a new social contract. It embodies a different utopian politics that delivers a nation from degradation, serves as a barometer of future progress and calls for democratic politics, citizen participation, demands an end to corruption, and seeks a new beginning ... Wherever citizens have been gripped by the fervor of peaceful people power, it was always the pursuit of an imaginable social utopia that drove protestors, who harbored no fear and were convinced that a new universe of social relations can be created based on a common belief. ... It is a moral vision best described as the relationship between the citizen and the ideal progressive state as the embodiment of the highest aspirations of a nation’s political life. Protest is a statement writ large of the desires of millions of individuals to supplant the arbitrariness, brutality and partiality of prior arrangements based on the private power of disposition..

At this point we should note that in a complex society, there are fundamental differences in moral values at the basis of a group’s claims that are not simply reducible to class or education, but reflect patterns of character, identity and locations in social networks. This was evident in the early studies on authoritarianism in which people varied on the basis of tendencies to submit to authority, conform to groups and show intolerance of ambiguity, vs. being autonomous, creative, open to experience and self-realization. In contemporary social psychological research, we might note that this polarity is associated with contrasting moral visions that in turn impact world views and political choices. For example, Lakoff (2010) has suggested that there is a basic polarity of the “strict father” vs. “nurturant parent” moralities. The former stresses self-discipline, strength and independence which arise from “strict” parenting. That later is more concerned with fostering empathy, sharing, compassion and creativity. In a similar vein, Haidt ((2012) has argued that people have fundamental different character patterns and moral world views that differentiate liberals and conservatives. People differ over care/compassion, liberty/fairness and loyalty authority and sanctity.¹ For our purposes, we will note that the Occupy movements see the current arrangements as not simply unfair, but that unfairness is an important moral stance and that there is far too little compassion in either the corporate.

Vision-that are located within spatial and interactional matrices.

Social movement research has considered “framing” an essential aspect of mobilization and claim staking and the goals of social movements. Movements depend on the shared interpretations of events and conditions, and in turn goals to be attained, and strategies to attain them. In order to affirm the bonds of solidarity between members and attract new members, it is necessary to frame reality in ways that appeal to the emotional needs of members and potential members as well their moral outlooks. **But that said, we would then argue the fundamental question raised by the contemporary social movements is the nature of vision-indeed hope and the good life.** Sociology, rooted in the Enlightenment valorization of Reason, has typically eschewed the notion of vision relegating it to the normative concerns of philosophy and religion, idle speculations of Utopia or an empirical question to be measured.

But that said, some social critics have stepped into territory where angels were barred from entering. For example, Bellah and his collaborators have been concerned with the vision of the “good life” since before many of the occupiers were born. From the *Broken Covenant* to *Habits of the Heart* to the *Good Society*,

¹ An excellent introduction to Haidt’s views can be seen in his interview with Bill Moyers. <http://vimeo.com/36124840>

Bellah has noted the downsides of an unbridled, Lockean individualism that has given us great affluence-but for the few, while many face unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, untreated illness, a decaying infrastructure and devastating environmental degradation. A ruthless, market oriented individualism has pervaded the entire society and undermined any shared purpose, public spirit or concerns for the unfortunate- indeed they, poor, minorities, immigrants and students are often seen as evil parasites. Meanwhile, our huge military consumes almost half of our income taxes and has been used to support imperialist interventions in over 50 countries and support a network of perhaps 1000 military bases in the world. But for most Americans, the “good life” has been seen in terms of freedom to pursue personal satisfactions and achievements apart from others, and retreat to one’s own circle of friends and family. Indeed for many politicians and even clergy, this “freedom” from social concerns and indifference to less fortunate others is itself a virtue to be celebrated.

But the conditions of our times, as the Occupiers show, require not new policies, but hope, new visions and a resurrection of utopian thinking. As Shostak (2001) put it :

It would seem far more utopian for a society to end capital punishment, to reject the use of terror and torture, to provide for the needs of its least-well-off citizens, and to bolster the hopes and ability of all persons to compete. ...Similarly, basic values that appear to promote utopian gains include the **cultivation of artistry, caring, creativity, curiosity, empathy, faith, honor, humor, love, sensitivity, and other virtues celebrated by healthy, life-appreciating people everywhere**². (emphasis mine).

We might finally recall the importance of hope and vision in the work of Ernst Bloch.³ For Bloch, Freud’s notion of the dream as wish fulfillment becomes the essential motive for hope which permeates myths, dreams, religions and utopian thought often dismissed as ideology by some Marxists. But for Bloch, this hope for a better life

...is rooted in a humanist anthropology which grounds his critique of oppression and emancipatory perspectives. Bloch always begins with the wishing, hopeful, needy, and hungry human being and analyzes what prohibits realization of human desire and fulfillment of human needs... Ideology contains a utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics... Bloch provides a critical hermeneutic of the ways that cultural history and socio-economic developments point to socialism as the realization of humanities deepest dreams and hopes, and that encourages us to look for the progressive and emancipatory content of cultural artifacts” (Kellner, p.2). For Bloch, the cultural surplus preserves unsatisfied desires and human wishes for a better world and because these wishes are usually not fulfilled they contain contents which remain relevant to a future society which may be able to satisfy these wishes and needs. In other words, ideology contains hints as to what human beings desire and need which can be used to criticize failures to satisfy these needs and to realize these desires in the current society. (Kellner)

As will be evident, this kind of Utopian thought, as embodied in the Occupy movements, is not easily understood in the dominant perspectives of either social movement analysis, or main stream politics. Without understand emotions in general, anger, the need for dignity and role of hope, without considerations of morality, social movement theory is as empty and vacuous as the one dimensional society that has given rise to the great refusals. Similarly, pundits and politicians fail to see that the messages and demands, and Utopian visions are expressed in the very existence-not formal petitions or attempts to engage in partisan politics-which is the graveyard of social movements.

² The Futurist Interviews Arthur Shostak, <http://www.wfs.org/node/350>

³ See Kellner, D, Ernst Bloch, Utopia and Ideology Critique for a short introduction to Bloch.

Occupy Wall Street

To illustrate how these factors help us understand aspects of some of the progressive mobilizations, let us now consider the OWS movement that would eventually emerge.

The Legitimation Crisis

Between globalization, financialization and automation, there were major changes in income and inequality. The economy changed from one providing goods and services into a form of global “casino capitalism” where most profits came from finance, insurance or real estate speculation. With the embrace of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, for most Americans, incomes stagnated while the incomes and wealth of the elites not only skyrocketed, but with this wealth, the elites changed the rules of economic activity and the tax codes to further increase their personal wealth (Harvey, 2003).

By the 1990s, when speculation became the primary basis of profits, new forms of “exotic” investment instruments appeared, as banks and investment organization were shorn of regulatory control. As a result, we saw a rapid rise in the value of housing, which, ironically enough increased the demand as more and more people bought homes for investments purposes, and/or refinanced the higher value to pay off credit card debt. Moreover, mortgage debt was transformed into an asset, CDOs and then bundled together and sold as an asset-insured by hedge funds. There was a vast proliferation of “subprime” mortgages in which vetting was negligent at best, criminal at worst. Eventually, the rapidly expanding housing market crashed, the entire financial industry imploded and took the entire economy down. Millions of people lost jobs, homes and almost 10% were officially unemployed. But while surely there was malfeasance, if not criminal behavior, this must be understood as a structural crisis in which the steering mechanisms had broken down.⁴

It was soon evident that thanks to “crony capitalism” that guaranteed casino players won, the banking/finance industries had “recovered,” indeed amassed more wealth than ever before while its elites were well rewarded. Outside of alternative media, mostly a few progressive journals like the *Nation*, *Salon* or *Rolling Stone*, or internet media such as *Daily Kos*, *Alternet*, *Truthout* or *Truth Dig*, there was little critique of the extent to which Wall St. controlled the government, the banks were saved, the people were screwed. The financial sector now controlled the political system-regardless of party or proclaimed ideology. Between lobbyists and campaign contributions, it’s the financial elites clearly control politicians-a system of hidden domination described by Wolin (2006) as “Democracy Inc.” which brings us “inverted totalitarianism”. The mass media focused on the bizarre costumes and silly slogans of the Tea Party. But nevertheless, many people were becoming increasingly frustrated and angry. And then came Arab Spring in Tunisia and the 18 days of Tahir.

The only thing that “saved the banking/finance system, was a vast government bailout, the TARP program of the Bush administration that pumped trillions of dollars into the insolvent banks, followed by the Obama Stimulus program⁵. And while the government rescue halted the plummet, and indeed the financial system was saved and its elite prospered, huge numbers of people lost jobs, were still foreclosed and evicted and many remained unemployed and/or underemployed. Large numbers of working classes, especially con-

4 This was evident in 1999 when Glass-Steagall was overturned.

5 We now know that the US government provided far greater capital to banks and financial institutions, many not even US banks, than was publically indicated.

struction workers were unemployed. Many recent college graduates with huge student loans were unemployed or underemployed. Such youth were more and more likely to be part of the now growing precariate.

The precariate consists of millions with insecure jobs, housing and social entitlements. They have no occupational identity, and do not belong to any occupational community with a long-established social memory giving an anchor of ethical norms. Being urged to be 'flexible' and 'employable', they act opportunistically. They are denizens, not citizens, in that they have fewer rights than citizens. ... There are three 'varieties' of precariat, all detached from old political democracy and unable to relate to twentieth-century industrial democracy or economic democracy. The first variety consists of those drifting from working-class backgrounds into precariousness, the second consists of those emerging from a schooling system over-credentialized for the flexi-job life on offer, and the third are migrants and others, such as the criminalized, in a status denying them the full rights of citizens. Each has a distinctive view on life and society (Standing, 2012)

And then came Arab spring-that seemed a model and catalyst for other progressive mobilizations. How did these mass protests in Tunisia and Egypt have contagion effects in Europe, Israel and the US ? As has been noted, the growing stagnation of wages, downsizing and deskilling had been taking place for decades-but bereft of a labor party or wide scale labor organizations, the fragmented nature of American society meant there was very little effective protest. Then, during the Bush years, the minuscule/fragmented left organized itself around opposition to the wars. The immediate reaction to the election of Obama was the emergence of the Koch/Armey funded "astroturf" Tea Party that was primarily a racist response to the election of an African American president and his "socialist" plans to provide health care to everyone and subsidize the parasitic classes (Langman, 2011).

But what took so long for a progressive reaction to take place. We would argue however, that while the timing of the explosion of Occupy could not be foretold, in 2008, in a now classical entreaty, amazingly prescient, Frances Fox Piven noted that Obama needed a social movement to insure a progressive agenda would be realized-much as it took progressive organizations to move Roosevelt to the left in the 30s. In the summer of 2011, the irreverent Canadian *Adbuster* magazine called for an occupation of Wall Street on Sept 17-and the rest is history. Zuccotti Park, a small private park near Wall St. was suddenly filled with a camp with large number of "occupiers." As will be seen, a new and unexpected social movement burst forth.

The occupiers established a democratically organized, egalitarian, community whose very existence was itself a protest and resistance to the inequality, the stagnation, unemployment/underemployment and most of all, the extent to which the fiscal elites benefitted and the people were screwed. It symbolized the alternative possibilities with its General Assemblies of participatory democracy, its emphasis on sharing and caring. For some, it was like the Paris Commune-and like that experiment, was eventually repressed. And most startling, this movement exploded with very little in the way of formal leadership and/or issuing clear demands. This movement was not little understood by the mass media-nor was it very well understood by academic social movement scholars. And while conservatives dismissed the movement as "whiners" who just wanted a government handout they had no more understanding of the movement than did liberals who saw them as a left wing version of the Tea Party who would support Democrats. Au contraire, most of the Occupiers clearly see that the Democratic Party had been just as complicit in sustaining Wall St, if not more so, than the Republic party⁶.

6 In 2008 Obama received more campaign money from Wall St. than did McCain, and from all indications, this will be the case for the 2012 elections.

Identity

Given what has been said, it is obvious that the Occupiers not only feel that they have been excluded and marginalized, but their fundamental sense of self has been assaulted. In American society, for many people, work has been one of the key elements of one's identity-especially among highly skilled industrial workers and the educated sectors. But following the implosion, millions of such workers were suddenly without jobs-or working at minimum skilled minimum wage service McJobs such as in fast food, retail sales, security etc. And even these jobs were hard to find. A long tradition of sociological research going back to studies of the Great Depression, have shown how joblessness led to despair, depression, the loss of self-esteem and in some cases, aggression to self or others. Such conditions of prolonged joblessness humiliate people rob people of their dignity, of their humanity.

The precariat, coming from segments of skilled workers, highly (over) educated, and migrant/criminal elements have no occupational ties or enduring ties to work organizations experience themselves as marginalized, excluded from social order. This is especially the case for people who "played by the rules," did what they needed to do, and found instead, rejection and disdain. But for many, as will be noted, "movement identities" provide a variety of alternative, if not seemingly more moral kinds of emotional gratifications. Participation in identity granting/recognizing communities of meaning from Churches to gangs, provide people with the fundamental basis for a good life.

Perhaps the most brilliant tactic of Occupy has been to call itself the 99% and seem themselves as victims of a an unfair, unjust, economic system whose elites, the 1%, have gamed the system to assume total control of the political institutions and the mass media in such way that they could enjoy unprecedented luxury and opulence-while the precariat bear the costs of their adverse policies.

Emotions

From what we have said, the impact of stagnation, decline and marginalization, has been to evoke anger, anxiety and resentment. But for Occupiers, the movement replaces despair with hope, provides ways of overcoming alienation, and channeling what they see as legitimate anger toward productive ends, the transformation of society.

Moreover, as we also know, participation in social movements provides many people with a variety of emotional gratifications-especially feelings of community with others, feeling of agency and empowerment that one is doing some, acting on the world instead of passive resignation, feelings of recognition and dignity, and finally, feeling that one's identity, even if, or especially if it is recognized as a "movement identity" provides a sense of dignified selfhood-not provided by the larger society.

Morality

One of the most fundamental moral issues is fairness, and there are two fundamentally incompatible notions of In the US, we could argue that there exist 2 basic moral visions of fairness. The Lockean pursuit of unfettered self-interest in a dangerous, competitive world of winners and losers demand fairness of opportunities so that all may compete equally. And many of the winners win big, and if one does not work hard enough or does not maintain certain kinds of morals, s/he will lose out and not have anyone else to blame.

Fairness, at least to the “winners” means that society should not reward its “losers” with any benefits which will then create a nation of immoral parasites living off the labors of others.

But for other people, one’s basic moral posture is based on caring, sharing and compassion, empathy and mutual support. Fairness is about seeing that in a world of plenty, all should benefit. **In deed and word, the Occupiers have embraced and articulated the sharing and caring morality-as not simply desirable-but the very survival of the world depends on changing life styles, identities and values.** It was not by accident that the initial target was Wall Street, the Ur symbol of the greed, power and wealth of a small number of people that is grossly unfair. . As Lakoff (2011) put it:

Democracy starts with citizens caring about one another and acting responsibly on that sense of care, taking responsibility both for oneself and for one’s family, community, country, people in general and the planet. The role of government is to protect and empower all citizens equally via The Public: public infrastructure, laws and enforcement, health, education, scientific research, protection, public lands, transportation, resources, art and culture, trade policies, safety nets, and on and on. Nobody makes it one their own. If you got wealthy, you depended on The Public and you have a responsibility to contribute significantly to The Public so that others can benefit in the future. Moreover, the wealthy depend on those who work and who deserve a fair return for their contribution to our national life.

I think it is a good thing that the occupation movement is not making specific policy demands. If it did, the movement would become about those demands. If the demands were not met, the movement would be seen as having failed..It seems to me that the OWS movement is moral in nature, that occupiers want the country to change its moral focus. It is easy to find useful policies; hundreds have been suggested. It is harder to find a moral focus and stick to it. If the movement is to frame itself, it should be on the basis of its moral focus, not a particular agenda or list of policy demands. If the moral focus of America changes, new people will be elected and the policies will follow.

It is evident that while this view is highly contested, even vehemently repudiated by some, it rests on basic emotional dispositions that define “fairness.” Such emotional stances are little impacted by facts or evidence. But it equally evident that emphasis on the unfettered individual gain of the few and corporate greed-and let others be damned, has not only fostered the decline of the United States economy and its infrastructure, but threatens intense resource wars and adversely impacts the environment in ways that portend major ecological collapse, more catastrophic weather and rising sea levels. At least we may not face locusts or frogs-they, like many other species are becoming extinct.

Vision

Utopian thought has a long tradition in the Western world, surely going back to the French socialists, various religious communities and communes such as the Shakers, political experiments such as kibbutzim and of course the Marxist revolutions of 1917 and 1949. But most Utopian communities either faded or turned into brutal dictatorships that betrayed the hopes and promises of their visionaries. But that said, the Occupy movements ask us to rethink the role of vision in social movements, and indeed, bring Utopia in. While Utopian thought has little impacted social research, we must recall, following Touraine, that NSMs were not attempts to change particular political strategies or overturn laws in the near term, but to change the very nature of the society in the long term by challenging meanings and values and changing identity in the future. In 1999, following upon the end of ideology debates Russell Jacoby (1999) pronounced the demise of Utopian thought- “that the future could fundamentally surpass the present.” Politics had become

boring. But the events to follow, especially the various movement of Arab Spring, Israel Summer, American Fall-the Occupy movements, require that we rethink the importance of Utopian visions.

Conclusion: social movements in the 21st Century

At the end of the 20th C, it was evident how the Internet had become the basis of “virtual public spheres” and internetworked social movements (Cf Melucci, 1998; Langman, 2005). Surely the global justice movements were clear indications of a new movement of movements in the space of flows that links up distant locales around shared functions and meanings on the basis of electronic circuits and fast transportation corridors, while isolating and subduing the logic of experience embodied in the space of places” (Castells, 1998). But the power of the internet, and indeed the flourishing of social media accessible via smartphones has amplified the power of the weak and enabled the masses to confront the power of the few. As Rushkoff (2011) has put it:

...this is not a movement with a traditional narrative arc. As the product of the decentralized networked-era culture, it is less about victory than sustainability. It is not about onepointedness, but inclusion and groping toward consensus. It is not like a book; it is like the Internet. Occupy Wall Street is meant more as a way of life that spreads through contagion, creates as many questions as it answers, aims to force a reconsideration of the way the nation does business and offers hope to those of us who previously felt alone in our belief that the current economic system is broken. But unlike a traditional protest, which identifies the enemy and fights for a particular solution, Occupy Wall Street just sits there talking with itself, debating its own worth, recognizing its internal inconsistencies and then continuing on as if this were some sort of new normal. It models a new collectivism, picking up on the sustainable protest village of the movement’s Egyptian counterparts, with food, first aid, and a library... The members of Occupy Wall Street may be as unwieldy, paradoxical, and inconsistent as those of us living in the real world. But that is precisely why their new approach to protest is more applicable, sustainable and actionable than what passes for politics today. They are suggesting that the fiscal operating system on which we are attempting to run our economy is no longer appropriate to the task. They mean to show that there is an inappropriate and correctable disconnect between the abundance America produces and the scarcity its markets manufacture... And in the process, they are pointing the way toward something entirely different than the zero-sum game of artificial scarcity favoring top-down investors and media makers alike.

From all that has been said, the movements of the 21st C are not your father’s social movements, or for some of us, the movements of our own youthful idealism. These movements are not directed at a particular event or single adversity, they are not episodic gatherings, but enduring as testaments to the enduring nature of the contemporary economic system. We cannot analyze these movements using the tools and concepts of the 20th C-although as I argued, a number of traditions in critical theory, NSM theory and sociology of emotions, especially when conjoined with issues of morality can provide important starting points. As noted the work of Jaspers and Polleta, while based on movements such as animal rights, nevertheless has provided some very useful starting points. This essay has attempted to continue that discussion.

Epilogue

The first question raised by critics and sympathizers alike of Occupy is what difference has it made. But those who ask are indeed quite unaware of just how much has happened. From the encampment of Zuccotti Square, 4 months later there are now 1,400 plus occupations nationally and internationally. Moreover, in that time, the concerns with the bleating's of the tea party have gone below the radar, and the national discussion have turned from austerity, debt reduction and retrenchments, to fairness, inequality and the importance of job creation. And the recent positive, if anemic, economic picture has tended to support those who see the government as having a role to play in fostering more just taxation and a role in economic growth. The mass media has gone from very few discussions of inequality to thousands of articles, stories and television news bits. Moreover, as many critics noted, many parts of Obama's State of the Union Address could have been written by Occupiers. Among the clear results of Occupy, Pew Research not shows that 2/3 of American's now see that there is a growing amount of inequality, are willing to demand greater government support, economic investment, and that the that the rich pay higher taxes. Despite inclement weather, police brutality and the dispersal of Occupation sites, the movements are not likely to disappear. They are the product of capitalist contradictions that will not soon change. Moreover, quite under the radar they have been forging links with labor activists, anti-foreclosure groups, community activists and minority communities, that despite many differences, are all impacted by the inequality and unfairness and understand that Wall Street has the wealth and buys the power, but what they don't have is the population. The Occupy movements have been busy forging alliances. But to fully understand these movements, we must occupy social movement theory.

YOUTH AND STUDENT MOBILIZATIONS

The New Wave of Student Mobilizations in Europe Explained as a Fordist-Posfordist Transition

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Abstract

The transformation of the historical functions and goals of the European university is producing the transition from mass university to what has been called “corporate university”. With this goal, I will examine how the new functions of the university are aimed at providing services and precarious workers to the labor structure of post-Fordism in the context of the growing importance of the “knowledge-based economy”. These changes have provoked a new wave of student protests. This new mobilization cycle has been based on the emergence of a new student subjectivity: the “precarious in training”. However, I claim that this wave of mobilization can be explained by the characteristics of the Fordist model that still applies to the European university. This model of university in extinction has facilitated a student response that can be characterized in terms of the classical Fordist patterns of collective action. At the same time, these patterns of action are being adapted to the emergence of the post-Fordist corporate-university through specific repertoires of action.

Keywords

corporate-university, post-Fordism, precarious work, social movement, student movement.

Introduction

The changes produced within the capitalist economy have meant deep transformations of the University. The current mutation of higher education has provoked a wave of student mobilizations against the Bologna Process. This new social movement has opened a broad debate on the situation of European universities and consequently on the student condition, which is very different from how it was in previous student cycles of mobilization (mainly the one of 1968).

In this paper I will analyze how the transformation of the historical functions and goals of the European university is producing the transition from mass university to what has been called “corporate university” (Sevilla: 2010). I claim that this transition shows remarkable parallelisms with the Fordism-Post-Fordism evolution in the working world. With this aim, I will examine how the new functions of the university are aimed at providing services and precarious workers to the labor structure of Post-Fordism. Furthermore, this mutation, mirroring the Anglo-Saxon model of university, has provoked huge student protests. The new student criticism has been mainly directed against the mercantilist orientation of the university, but also against the assimilation of the university as device of knowledge production in the era of “flexible production” (Harvey:1993). This new mobilization cycle has been claimed to be based in the emergence of a new student subjectivity: that of the “precarious in training”

(Calella: 2008). However, I argue that this wave of mobilization can be explained by the characteristics of the Fordist model that still applies nowadays to the European university. This model of university in extinction has facilitated a student response that can be characterized in terms of classical Fordist patterns of collective action. At the same time, these patterns of action are being adapted to the emergence of the Post-Fordist corporate-university.

From this perspective, the last cycle of student resistance appears to be the twilight of the student protest inside the Fordist university, and anticipates, at the same time, some elements on how the student struggles will be in the new context of the university as a device of flexible production of knowledge.

The transformation of University: towards a University in service of postfordism

Since the “oil crisis” of 1973 and the later neoliberal reorientation of economy, capitalism has experienced deep changes in its own nature and forms. These changes have also affected the technical composition of work and the new ways for capital appreciation. Within this context, in the last years, some theorists have developed the idea of *cognitive capitalism*¹ to explain the new era of capitalism and the increasing importance of knowledge (and affects) for the capitalist accumulation. Most of these theorists belong to the post-workerist tradition (Negri, Virno, Fumagalli or Mezzadra, among others), and are influenced by the workerist emphasis on the ‘real subsumption’ of labor. In this subsumption, the collective social intellectual productive ability is one of the main subjects of exploitation, including the collective cognitive capability – what Marx referred to as the “General Intellect” in the *Grundrisse* fragment on machines. This idea leads the post-workerist theorists to suggest that since capitalism is based in the use of scientific knowledge, it can be considered as a cognitive process. According to these ideas, the production of knowledge plays a central role for the capitalist accumulation. Within this theoretical framework, universities become a strategic sector in the increasingly important global market of knowledge.

On the other hand, the deregulation of the labor market has led to a degradation of labor, specially for young people who, due to the current economical crisis, see how precariousness is the present and the future context for their lives.

Because of this transformation of labor, the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism (from material to immaterial-cognitive capitalism) has not been immune to the University. In the context of enhancing knowledge as a basic strategy for accumulation, the University has become a central institution in this transformation. In this sense, the deep transformation of the labor market and the changes produced inside the industrial organization (two of the main characteristics of Post-Fordism) have also reached the University. Moreover, in the general context of the “knowledge based economy”². In fact, knowledge production is located in the heart of what is called the “new economy”, which is generating, among other things, a significant impact on universities. Thus, universities should in principle adapt themselves to these new demands and to a new situation of extreme competitiveness which forces them to produce mainly “profitable” knowledge.

1 Vercellone (2007: 14) explains clearly the meaning of cognitive capitalism: “(i) the notion of ‘capitalism’ defines the enduring element in the change of the structural invariants of the capitalist mode of production: in particular, the driving role of profit and wage relation or, more precisely, the different forms of dependent labor on which the extraction of surplus labor is founded; (ii) the term ‘cognitive’ emphasizes the new nature of the conflictual relation of capital and labor, and of the forms of property on which the accumulation of capital rests.”

2 In fact, cognitive capitalism would be the critical version of this knowledge based economy.

The pressure over every public service to be commodified has also affected university. And, of course, the University has also had to face the tensions derived from the general transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism. And it has also opened the chance for new student struggles.

How university adapts to Post-fordism: the importance of neoliberalism

In general terms, in what sense we can say that University has been adapted to the basic requirements and logics of post-Fordism?

According to Bousquet (2011:514), during the 1980's a new culture (namely *administrative culture*) appeared in the universities, in direct relationship with the theories inspired in the Taylorist organization of labor. These theories also promoted a new paradigm in the management of corporations. In this way, the restructuring of the labor market, the implementation of neoliberal policies oriented to reduce the public services, and the implementation of concepts from the "new management in public administration" made possible the deep mutation of universities. This mutation was accompanied by two parallel processes described by de Sousa Santos (2005:20): (1) a high reduction of public investment in universities, and (2) the development of a global market of knowledge and of the university sector.

As a result of these two processes, University, as a social institution, has gone through three different crisis during the two last decades:

- 1.- A crisis of hegemony, due to the increasing presence of other private institutions with which it is necessary to be in competence.
- 2.- A crisis of legitimacy due to the breakdown of previous basic consensus on university's functions.
- 3.- A institutional crisis, because of the increasing pressure to subjecting university to the criteria of productivity and efficiency.

In the words of Sousa Santos (2005: 21), the combination of these processes and the economic crisis has caused the transition of university from a public service into a wide range appreciation of educative capitalism. In this context of "academic capitalism" (Slaughter and Rhoades: 2004) a new model of university emerges: the corporate-university. I claim that the main goal of this new corporate-university is to be directly orientated to the post-Fordist and precarious labor market. I do agree with Calella (2008:72) when he claims that universities have become "public agencies for the precarisation of labor." And also, in this new context, University makes possible to corporations the "primitive accumulation" of knowledge. However, we should try to avoid to understand these changes in a deterministic way. In the current agonistic democracy, the project of university is under struggle. As Sotiris (2011) claims:

the turn towards the entrepreneurial University should not be seen 'one-dimensionally' as the result of Universities being turned into private businesses, but as the condensation of class strategies related to the imperatives of hegemony in a period of capitalist restructuring and deterioration of the balance of forces between capital and labor. It does not mark a simple process of privatization but a more complex transformation of a hegemonic apparatus in line with the changes in bourgeois strategy, exemplified in the hegemony of neoliberalism.

How mass-university becomes corporate-university

After the wave of struggles of 1968, a new way of capitalist domination replaced the three pillars of capitalism (namely, factory, school and family) (Zizek 2011: 166). In the case of education, lifelong learning and flexible education is replacing the public universal education. Indeed, in the postmodern capitalism, the market has invaded new areas which until then were considered as privileged functions of the State. Toscano (2011b: 260) reminds us how Vercellone describes the mass university (a consequence of the “thirty glorious years” after the II World War) as both the product and the site of the real subsumption of labor that had characterized an expansive Fordism (through a “passive revolution”, in Gramsci’s words). Moreover, Toscano (2011b:261) explains how

the mass university is functional to the designs of both the state and private managers of this real subsumption, but at the same time it very rapidly generates a powerful criticism of those designs themselves not just in terms of the hiatuses between the modernizing project and its institutional reality (critique of authoritarianism and elite selection), but as questioning of the control of labor-power itself (critique of technocracy, of the instrumentalisation of academic disciplines, of the relationship between the university and the labor market).³

The transition towards the corporate-university seeks to make functional the higher education to the new economy and the new social and technical composition of workers. This new corporate-university is oriented to respond to the demands of the post-Fordist labor market, namely to teach students how to be flexible, precarious and available for any job. Actually, it is the whole system of university that has become as a post-Fordist device. In this sense, there are some nuclear elements of the corporate-university that connect it with the general post-Fordist re-organization of labor. According to Sevilla and Urbán (2008:64) some of these elements would be:

- The trend to have, annually, an amount of graduates in correspondence with the dominant class demands of intellectual work.
- An increasing association of university research projects to the needs of multinational corporations.
- The improvement of the techniques of fragmentation, partialization and hyper specialization that facilitate the use of trained technicians.
- The growing importance of general skills instead of knowledge in order to train flexible workers able to shift job very easily.
- The generalization of precarious material conditions of life for students, researchers, scholars and other workers of university. In this sense, university itself becomes a factory of precariousness.

According to these elements among others, this restructuring of higher education can be defined as the “corporate welfare” university (Bousquet: 2008:5) or simply as the adaptation of the University to the requirements of the new way of organizing economy and the work-world. Thus, University inserts within the overall device of “flexible accumulation” through the downgrading of the new workforce and the general

³ In fact, this is what was questioned during the emergence of student movements during the 1960s, when the diffusion of education and knowledge inside the mass university allowed the crisis of the first dimension of real subsumption (Cohn-Bendit et al, 1969: 377).

commodification of university research. In this sense, university becomes an assembly line just-in-time by means of the construction of two different channels in the students training: the degree and the post-degree.

In a similar way, another fundamental issue to understand the current situation of the university is the student (or educational) debt⁴. One of the main characteristic of the new era of capitalism is its financialization, that is the quick transit from a real-material economy to another one based in a speculative-fictitious economy. The global growing of the student debt has become a new concern for students. The importance of this mechanism is explained by two factors: firstly, as an insertion of higher education inside the logics of financialization of the economy, and secondly as a chance to open a new processes of student resistance (as we can see these days in several universities of the US⁵). Moreover, the problem of the educational debt allows to link the student struggles with a broader social unrest. Indeed, the student debt, as Williams argues (2010), is becoming the new paradigm of life for young people and offers some lessons to students around the world they live in. This is the real “pedagogy of debt”: it shows that education is just another consumer good, teaching which is the real role of the State, and also adding an extra-stress for students who are concerned about their present but still more worried about their future.

The new wave of student movement and the fordist-postfordist transition

The transition from mass-university to corporate-university has opened a wave of transnational student protests. We can locate the symbolic beginning of this wave in the so-called “millennium strike” that was organized by the General Strike Council (CGH) in Mexico in 1999. This strike was able to keep paralyzed the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) during nine months. Since that time, several student conflicts began to spread like wildfire throughout the world, drawing a “rare geopolitics of resistance” (Bensaïd, 2003). These resistances were developed in particular scenarios and situations, but all of them had the common goal of facing the neoliberal model applied to higher education. And also in clear harmony with three aspects of the anti-globalization movement⁶: the criticism to neoliberal capitalism, the emerging transnational coordination (in this case, European) and the contentious repertoire of protest.

The transition from the mass university to the corporate-university has caused a cycle of transnational student mobilization⁶. In this new student movement wave, the factors facilitating the emergence of mobilizations have varied -inevitably- from one context to another, and in terms of intensity, objectives and motivations. However, I believe that there is a certain shared *corpus* and heritage among all the protests of recent years which is linked to the social condition and position of *precarious workers-in formation*.

Looking for a possible genealogy of the new wave of student mobilizations

The transition from mass-university to corporate-university has opened a wave of transnational student protests. We can locate the symbolic beginning of this wave in the so-called “millennium strike” that was organized by the General Strike Council (CGH) in Mexico in 1999. This strike was able to keep paralyzed

4 See: http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2012/01/10/actualidad/1326174143_330152.html

5 See: <http://www.diagonalperiodico.net/El-problema-de-la-deuda.html> and the website of the campaign: <http://www.occupystudentdebtcampaign.org/>

6 A cycle that begins in Mexico with the General Strike of the Autonomous University of Mexico in 1999 and still goes on with the open and deep student conflicts in several countries.

the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) during nine months. Since that time, several student conflicts began to spread like wildfire throughout the world, drawing a “rare geopolitics of resistance” (Bensaïd, 2003). These resistances were developed in particular scenarios and situations, but all of them had the common goal of facing the neoliberal model applied to higher education. And also in clear harmony with three aspects of the anti-globalization movement”: the criticism to neoliberal capitalism, the emerging transnational coordination (in this case, European) and the contentious repertoire of protest.

In this first phase (1999-2004), in Europe, some significant changes in the dynamic of the student movement start to be developed. Indeed, the process of the European Social Forum (ESF), becomes for the student movement a framework of exchange of experiences and also a network to articulate struggles. Thus, one survey, conducted during the first ESF in Florence in November 2002, shows that 57.5% of respondents claimed to belong to student groups. This process created the conditions for a “Europeanization of protest” (Della Porta, 2008:33) and to establish the “Bologna process” as the unifier of the resistance. And also to locate the European Union as a strategic framework of confrontation, and as we shall see later, to show the chances for the European coordination of the movement.

On the other hand, the dynamics of sectionalism ESF (health, education, migrants, climate change, public services, women, war) set the conditions for the convergence at a European level between the different sensitivities of the movement, the student unions (European Student Union) and teachers’ unions.

On the other hand, at a European level, in a competitive/cooperation relationship with the Social Forums, the European Forum for Education was developed. Its first edition took place in Berlin in 2003 in the same days that the official summit of education ministers of the European Union. The second edition, as “counter-summit ‘to the ministers of the European Higher Education held in Bergen (Norway) in May of 2005.

In this second phase (2004-2010) of the new wave of student protest emerges definitely, at a European level, the trends already existing in previous mobilization cycle. The student movement becomes what Tarrow defines as “cosmopolitan by the base”. The shared experience of the European Social Forums (Florence 2002, Paris 2003, London 2004, Athens 2006, Malmö 2008), and the development of the European Forum for Education (Berlin 2003, Bergen 2005) led to a radicalization of the left wing of the student movement. This new political experience set the conditions for determining the common goal to face the “Bologna process” and the birth of a European coordination of the movement beyond the traditional student union structured in the ESU.

Continuing with this brief review of the student protests in Europe in the recent years, in 2005 and 2006, the European student movements came back on stage. In this academic year we attended the following demonstrations: against school and college reform in Italy (2005), against the Bologna process in the Spanish State (2005-6); against reform prohibits collective college exams in Denmark (2005), with the partial success of the student movement and workers against the First Employment Contract in France (Kouvelakis, 2006), against the law of higher education in Greece (2006).

The dynamics of university mobilization was reactivated in the last quarter of 2007 with the protests against the Pécresse Law of Autonomy of universities in France, the continuity of the struggle in defense of free public university in Greece and the “focus” of resistance to the implementation of the “Bologna process” in the Spanish State.

In the academic year 2008-2009 the protests at the European level were accelerated with the “anomalous wave” of the Italian student movement in the fall of 2008 (AAVV, 2009). The “revolt-signal” from Greek movement after the murder of the teenager Alexander Grigoropoulos by the police in December 2008, led thousands students to occupy universities and even the television studios for weeks. This revolt appears as the first outbreak of discontent “system” around precarity, stated in terms of massive and sustained confrontation against two symbolic targets: banks, accused to be responsible of the crisis, and the police. And also the student mobilizations in Spain against the Bologna Process which was particularly conflictive in Catalonia.

Last year, mainly England but also Italy and other peripheral countries of EU (such as Serbia) led the protests against the education cuts of the austerity measures dictated by the governments. In both cases, a new symbolic repertoire of the movement was created: the “book block”⁷, which, as we will see is a perfect and visual example of the conflict around knowledge, precarity and education.

Finally, during this academic year the student wave has come back to Latin America. The student struggle in Chile⁸ has been one of the most intensive protests in the country since the breakdown of Pinochet’s dictatorship. Also in Colombia there has been a huge mobilization against the marketization of higher education. After the emergence of the “Indignados movement” in Spain we have also seen the birth of a “new global rebel cycle” with mobilizations in several countries and contexts. In these different movements, we can see the key role played by student activism and, in general, by a new generation of social activists unhappy with their situation under capitalism. In fact, these last mobilizations have placed the precariousness and the huge problem of the student debt in the public debate.

But is it possible to find common elements to all these student protests? Despite the natural differences of the student movement in each country, Roggero⁹ argues that it is possible to find common elements to all these student protests, namely: (i) the assertion of a new hybrid figure of student who moves permanently between lifelong learning and the labor market; (ii) the precariousness as the contextual framework and also as a factor for a new student subjectivity; (iii) the downgrading processes and the several mechanisms of differential inclusion where the distinctive factor is no longer what it has been studied but primarily where; (iv) and, finally, the reconfiguration of the space-time in the production of autonomous knowledge, through measures oriented to control and quantify the production of knowledge.

However, over and above describing these mobilizations and their common elements, what is really important here is to observe how the student/youth mobilizations have been developed before the general mobilizations of other social actors. This allows us to claim that during recent years (and as it happened during the 1968 cycle), the student/youth mobilizations have acted as a “tactical vanguard” and as a catalyst for social antagonisms in very different demographic contexts and political situations (such as Arab countries, France, England, Portugal or Spain, or the US). And it’s happening because, at this time, the following changes have turned into mobilizing factors: On the one hand, the rise of “cultural capital” of youth, that is: the skills and abilities acquired and derived from the forced versatility of living labor; and, on the other hand, the applied technopolitical digital media networks and virtual organizational form that hybridizes with cultural and political alternatives from social networks.

7 For a genealogy of the book bloc, see: <http://libcom.org/library/book-bloc%E2%80%99s-genealogy>

8 See: <http://www.fundacionbetiko.org/index.php/es/anos/2011/442-movilizaciones-estudiantiles-en-chile-2011>

9 See: <http://transform.eipep.net/transversal/0707/roggero/es#redir>

Precisely, the concept of “youth” has been used in some way as an “empty signifier” (Laclau:1996), becoming a legitimizer for contentious mobilization. For instance, in the Spanish case, the appeal to the term “youth” was used successfully in the demonstrations that preceded the 15-M by the “*Juventud Sin Futuro*” (“Youth without future”) student platform¹⁰ on April the 7th. In this case, the term “youth”, acting as an “empty signifier”, encapsulated much of the social reality and the collective imagination that allowed to justify such a mobilization. This use was also applied in Portugal by the “*Geracao a Rasca*” movement. These examples show that, in the battle for legitimacy and social hegemony, the role of the student movement and youth in general is still key. In the last months, the appeal to the condition of youth has been instrumental in articulating broad movements that undermine the dominant discourse on the economical crisis and the austerity measures.

But how and why has this new student unrest been developed? And how can we relate it to the Fordist-post-Fordist transition?

The chances of the mass university for student activism

Even I claim the transition from mass-University to corporate-University is a fact, it would not be correct to claim that University, nowadays, is a total post-Fordist context where the social bonds have disappeared and the individualization of relationships is total. Thus, some structural and inherent elements of University remain it as an institution with certain peculiarities. Peculiarities that make easier the social activism.

In this sense, the new emergence of the student movement can be explained by several reasons. Among the different approaches existing for the social movements study, the resource mobilization perspective on social movements seems to be the most appropriate to explain this new wave of student movements. Thus, the persistent mass university offers tangible and intangible resources (Freeman: 1979:170) for the self-organization of the student movement. In contrast, these resources are not available for workers in the context of the typical post-Fordist labor market. And here we can find the explanation of the advantage taken by student movements, in the last years, as a “tactical vanguard” (Mandel, 1973: 33) in the mobilization process in Europe or in other regional areas.

In the case of intangible resources we can find the partial homogeneous identity or, at least, the common interests shared by the students inside the faculties. This fact is really interesting because as Toscano claims (2011: 83): “*At once reflecting, and at times exacerbating, the divisions and contradictions in society at large, the university can also unify students in ways that corporatist or fragmented interest cannot*”.

Obviously, as Bourdieu (2004) claimed, the education is a central institution for the social reproduction of social divisions where the student mainly accumulate a “symbolic and relational capital”. But this is not contradictory with the idea defended by researchers as Sevilla:

students do not constitute a class, rather they find themselves situated in a temporal condition: they are apprentice intellectual workers who the moment they gain self-consciousness as a community are dispersed and find themselves neutralized. But in the brief interlude of their preparation they constitute a compact group which has demonstrated an enormous political impulse in country after country.

¹⁰ See Errejón (2011) in: <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=126259>

On the other hand, the tangible resources available for the student movements are directly linked to the “student environment”. In this case, the two main resources are the available time, and the shared physical space. Both of them imply a great chance to achieve the goal of organizing and mobilizing students.

Regarding *time*, the particular student condition allows many students to have their own time released from work (not alienated time) which becomes an opportunity for collective self-organization, to develop a collective diagnostic and discourse on their own interests, and to have enough time to agree on a repertoire of actions to be displayed in order to defend these common interests. Indeed, the introduction of ECTS credits through the “Bologna process” as the unit of time to measure the student work, seeks to impose rates of study that are in fact rhythms of work. The application of ECTS credits is leading to the succession and proliferation of courses, seminars, modules, tests, projects and required courses that make difficult to combine the studies with having a job or any extra-curricular activity. University, in this sense, looks a *just in time* assembly line.

This neo-Taylorist educational model allows the mutation from potential critical time for self-formation into alienated work time: the work to become future precarious. Because of this, the expropriation of the student’s lifetime is the central element, form and content of the new student condition. This dominion over the lifetime has two main meanings. Firstly, the orientation of the studies according to the special requirements of corporations, what means that specific skills should be developed by the workforce to be marketable. Secondly, the central element in practice is to discipline the future workforce and the elimination of the right to organize the own life. In general terms, we can say that studies are orientated to learn how to be precarious, and above all, how to be available for any job.

On the other hand, we find the availability of a *common physical space*. located in universities and faculties. This shared space makes easier for students to be in touch, to establish relationships and bonds within the movement, and to develop formal and informal networks of activists. In turn, this makes easier what Klandermans (1988) defines as the “formation of consensus”¹¹, which is one of the central elements for the creation and re-creation of social movements. Within the student activists networks, the formation of consensus seems to be elaborated easier than in the individualization of labor relations.

This individual disconnection and fragmentation caused by neoliberalism and post-Fordism has had a direct impact on the possibilities for workers’ organization. In general, it has meant an expropriation of the life-time and of a shared physical space, among other new difficulties for precarious workers. Indeed, the overcrowding of universities has provoked a homogenization of the student condition which is not derived from the social origins or the common uncertain future. Rather, the “mass student” shares a social space which is the faculty, which makes it a social subject organizable and allowing to develop a dynamics of self-organization. In the fragmentation of society caused by instability and precariousness, this is a common aspect of the student condition with a great potential for contentious.

In summary: the organizational resources available to the student movement allows it to be an active agent in social conflicts still now, with some resources difficultly findable in the current labor market, specially for precarious and working pors. I claim that we can understand these resources as the reminiscences of the Fordism still alive in University. According to this thesis, it might be said that the late transition of

11 That is: the collective formation, within certain social networks, of a common definition on a particular (supposedly unfair) situation.

the University to the post-Fordist labor market means, through the evolution of the university into a model of corporate-university, a change of this pattern, modifying the ways in which the student movements are used to organize themselves. However, the survival of shared subcultures and of the physical spaces still maintains the chances to define common identities and interests which are key to ensuring the organizational forms of the student response.

Facing the knowledge factory: precarious in training

As we have seen, the resources of time and common space have made easier the development of resistance undertaken by student movements against the deep mutations of the functions of the University. Thus, if in the cycle of 1968 the protest was against the lack of democracy inside the University, now the student movement is oriented against the precariousness offered in and after the years at the University¹².

In fact, as claimed by Kouvelakis (2006), during the student struggle against the First Employee Contract in France, “the students have acted as part of world of work” linking directly their student condition to their condition of precarious workers. Because of that, as Sotiris (2011) defends:

in the current struggles students tend more easily to associate with the labor movement, to think in terms of common demands, to create forms of solidarity. Student movements are not just a reaction to the devaluation of degrees but are a part of greater social mobilization against the neoliberal restructuring of the totality of capital – labor relations.

In this sense, Kouvelakis argues that there has been a “reduction of the gap between youth in school and universities and young workers due to the increase in wage-earning activity among lycée and above all university students”. Because of that, differently to the 1968 movement, this transformation has not only facilitated the collaboration with workers, but it has made it a common struggle.

In fact, what is really new here is the articulation of a discourse capable of combining this double condition of student and working poor. A discourse able to better understand the new condition of students and the new functions of universities.

According to Vercellone (2008:121) we cannot consider the “constitution of the labor force (supposedly in training) through the old lens of Fordism: that is, thinking in the student as an inactive and unproductive figure, which not deserves to be paid. The figure of the student as the employee, or the working poor, are increasingly confused”. Thus, students as producers of knowledge would be already in production, regardless of the concrete existence of a working relationship: “Today, the student is immediately precarious as a producer of knowledge and wisdom” (ESC, 2006). As Calella (2008: 75) claims:

students are certainly precarious, but not simply because they produce knowledge. They are being exploited as temporary workers with cost zero in the mandatory practices or in the thousands of precarious jobs with no rights to which have been constrained. But above all, they are a good of production, a particular commodity.

I do agree with Toscano (2011b:258) when he defines the new situation of the student body as a “re-proletarianization derived from, for instance, the graduates working jobs that previously only required a

¹² Needless to say that what is really different among the two cycles is the material situation of the two generations. As Bensaïd explained (2008) we can find in these waves the transition from the ‘getting better’ of the 1960s to the ‘getting worse’ of the new times.

high-school degree”¹³. Thus, University is becoming a factory of precariousness for most of the students who see how degrees lose its contractual capacity and “exchange value”.

Nowadays, the deterioration of students life conditions has meant a common self-identification as “precarious in training” that has been one of the main discourses which have federalized the student movement around the world. And, indeed, this new collective consciousness has linked the economic transformations to the deep mutation of universities and, finally, to a new student condition that has been processed by the student movement activists as a general framework of injustice.

The repertoire of action of the new student mobilizations

The repertoire of mobilization of student movement is quite odd. On the one hand, because it often displays a non-institutionalized political action, and, on the other hand, “because student movement develops very diverse and flexible repertoire of actions: occupations of university spaces and streets, breaks of academic regularities, development of several forms of counter-information, and so on” (González Calleja, 2009:53). In the last period of mobilization of the student movement, these repertoires have evolved and adjusted to the different contexts in which they have been developed. Similarly, there have been significant innovations in the forms of action. This shows the organizational flexibility of the movement and the ability to interpret the social and political context, as well as the opportunities it provides.

This cycle has also developed a specific repertoire of action of the movement. Due to their symbolic impact and the high diffusion they have had, I will attend to two of the repertoires that have been repeated in different contexts: (1) the faculty occupations and blockades, and (2) the development of the initiative of the “book block”.

Faculty occupations and blockades

The occupation of faculties have been a symbol of the movement and, in the case of Europe, they have had a specific political meaning. There have been occupations of faculties in England, Germany, Austria, Greece, Spain etc.¹⁴ In every country where there has been a student mobilization this has been the most repeated repertoire. As we have previously seen, the expropriation of time is a central element in the new student (and precarious) condition. Through the occupations, the student movements tried to free time for themselves and for social activism. As activists recognize, in the case of the protests against the Bologna Process, occupations were also the way to have enough time to study the education reforms, with a very technical content and, as the movements criticized, mostly approved in a non democratic way. Developed as “Japanese strikes” (in the Spanish case), these occupations had the goal to achieve the social time necessary to articulate the protest and, at the same time, to break with the faculty daily routine and visualize the conflict inside the institution. Furthermore, occupations acted as a mechanism to build up the movement and the opposition discourse.

In the same way, the tactical of blockades of faculties (developed mainly in France) was a repertoire oriented to make possible the right to strike in universities, but also the most advanced example of how students have acted as a part of the world of work. The blockades pursued the objective of *short-circuiting* the assembly-line of universities and breaking the flow of knowledge production (Sevilla and Urban, 2008: 71).

13 This is absolutely contradictory with what happened after the 1968 wave of protest in the universities of Spain, Italy or France, where many student activists decided to leave universities to proletarianize themselves working in big factories and changing their life conditions and their social expectations.

14 A map of universities occupied in Europe in November of 2009 can be found here: <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=de&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&source=embed&msa=0&msid=116283369278129786033.0004778dfa81fb402d565&dll=49.781264,12.348633&spn=13.632758,28.125&sz=5>

The “book block”

The most visual repertoire used by the student movement has been what is known as the “book block”. This repertoire was firstly put into practice by Italian activists in 2010. Later, it spread to other countries, being adapted by student movements in Madrid or London, in what is a clear case of diffusion and transnational activism (Tarrow, 2011). As one of the activists of “Juventud Sin Futuro” in Madrid explains, the meaning of this repertoire:

is a nod to the various student struggles and precarious youth that have developed around Europe and that have also used this symbol. Young people also read. And there is a connection between the consciousness that gives us something so fundamental as a book and the defense of culture and knowledge against the marketization of the university¹⁵.

Moreover, this repertoire is thought for urban demonstrations, for urban conflicts and as a way to defend activists from police, always as active non violent disobedience.¹⁶ Symbolically strong, the “book block” emerges as an opportunity for the legitimization of the movement and it appears linked to knowledge and as the symbol of a generation with high levels of education but doomed to precariousness. The symbolism of the book block and its sense also means that the contradictions involved in the University cannot be solved, exclusively, inside the university itself. And this is because the subsumption of university inside the global market of knowledge makes it impossible, and because the condition of precarious develops inside and, even more, outside university.

Main findings

In this paper, I have briefly reviewed how universities have been transformed in parallel to the Fordist-post-Fordist transition of the labor market, at least in the new management and goals of universities. I have claimed that the new functions of universities are directed to satisfy the needs of the labor market and of corporations, inside the tensions derived from the increasing global market of knowledge. This evolution of universities has provoked a new emergence of student discontent. This discontent has been possible to be expressed and organized because of the resources available for students, specially the time and the common physical space which are still present (despite both are decreasing in the corporate-university) in the student life. Despite the evolution towards the corporate-university, the structure of universities still offers to the student movements objective chances to organize social protest. In fact, the mass university associated to Fordism is still allowing the development of some social mobilization repertoires that, on the other hand, the post-Fordist labor market inhibits or, at least, makes much more difficult to articulate.

My main conclusion is that the mass university, associated with a Fordist model of production, might explain why the student subject has been, in the last years, one of the most important actors of contentious social mobilization. In fact, the student protests have acted as a “catalyst movement” for a broader processes of social mobilization. At the same time, the construction of a common identity (“precarious in training”) has also allowed this emergence of a new student collective subject, a new identity for new struggles in the new era of universities. Finally, this diagnostic of the student condition has had two main impacts over the recent wave of mobilizations: (i) firstly, the link of the current student movement with

15 See: <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=128668>

16 See: http://www.unicommon.org/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=2646:presentazione-di-book-bloc-project-andcatid=132:book-blocandItemid=324

the world of work, or at least, the articulation of a movement acting inside and outside university as a hard critique to the situation of precariousness; (ii) secondly, putting into practice some repertoires oriented to visualize this condition and trying to avoid the measures of control and discipline implemented by the new corporate-university.

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Precarious present, uncertain future: multiples dimensions of precarity as a symbolic tool and resource in the Italian university mobilisation

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Introduction

Dealing with precarity is not a choice, for a young researcher in the Italy of today. I am not an expert on labour, I usually work on public memory of contentious pasts, and, in general, on the symbolic construction of conflict, focusing in particular on the student movement.

The idea of going out of my comfort zone and approaching this topic came to me and my friend and colleague Ludovica Ioppolo (who imagined this piece of research with me and then had to renounce because of other academic commitments) in 2011, pressed by the urgency of the topic. As doctoral students, we are actually living this condition of precarity in our research work, and we have participated in the university mobilisations of the last few years. Therefore, we thought, we should start to investigate this matter, both as researchers and as activists, in order to improve the scholarly knowledge on this field and to contribute of the self-awareness of the social actors involved in this process.

This is a working paper, the start of my investigation in this field. I am mainly interested in precarity as a symbolic resource and tool, able to transcend the social field of labour and to take on a wider meaning and role in different social processes. In the second section of this paper I briefly describe the symbolic field I am interested in, reconstructing some traits of the shift from the flexibility discourse to the precarity discourse. In the third section, I analyse the main contents of the precarity discourse in the context of the university mobilisation of 2009-2010, with a qualitative discourse analysis of the media coverage of that mobilisation, and in the fourth I try to individuate the most useful theoretical lenses for the further research on the role of the precarity discourse in the public sphere, starting from the results of this first empirical analysis.

Epistemological and ethical aspects

Doing research on social movements involves various kind of ethical, methodological and epistemological concerns: traditionally, in fact, research has an «emphasis on “organized” civil society», focusing «on actors that are easily identifiable, structured according to known models, and acting according to known repertoires of action», while «activists’ focus on “practices”» (Hintz and Milan 2010: 838-839). Furthermore, I address the object of study both as a researcher and as an activist. I have been engaged in the student movement since 2001 and I am actually a member of the national executive committee of Rete della Conoscenza, the largest Italian student union.

I believe that in general my position of activist/researcher gives me a comparative advantage for what

concerns data gathering, data analysis and capacity of comprehension of the internal dynamics of the movement. However, in this work I primarily focus on media discourse analysis, not involving any direct contact with activists. The only parts of this paper in which I refer to my personal experience as an activists are the references to the events that characterised the university mobilisation of 2009-2010: in those cases, I quote the chapter I wrote for a collective work. I find this self-quoting quite embarrassing, but for now it is the only written account of that wave of student protest, so I have no other choice.

The symbolic dimension of collective action

Mario Diani has defined social movements as «networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity» (Diani 2003: 301). Thus, there are three dimensions that qualify a movement as different from other processes such as coalitions: (1) a collective action involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents, (2) dense informal exchanges between entities engaged in collective projects, and (3) presence of a collective identity. Many scholars have showed the relevance of the third characteristic (the collective identity) in the making of a social movement (Touraine 1981, Melucci 1996).

Collective identity is considered a strategic device for both the setting of borders for the group membership and the motivation of individuals to action. It links the actors to each other, it grants patterns to go over the individual reasons for joining the movement and to develop a collective consciousness which often goes even over the problem originating the conflict (Polletta and Jasper 2001, della Porta and Diani 2006).

The construction of the collective identity of a group is a dynamic process, which needs to be continually reproduced, through the use of specific symbols, practices and rituals (Melucci 1996). Many scholars has worked on the identity building process of social movements in the last decade, and some of them referred to the use, by activists, of «evocative cultural symbols, resonating with the ones belonging to the potential members, to motivate them to collective action» (Valocchi 2005: 54), in order to build frames (Snow and Benford 1988, Snow and McAdam 2000) that can help people to interpret an event or situation and place it in a wider meaning system.

The last few years have seen a deepening of the discussion of the role of culture in social movements. The broad framework is provided by the debate on structure and agency[...]: social actors act in the context of structural constraints, which not only have to do with material resources but also with cultural ones. Actors' interpretations of their situation, their preconceptions, their implicit assumptions about social life and its guiding principles, about what is worthy or unworthy, all drastically constrain their capacity to act and the range of their options. At the same time, through action, agents also try – and sometimes succeed – in modifying the cultural structures in which they are embedded. Social agency is indeed at the same time oriented on the reproduction of its constraining structures, and the creation of new ones. This duplicity can be found even in the experience of social movements, which by definition should be the most oriented towards change. (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 66-67)

This development of the scholarship is rooted both in the so called «new political culture» perspective, that calls for a new interest in the role of culture in politics and in particular in the «symbolic structuring of political discourse» (Olick 1999: 337), and in social movement studies: in their polemical essay questioning the «structural bias» of the mainstream paradigm in social movement studies, Jasper and Goodwin pointed out that «we need a better appreciation of the symbolism of events and individuals, so that we can see how they discourage

or encourage political action» and listed among their «modest proposals» the acknowledgement that «culture permeates the political opportunities and mobilizing structures» (Goodwin and Jasper 2004a: 3-30).

In that debate and in other occasions, Francesca Polletta called for a different conceptualization of culture, as «the symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices (political, economic, educational, etc.)» (Polletta 2004: 100). There is a shared effort in recent social movement scholarship, aiming at enlightening some areas of the movements' behaviour traditionally underestimated, like emotions (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001) or storytelling (Tilly 2002, Polletta 2006), usually linked with the identity building process (Polletta and Jasper 2001, Tilly 2002, della Porta and Diani 2006).

Every contentious dynamic, from this point of view, implies a process in which the identity of a group is socially built on the traits that make the members of that group part of a common “we” and different from “them”. This process has been identified as the symbolic construction of conflict (della Porta and Piazza 2008).

Precarity vs flexibility, a symbolic struggle

The word «flexibility» is commonly used in relationship with the changes occurred in the last two decades to the traditional full-time open-ended form of wage labour that characterised to so called golden age of capitalism. (CSALE 2010)

In particular, labour flexibility is a model that requires the «worker to repeatedly adapt the structure of his existence to the changing needs of the productive organisation, private or public, in which he performs his work activity» (Gallino 2001: 25, my translation). Therefore, flexibility, «deriving from the changing needs of market, does not involve only the continuity of employment, but also income, working hours and the tasks of the worker in the organisation» (CSALE 2010: 12).

The demand for flexibility by employers, in the public debate of the '90s, was based on two main arguments: globalisation requires companies to handle human resources in relation to the production and flexibility contributes to increase employment (Gallino 2001). «The term flexibility resonated throughout Italian society, also thanks to the contribution of mainstream media». (Mattoni 2009: 2).

After two decades, the symbolic landscape of the Italian debate on labour looks considerably different. The concept of «precarity» of work has reached in the recent years an undisputed centrality in the Italian public discourse. A new narrative based on the difficulties of young people in the job market seems to have replaced the «flexibility ideology» (Gallino 2001).

The shift in the public discourse from flexibility to precarity is visible, and it involves not only grassroots social coalitions or trade unions, but also conservative state officials like then-chairman of the central bank Mario Draghi¹ and then-premier Silvio Berlusconi². In fact, the change in the terms of the debate is

1 Anonymus, 2010. Draghi: «Situazione preoccupante. Bisogna stabilizzare i precari»] Draghi: «Situazione preoccupante. Bisogna stabilizzare i precari», *Il Corriere della sera*, [online], 5 Nov. Available at <http://www.corriere.it/economia/10_novembre_05/draghi-allarme-economia_a3e840f6-e8c7-11df-9527-00144f02aabc.shtml> [Accessed 25 November 2011]

2 He pointed out the problem of precarity in his letter to the EU (Redazione Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2011. Il testo integrale della lettera del governo italiano

shared by different social actors and does not seem directly related to their position in the topic. A clear example is the lexicon used by two protagonists of the intellectual debate: in 2001 Luciano Gallino, opposing the labour reforms, used the word «flexibility» (Gallino 2001), while in 2008 Pietro Ichino, supporting them, used «precariat»³.

This shift in the public discourse is the context of my research, and I start with an analysis of its factual basis in the Italian mediatised public sphere, considering the media as «a master arena» of public discourse (Gamson 2004: 243). For this part of my work I will refer to the most recent debate on the media influence on social action (Couldry 2008), using the set of instruments typical of critical discourse analysis usually applied to media studies (Wodak. and Krzyzanowski 2008).

I am aware of the critiques and revisions to which the concept of public sphere has been subjected in the field of media studies in the last two decades: some of them have accounted for the its lack of neutrality, excessive rationalism, exclusion of household and economy and monism (Garnham 1992), others have denounced the fragmentation of the contemporary public sphere (Gitlin 1998), others have described how the public orientation of the individual interacts with the media consumption (Couldry and Markham 2008) and have called for more attention towards the spaces of dissent which challenge the borders of the public sphere (Couldry and Curran 2003), others have proposed the concept of «media environment», more «open, unpredictable», «controversial», «fluid» and «dynamic» (Mattoni 2009). Nevertheless, in this work I am interested in the observation of a particular phenomenon, the shift from the flexibility discourse to the the precarity discourse, that is clearly visible and analysable in the mainstream public sphere, probably as a result of more complex and articulated processes that happened out of it or in its margins. Others have investigated how social actors promoted the precarity discourse in dissenting media environments (Mattoni 2009), while in this paper I focus on the impact that these processes had the level of debate that social actors develop in the arena of the mainstream media, that is the mediatised public sphere.

For these reasons, I will focus primarily on mainstream independent commercial newspapers, given the level of public legitimacy they have and they can give (Cavallari 1990).

The first step of this research is constituted by a description of the shift in the public discourse from «flexibility» to «precarity». In order to show this process, I have analysed the occurrence of the words «flessibilità» and «precarietà» (counting also the variant «precariato») in the digital archives of the two most important Italian newspapers, both in terms of distribution and of cultural relevance, that are *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della sera*. The words are used as indexes of the different «interpretive packages» (Gamson and Modigliani 1989:2) used to address the topic of labour. In the next sections I will try to reconstruct the traits that constitute one of these packages and to elaborate some hypotheses for further research on the role of these symbolic elements in the processes of mobilisation in the university.

all'Unione europea, Il Fatto Quotidiano, [online], 26 Oct. Available at:<<http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2011/10/26/il-testo-integrale-della-lettera-del-governo-italiano-allunione-europea/166579/>> [Accessed 25 November 2011].

3 Ichino, P. (2008) Contro il precariato un nuovo diritto del lavoro, Pietro Ichino [online] 25 Feb. Available at:<<http://www.pietroichino.it/?p=20>>

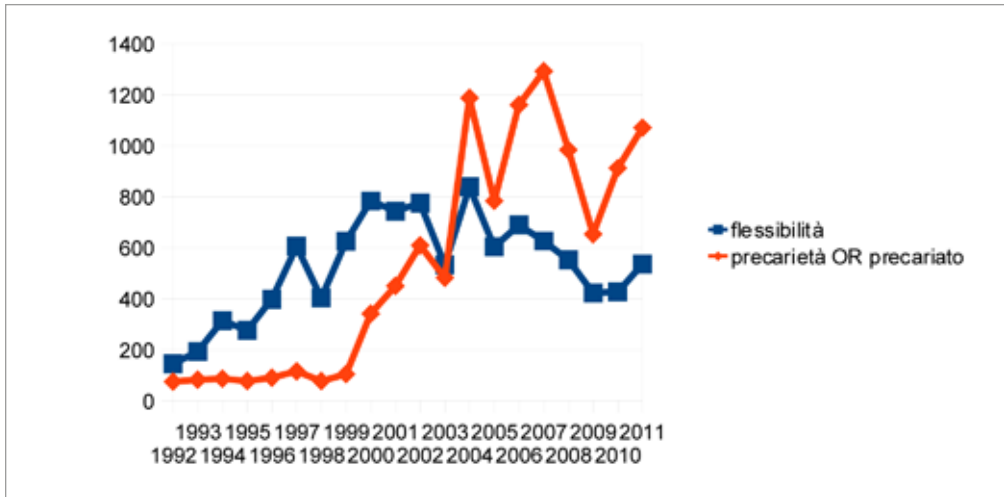


Table 1. Occurrences per year of the words «flessibilità» and «precarietà» or «precariato» in *La Repubblica*, from 1992 to 2011

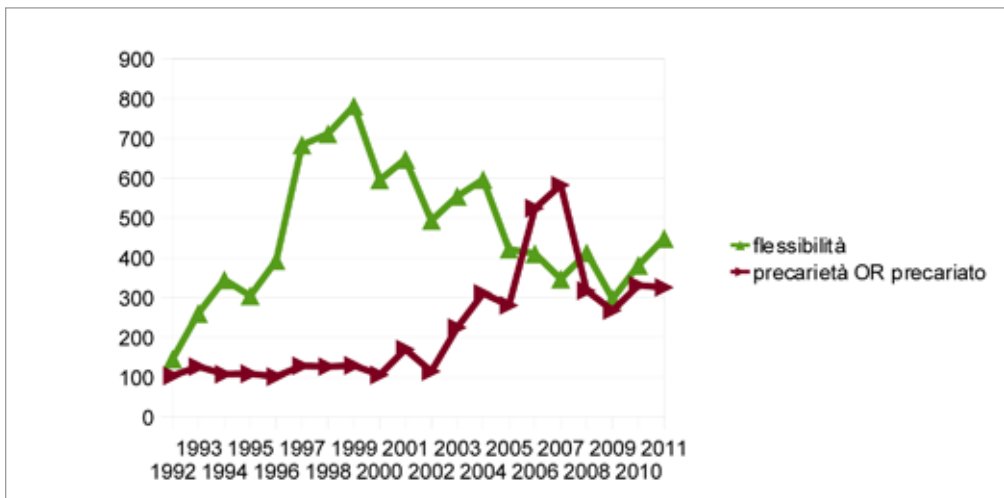


Table 2. Occurrences per year of the words «flessibilità» and «precarietà» or «precariato» in *Il Corriere della sera*, from 1992 to 2011

There are some differences between the newspapers: in *Il Corriere della sera* the difference between the two words in the '90s is larger than in *La Repubblica*, while the difference in the opposite sense in the latest years is smaller. But the trend is similar: a clear prevalence of «flexibility» in the '90s and of «precarity» in the 2000s.

But these figures might be misunderstood, given that the use of both the words is almost constantly increasing, and the absolute number of occurrences of a word can depend on the particular focus of a newspaper on a topic in a certain period of time. If we are interested in the relative growth of the use of «precarity» over «flexibility», a more effective view might be shown by the representation of the ratio of occurrences of «precarity» to occurrences of «flexibility».

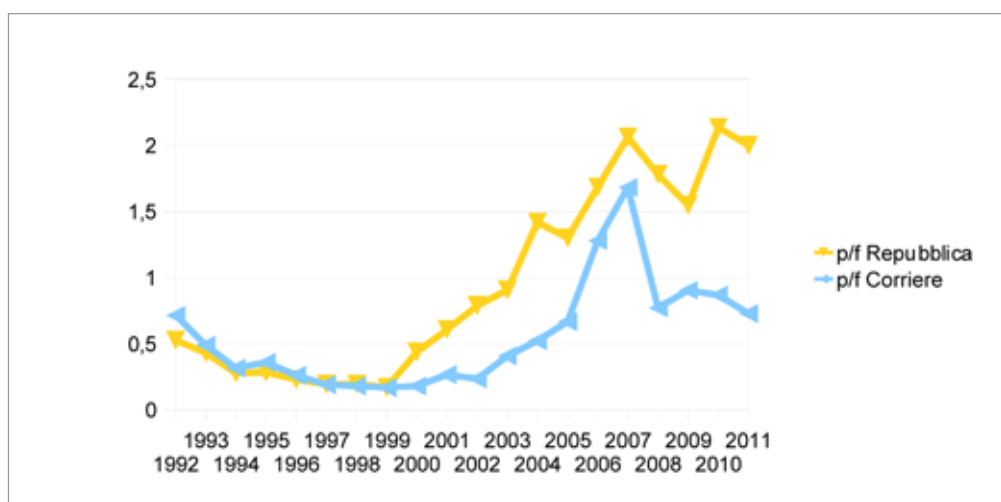


Table 3. Ratio of occurrences of «precarietà» or «precariato» to occurrences of «flessibilità».
In *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della sera*, from 1992 to 2011

This chart gives the best possible image of the evolution of the public discourse in the mainstream media: the ratio is equally low in both the newspapers in the '90s, and then it starts increasing; the trend proceeds in the same way, with a difference between the newspapers that remains stable, peaking in 2007 and then decreasing. The largest difference is in the last two years.

This trajectories can be interpreted in different ways: the peak comes at the end of the first wave of mobilisation on precarity (Mattoni 2009), during the period of the center-left government led by Romano Prodi, when the attitude towards labour was an intense topic of debate in the majority coalition; the decrease after 2007 might be linked to a general shift towards the right of the Italian political field, with the liberal turn imposed by Walter Veltroni to the center-left coalition, the disappearance from the parliament of the radical left and the start of a new right government led by Silvio Berlusconi, but a relevant role might also be played by the financial crisis, which contributed to shift the media attention from labour-related to market-oriented topics and views.

All these hypotheses need to be verified in further research. What is clear even from this sketchy quantitative analysis is the general evolution of the public discourse in the mainstream newspapers, with a visible shift from the flexibility discourse to the precarity discourse.

There are quasi-obvious structural reasons for this shift, rooted in the interaction between the evolution of the Italian labour market and the changing global economic phase. The literature shows how precarity has become a quasi-ubiquitous condition for most Italian youth, pointing out different aspects of this phenomenon: lack of rights and welfare (IRES 2007), frequent and growing unemployment (ISTAT 2010, EUROSTAT 2010), etc.

But there is a symbolic side of this phenomenon that cannot be overlooked. The literature on social movements has already underlined the role of narratives, identities, frames and ideologies in collective action and even structural factors need symbolic instruments to influence the public discourse.

This is particularly interesting in a context in which traditional forms of collective action do not succeed in building an efficient representation of precarious labours, and workers are committed in finding new and different ways to mobilise and achieve their goals (Murgia and Selmi 2011). It looks like precarious workers, that have not been able to win their struggle at the actual level yet (Zanetti 2005), have scored some points at the symbolic level. Precarity, this is my hypothesis, has not yet succeeded in producing massive forms of organisation of social struggles, but it has succeeded in imposing itself in the public discourse, involving a wide set of actors and individuals.

We already know something about the discourse on precarity developed in the movements (Mattoni 2009). But what is «precarity» in the mainstream public sphere? What discourse do the figures in tables 1, 2 and 3 refer to?

In order to start answering these questions, I will analyse the precarity discourse in the mainstream public sphere in a particular case: the university mobilisation of 2009-2010.

The precarity discourse in action: the case of the mobilisation against the university reform

The case in which I choose to analyse the precarity discourse in the context of collective action is the mobilisation against the university reform proposed by the cabinet lead by Silvio Berlusconi (the so-called «Gelmini law», from the name of the minister of education). The bill was proposed by the government on October 28th, 2009 and finally approved by the parliament on December 23th, 2010.

In the first months, the general reaction of the media to the reform was pretty favourable, and students were alone in the opposition, while, in the Spring, the mobilisation of researchers generated a strong turn in the media coverage, and the huge mobilisations of October, November and December 2010 were generally supported by the mainstream media (Zamponi 2011).

Precarity was one of the main topics of mobilisation, and I argue that it has been used in a much broader sense than before, becoming a useful resource and tool for the movement in a way that can be analysed through different conceptual lenses. In the next section I will try and list some of these lenses, while in this I use the labels of «discourse» and «frame» without any particular theoretical implications.

In this section I briefly analyse the most frequent uses of «precarity» and «precariat» in reference with the university, during the 14 months of the anti-Gelmini mobilisation. The dataset I use is constituted by the articles containing the words «precarietà» or «precariato» and «università» in *La Repubblica* from October 28th, 2009 to December 24th, 2010.

I choose to focus on the mainstream media and on a period of time that comes after the shift between the flexibility and the precarity discourses, because my goal is not to analyse the relationship between social movements and media in the construction of a public discourse about precarity (for an analysis of that process, see Mattoni 2009), but to examine the result of this process, to reconstruct the symbolic bricks of the precarity discourse when it is already established in a public discourse. What I analyse is not the movement discourse on precarity, but the result of its hegemonic work, the product of its interaction with the media mechanisms.

In these articles, «precarity» is used indifferently by activists and journalists, and the shared discourse that emerges it is at the same time the result of an interaction between them and a common symbolic repository from which both activists and journalists draw images and arguments.

In the first four subsections I describe the references to precarity in the articles regarding the mobilisation of different social actors, while in the following three subsections I analyse three different kind of articles, not referring directly to the university mobilisation but containing the word «università», arguing that the public discourse on university constitutes the symbolic environment for the mobilisation and it is constructed with continuing interactions between different frames, narratives and social actors.

The mobilisation of precarious researchers

Precarity is a real issue in the university mobilisation, and precarious university workers are among the actors that participate in the movement, succeeding in gaining some representation in the press. In the first half of 2010, especially during the Spring (that is the period in which the mobilisation of researchers starts changing the public discourse on the university reform), the articles generally deal with the condition of precarious researchers and employees in the Italian universities. They describe the difficult work, salary and life conditions of precarious university workers, in relationship with their complains about the university reform and their actions of protest⁴. Most of them are published in the local news section of the newspaper⁵, while only a few of them get to the national sections⁶. In the second half of the year, especially from October, they tend to focus more on protest events and on the evolution of the mobilisation.⁷

The precarity frame in the mobilisation of students

The involvement of university students in the use of «precarity» as a mobilisation frame has already been described as a «frame extensions process» (Benford and Snow 2000: 625), referring to the university mobilisation of 2005, by Mattoni (2009). What in 2005 was a theoretical assumption in the political discourse of student activists, in 2010 is a concept commonly reported in the public discourse by the mainstream media.

- 4 Bompani, Michela 2010. Denise, eterna precaria: 'In pensione con 133 euro', *La Repubblica*, 13 Feb.; Longhin Diego 2010. Temo il blocco delle lezioni ma si sollevano giusti problemi, *La Repubblica*, 16 Mar. p.5 (Torino); Anonymous 2010. Ricercatori, l' unica via è andarsene dall' Italia, *La Repubblica*, 15 Apr. p.34; Anonymous 2010. La riforma Gelmini allunga il nostro limbo, *La Repubblica*, 22 Apr. p.32; Anonymous 2010. I precari universitari un esercito di riserva, *La Repubblica*, 25 Apr. p.24; Venturi, Ilaria 2010. La protesta gentile anti-Gelmini in rettorato docenti e precari, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.8 (Bologna); Rau, Gaia 2010. Atenei, la protesta si allarga, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.6 (Firenze); Rau, Gaia 2010. Il pianto del super cervellone 'La mia ricerca morirà con me', *La Repubblica*, 20 May, p.1 (Firenze); Valfrè, Enrica, Piotto, Igor 2010. La manovra colpisce 90mila torinesi, *La Repubblica*, 6 Jun. p.15 (Torino); Fugnoli, Laura, 2010. Precarietà e turni massacranti i camici bianchi non sognano più, *La Repubblica*, 18 Jun. p.3 (Milano); Montanari, Laura 2010, Il grido d'allarme della Crusca, *La Repubblica*, 24 Jun. p.39
- 5 Longhin Diego 2010. Temo il blocco delle lezioni ma si sollevano giusti problemi, *La Repubblica*, 16 Mar. p.5 (Torino); Venturi, Ilaria 2010. La protesta gentile anti-Gelmini in rettorato docenti e precari, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.8 (Bologna); Rau, Gaia 2010. Atenei, la protesta si allarga, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.6 (Firenze); Rau, Gaia 2010. Il pianto del super cervellone 'La mia ricerca morirà con me', *La Repubblica*, 20 May, p.1 (Firenze); Valfrè, Enrica, Piotto, Igor 2010. La manovra colpisce 90mila torinesi, *La Repubblica*, 6 Jun. p.15 (Torino); Fugnoli, Laura, 2010. Precarietà e turni massacranti i camici bianchi non sognano più, *La Repubblica*, 18 Jun. p.3 (Milano)
- 6 Bompani, Michela 2010. Denise, eterna precaria: 'In pensione con 133 euro', *La Repubblica*, 13 Feb.; Anonymous 2010. Ricercatori, l' unica via è andarsene dall' Italia, *La Repubblica*, 15 Apr. p.34; Anonymous 2010. La riforma Gelmini allunga il nostro limbo, *La Repubblica*, 22 Apr. p.32; Anonymous 2010. I precari universitari un esercito di riserva, *La Repubblica*, 25 Apr. p.24; Montanari, Laura 2010, Il grido d'allarme della Crusca, *La Repubblica*, 24 Jun. p.39
- 7 Venturi, Ilaria 2010. Agraria, l'ala dura della protesta, *La Repubblica*, 29 Sep. p.9 (Bologna); Spinella, Cristoforo 2010. Università, nel buio l' avvio delle lezioni Sei ricercatori su dieci: 'Non insegneremo', *La Repubblica*, 6 Oct. p.6 (Palermo); Capua, Patrizia 2010. Scontri, il ricercatore torna libero, *La Repubblica*, 17 Oct. p.4 (Napoli); Manna, Erica 2010. Blitz dei precari all' inaugurazione 'Per noi l' orizzonte è un miraggio', *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.9 (Genova); Parmeggianni, Stefania 2010. Scuola, un lungo mercoledì di protesta, *La Repubblica*, 17 Nov. p.5 (Bologna), G., V., G., S. 2010. Sapienza, vita senza futuro niente soldi per gli stipendi, *La Repubblica*, 25 Nov. p.3 (Roma)

A large number of articles, in fact, refer to «precarity» or «precariat» dealing with protest events organised by students⁸. This concept is used in different ways, mostly as a label to define a general condition of distress in the university⁹, in relationship with the concept of «future»¹⁰ and with the idea of a social coalition between students and workers¹¹. There is also the frequent reference to a set of topics usually linked to the precarity discourse in general, out of the university context, such as the need for a generational change, the inequalities between open-ended and precarious workers, the lack of welfare protection.¹²

The precarity frame in the mobilisation of tenured researchers

Particularly interesting is the quantity and quality of articles that use the words «precarity» o «precariat» while representing the mobilisation of tenured researchers. Tenured researchers, represented by *Rete 29 Aprile*, far from being the most relevant part of the movement from a quantitative point of view, have been fundamental for the development of the mobilisation.

The emergence of the researchers movement in the Spring, to which was added the spreading of students protest in the Fall, has represented undoubtedly a novelty for the Italian academia, because the students and the precarious only were previously mobilized [...]. In fact, researchers as social category represent few workers knowledge only, who were not used to union activity or protest before the recent mobilization. Nevertheless, most of them were able to give rise and to lead a movement, aggregating other university categories, not joining the existent unions or category association, but creating a new networked organization and inventing new forms of protest or adapting those used by other workers categories. If the researchers failed to prevent the approval of the Bill, they were however able to attract media attention and influence public and political agenda, carrying on the mobilization, though at lower intensity, even during the current phase of implementation of the reform. (Piazza 2011)

The role of tenured researchers has been fundamental for three main reasons: on the public discourse level, their legitimacy of «scientists», of potential «brains on the run» gave the protest a credibility that the students cannot have; on the strategic level, their decision to stop all teaching activities produced a total block of universities that gave the start to the general mobilisation on early October, 2010 (Zamponi 2011); on the collective identity level, their protest «had its added value in the ability to build projects and concrete actions with the student movement and the galaxy of precarious researchers» (Maida 2011, xi, translated by Piazza 2011).

8 Anonymous 2009. Poli, prove di fusione con Milano, *La Repubblica*, 12 Nov. p.8 (Torino); Anonymous 2009. Sotto Palazzo Vecchio le urla dei precari ne hanno diritto ma l'assunzione non arriva, *La Repubblica*, 15 Dec. p.3 (Firenze); Di Giuseppe, Fulvio 2010. Studenti e disoccupati, sfilata la rabbia, *La Repubblica*, 13 Mar. p.7 (Bari); Di Giacomo, Antonio 2010. 'Qui possono rinascere i nostri sogni', *La Repubblica*, 3 Jun. p.5 (Bari); Giannoli, Viola 2010. No a tagli allo studio e precariato ecco il flash mob di studenti e prof, *La Repubblica*, p.8 (Roma); Brunetto, Claudia 2010. Blitz e striscioni, studenti in rivolta, *La Repubblica*, 15 Oct. p.8 (Palermo); Giu., O. 2010. Meloni evita il confronto con l'Università, *La Repubblica*, 6 Nov. p.13 (Torino); Studenti Link e Collettivo Lettere 2010. I tagli all'università: presidente, intervenga, *La Repubblica*, 2 Feb. p.13 (Bari); Brunetto, Claudia 2010. Studenti in corteo, a scuola è autunno caldo, *La Repubblica*, 9 Oct. p.5 (Palermo); Giustetti, Ottavia 2010. Arriva Sacconi, università blindata, *La Repubblica*, 9 Nov. p.9 (Torino); Forgnone, Valeria, Grattoggi, Sara 2010. Universitari e liceali, sfilano in 20 mila, *La Repubblica*, 18 Nov. p.2 (Roma); Vettori, Emilio 2010. Palazzo Campana sfida la Gelmini Domani occupiamo strade e università, *La Repubblica*, 22 Nov. p.1 (Torino); Giannoli, Viola, Grattoggi, Sara 2010. L'assemblea degli studenti Contro la riforma Gelmini in piazza il 22 dicembre, *La Repubblica*, 17 Dec. p.2 (Roma); P., D. 2010. 'Dottorando suicida contro i baroni' Gelo sull'intervento della Gelmini, *La Repubblica*, 22 Dec. p.7 (Palermo); Sofri, Adriano 2010. I ragazzi con i pensionati, *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.47; De Fazio, Bianca 2010. L'università tra le macerie di Pompei, *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.3 (Napoli); Anonymous 2010. Nuova ondata di scuole occupate, *La Repubblica*, 16 Dec. p.5 (Palermo); Maltese, Curzio 2010. La protesta delle chitarre "ridateci il futuro", *La Repubblica*, 23 Dec. p.1.

9 Anonymous 2009. Poli, prove di fusione con Milano, *La Repubblica*, 12 Nov. p.8 (Torino).

10 Giannoli, Viola, Grattoggi, Sara 2010. L'assemblea degli studenti Contro la riforma Gelmini in piazza il 22 dicembre, *La Repubblica*, 17 Dec. p.2 (Roma).

11 Giannoli, Viola 2010. No a tagli allo studio e precariato ecco il flash mob di studenti e prof, *La Repubblica*, p.8 (Roma); Sofri, Adriano 2010. I ragazzi con i pensionati, *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.47; De Fazio, Bianca 2010. L'università tra le macerie di Pompei, *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.3 (Napoli); Anonymous 2010. Nuova ondata di scuole occupate, *La Repubblica*, 16 Dec. p.5 (Palermo); Maltese, Curzio 2010. La protesta delle chitarre "ridateci il futuro", *La Repubblica*, 23 Dec. p.1.

12 Anonymous 2009. Sotto Palazzo Vecchio le urla dei precari ne hanno diritto ma l'assunzione non arriva, *La Repubblica*, 15 Dec. p.3 (Firenze);

For a reconstruction of the mobilisation of tenured researchers in the Italian university movement of 2010, see Ferretti (2011), Maida (2011) and Piazza (2011). What is relevant in the context of this paper is the frequency of articles in which tenured researchers, even if they are not «precarious» *stricto sensu*, use «precarity» as a frame to present their conditions, complains and proposals in the public field.

These articles are mainly concentrated in the Spring¹³, when the researchers start organising and form their national network, and in the Fall, at the apex of the protest¹⁴.

Researchers use «precarity» as a concept able to describe their condition, in a sense that is wider than the strict definition of the contract. The phenomenon is quite similar to the one described in the previous subsection referring to the students: the frame is extended both horizontally, comprehending a wide set of meaning related to different aspects of the labour conditions of researchers (that in other times might have been interpreted with other words, such as «exploitation»), and vertically, describing precarity *stricto sensu* as a past that tenured researchers know and want to remember and redeem. Most of them had precarious contracts for year, before the tenure, and the representation of that condition is still part of the collective identity they are building¹⁵.

Precarity as a frame to address the movement from outside

The hegemonic function of the precarity frame, the use of which has tangible results in the public discourse, is proved by the fact that, from a certain moment on, different social actors start to use it to refer to the university movement.

This phenomenon, a part from one case¹⁶ that anticipates all the others, happens in the Fall of 2010, at the apex of the mobilisation, when, as I showed in the previous subsections, there is already a precarity discourse developed and shared by different actors in the field.

Politicians from different parties address the issue of the university mobilisation, referring mainly to students and using the words «precarietà» or «precariato». The first is Nichi Vendola¹⁷, leader of the eco-socialist party *Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà*; then the same words are used, from different point of views, by Giorgia Meloni¹⁸, minister of youth and member of the conservative party *Popolo della Libertà*, Maurizio

13 Bompani, Michela 2010. Ricercatori pronti allo sciopero delle lezioni, *La Repubblica*, 31 Mar. p.11 (Genova); Bompani, Michela 2010. Ricercatori, si allarga la protesta l' università verso il blocco, *La Repubblica*, 2 Apr. p.9 (Genova); Anonymous 2010. I precari universitari un esercito di riserva, *La Repubblica*, 25 Apr. p.24; Rau, Gaia 2010. I ricercatori ritirano la disponibilità a insegnare, *La Repubblica*, 29 Apr. p.5 (Firenze); Russi, Francesca 2010. Ateneo e Politecnico, rischio paralisi da domani si fermano 900 ricercatori, *La Repubblica*, 16 May p.3 (Bari); Rau, Gaia 2010. Atenei, la protesta si allarga, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.6 (Firenze); Altieri, Leonardo, Tassinari, Giorgio, Vecchi, Roberto, Zappoli, Sergio 2010. Le università non facciano la fine delle aziende sanitarie, *La Repubblica*, 19 May p.9 (Bologna); Anonymous 2010. L' Università di Parma in difesa della Costituzione, *La Repubblica*, 25 May p.11.

14 Venturi, Ilaria 2010. Ateneo, la mobilitazione al potere, *La Repubblica*, 28 Sep. p.5 (Bologna); Coin, Francesca 2010. Cara Gelmini, non ci faccia fuggire dalle Università, *La Repubblica*, p.1-23; Venturi, Ilaria (2010); Gli universitari danno la sveglia alla città, *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.7 (Bologna).

15 Venturi, Ilaria 2010. Agraria, l' ala dura della protesta, *La Repubblica*, 29 Sep. p.9 (Bologna);

16 Anonymous 2010. Il sacrificio dei più maturi, *La Repubblica*, 16 Jun. p.1 (Firenze)

17 Anonymous 2010. La videolettera di Vendola 'Precari, è ora di rivoltarsi', *La Repubblica*, 16 Oct. p.4 (Bari)

18 Giu., O. 2010. Meloni evita il confronto con l' Università, *La Repubblica*, 6 Nov. p.13 (Torino)

Sacconi¹⁹, minister of labour and member of the same party, Vendola again²⁰, the center-left *Partito Democratico*²¹, the president of the republic Giorgio Napolitano²² and then-major of Turin Sergio Chiamparino²³ (*Partito Democratico*).

A similar attitude is adopted, at the beginning of December, 2010, that is the moment of highest popularity of the movement (Zamponi 2011), by pundits, that start identifying precarity as one of the main and most legitimate reasons of the protest. In *La Repubblica* this happens four times²⁴ in one week, the first week of December. The Florentine edition of *La Repubblica* includes an anonymous «university student» as a possible «person of the year», because of its «uncertain future, made of cuts and precarity»²⁵

Brains on the run

A common topic, quite frequent in the articles, regards the so-called «brains on the run», the Italian researchers working abroad. The theme is particularly popular between the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010, in occasion of the public debate that follows the open letter in which Pierluigi Celli, general director of the private university Luiss, advises his son to go abroad²⁶.

The conditions of the people who decide to emigrate is described as characterised by «precarity and worry»²⁷, associating precarity with a very general definition of distress. As the previous subsections have shown, the word «precarity» is gradually increasing its polysemic nature: it is the actual precarity of labour of researchers, it is the precarity of labour that the students expect from their future, it is also the uncertainty on the future of university for tenured researchers. The concept becomes larger than itself, and becomes a powerful symbol, charged with a meaning that goes beyond any punctual definition, able to represent the general condition of a generation.

The lost generation

Another group of articles refers more generally with precarity as a condition of distress that characterises young people, sometimes describing the actual social problems connected with labour and welfare, sometimes focusing more superficially on different stereotypes regarding the Italian youth.

19 Giustetti, Ottavia 2010. Arriva Sacconi, università blindata, *La Repubblica*, 9 Nov. p.9 (Torino)

20 Casadio, Giovanna 2010. Giusto ribellarsi, sono senza futuro ma la guerriglia è un vicolo cieco, *La Repubblica*, 17 Dec. p.14

21 Sannino, Conchita 2010. Bindi con Bersani 'Prima le alleanze', *La Repubblica*, 19 Dec. p.1 (Napoli)

22 Zunino, Corrado 2010. Napolitano riceve gli studenti Solo lui ci ha ascoltato davvero, *La Repubblica*, 23 Dec. p.2

23 Griseri, Paolo 2010. Se il movimento vuole un futuro dica basta a violenza e vecchi slogan, *La Repubblica*, 23 Dec p.7

24 Galli, Carlo 2010. L'istruzione precaria, *La Repubblica*, 1 Dec. p.1-30; Coletti, Vittorio 2010. La legge dell' ignoranza, *La Repubblica*, 5 Dec. p.1 (Genova); Ceccarini, Luigi 2010. Pochi fondi e precariato le ragioni della protesta, *La Repubblica*, 6 Dec. p.29; Diamanti, Ilvo 2010. Ragazzi ribelli - La marcia dei (più) giovani, *La Repubblica*, 6 Dec. pp-27-28-29

25 Rau, Gaia 2010. Personaggio dell'anno, *La Repubblica*, 28 Dec. p.10 (Firenze)

26 Anonymous 2009. La fuga di cervelli riguarda anche gli extracomunitari. Nouredinne spiega Taha il marocchino: 'Qui mi laureo per l' impiego dovrò lasciare l' Italia', *La Repubblica*, 24 Nov. p.3 (Torino); Celli, Pierluigi 2009. 'Io, mio figlio e l' arte della fuga', *La Repubblica*, 4 Dec. p.1-47; Anonymous 2009. Napolitano: giovani non lasciate l' Italia, *La Repubblica*, 4 Dec. p.4; Augias Corrado 2010. La tentazione di fuggire da un paese per vecchi, *La Repubblica*, 10 Feb. p.44.

27 Anonymous 2009. La fuga di cervelli riguarda anche gli extracomunitari. Nouredinne spiega Taha il marocchino: 'Qui mi laureo per l' impiego dovrò lasciare l' Italia', *La Repubblica*, 24 Nov. p.3 (Torino)

A common topic in these articles is the reference to the insufficiency of the Italian welfare system, not able to deal with social conditions that are different from the traditional open-ended contract²⁸. There are also frequent comparisons with other European countries²⁹ and references to the word «bamboccioni»³⁰, with which then-minister of economy Tommaso Padoa Schioppa in 2007 defined young Italians who live with their parents. Furthermore, some articles focus on the difficulties of forming a family³¹ and on the uselessness of higher education in the job market³². Expressions like «precarietà esistenziale»³³ and «precarietà di vita»³⁴ are used, and it is generally conveyed the idea of a common condition of distress and hopelessness, shared by a whole generation, the borders of which are undefined and which is called with different labels: «generazione senza posto fisso»³⁵ («generation without a stable job»), «generazione dei precari»³⁶ («generation of precarious»), «generazione '00»³⁷, «generazione sandwich»³⁸. This shared condition is so generally acknowledged that it becomes part of the popular culture, to which the media refer even when dealing with topics far from connected with labour³⁹.

From the lips of the enemy

The last group of articles includes the cases in which the words «precarity» or «precariat» are used by social and political actors that are on the opposite side of the struggle fought by the university movement. It is interesting to notice how these articles are concentrated around the end of April, when the researchers' mobilisation gets for the first time media attention, and November, during the most intense student protest.

The gallery of characters is quite various: Pier Luigi Celli⁴⁰, general director of the private university LUISS, praises the «Gelmini law» but refer to «precarity», as well as pundit Mario Pirani⁴¹; Gianfranco Fini, co-founder of the conservative party *Popolo della Libertà*, cites the «struggle against precarity» as one of the priorities that the government he supports must assume⁴²; Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, presi-

28 Schiavazzi Vera 2010. Figli d' Europa, *La Repubblica*, 18 Jan. p.27-28-29; De Luca, Maria Novella 2010. Le famiglie del weekend I forzati delle coppie a distanza, *La Repubblica*, 9 Mar. pp.51-52-53; Anonymous 2010. Ricercatori, l' unica via è andarsene dall' Italia, *La Repubblica*, 15 Apr. p.34; Sasso, Cinzia 2010. Così si salverà la generazione '00, *La Repubblica*, pp.29-30-31; Anonymous 2010. Diamanti studia la generazione dei precari, *La Repubblica*, 8 May p.10; De Riccardis, Sandro 2010. Se studiare di più diventa un handicap, *La Repubblica*, 15 Sep. p.1.

29 Anonymous 2010. Ricercatori, l' unica via è andarsene dall' Italia, *La Repubblica*, 15 Apr. p.34; Sasso, Cinzia 2010. Così si salverà la generazione '00, *La Repubblica*, pp.29-30-31; De Riccardis, Sandro 2010. Se studiare di più diventa un handicap, *La Repubblica*, 15 Sep. p.1.

30 Schiavazzi Vera 2010. Figli d' Europa, *La Repubblica*, 18 Jan. p.27-28-29; Anonymous 2010. Diamanti studia la generazione dei precari, *La Repubblica*, 8 May p.10.

31 Anonymous 2009. Voci dalla generazione senza posto fisso. *La Repubblica*, 15 Dec. p.3 (Firenze); De Luca, Maria Novella 2010. Le famiglie del weekend I forzati delle coppie a distanza, *La Repubblica*, 9 Mar. pp.51-52-53;

32 Visitilli, Giancarlo 2009. In cattedra la resa dei genitori, *La Repubblica*, 4 Nov. p.1 (Bari); De Riccardis, Sandro 2010. Se studiare di più diventa un handicap, *La Repubblica*, 15 Sep. p.1.

33 De Luca, Maria Novella 2010. Le famiglie del weekend I forzati delle coppie a distanza, *La Repubblica*, 9 Mar. pp.51-52-53;

34 Sasso, Cinzia 2010. Così si salverà la generazione '00, *La Repubblica*, pp.29-30-31

35 Anonymous 2009. Voci dalla generazione senza posto fisso. *La Repubblica*, 15 Dec. p.3 (Firenze)

36 Anonymous 2010. Diamanti studia la generazione dei precari, *La Repubblica*, 8 May p.10

37 Sasso, Cinzia 2010. Così si salverà la generazione '00, *La Repubblica*, pp.29-30-31

38 Galimberti 2010. Generazione sandwich /2, *La Repubblica*, 27 Jan. p.49.

39 Rampini, Federico 2010. Homo faber - il ritorno alla manualità - perché oggi è di moda l' uomo artigiano, *La Repubblica*, 6 Mar. p.49.

40 Celli, Pier Luigi 2010. Il riscatto del made in Italy deve partire dall' università, *La Repubblica*, 19 Apr. p.8 (Affari e finanza).

41 Pirani, Mario 2010. Liberare la ricerca dalle mani dei boiardi, *La Repubblica*, 19 Apr. p.22.

42 Bei, Francesco 2010. L' ultimatum di Gianfranco "Berlusconi si deve dimettere", *La Repubblica*, 7 Nov. p.3.

dent of Ferrari and former president of the Italian employers organisation Confindustria, proposes a «generational pact» against precarity⁴³.

Finally, closing the cycle, a book on flexibility is titled «Elogio della precarietà» («The praise of precarity»)⁴⁴. The precarity discourse has gained such position in the public field that, even to criticise it, it is easier to assume than to deny it.

Multiples conceptual lenses to interpret the multiples dimensions of a phenomenon

The symbolic success of the precarity discourse emerges quite visibly from the previous sections. But the reasons of this success, the mechanisms which made precarity a symbolic tool and resource in the mobilisation of Italian university students and researchers and the potential implications of this process in the future of Italian contentious politics need further analysis.

Alice Mattoni's work, that I have cited many times, points out the role of the media in this process, and in particular the interaction between activists and media in socially constructing the meaning of the struggles of precarious workers. This is why I do not define precarity only as a symbolic resource for social actors, but also as a symbolic tool, in order to underline the active role of social movements in the construction of the public discourse on precarity, already acknowledged by the literature.

Different conceptual lenses can be useful to interpret this phenomenon. Each of them enlightens some aspects of it, and at the same points out obscure areas that need further investigation.

Precarity works as a *diagnostic frame* (Snow and Benford 1988). Social actors have been able to recognise the matter, appropriate it and publicise it as a social problem. What in the 90s was a concept generally unknown, as I have showed in the second section, has become a common way to interpret the actual condition of labour. Social and political actors have played a fundamental role in this process, developing and spreading this frame as an explanatory tool for a condition shared by an increasing number of people. As I have showed in the third section, this frame, in the context of the university mobilisation, has been extended from precarious workers to students and tenured researchers. But this process is not without consequences for the frame itself: extending it to different actors, its meaning has been stretched horizontally and vertically, in time and space. Which are the implications of these process on the relationship between different social actors, that might use the same frame with very different meanings? Where are the limits of this extension? Which are the consequences of this changes in the efficacy of this frame as a symbolic resource for mobilisation?

At the same time, precarity has become a *collective identity* (Polletta and Jasper 2001), able to activate mechanisms of recognition and belonging in a wide spectrum of social actors. Students and researchers who participated in the mobilisation have different positions and often different interests inside the university, but they feel part of a collective entity, and, in our hypothesis, the main common trait they recognise is precarity, with both social and generational connotations. I have examined the social construction of this

43 Mania, Roberto 2010. Tagliamo le tasse ai giovani lavoratori il patto generazionale di Montezemolo, *La Repubblica*, 24 Nov. p.25.

44 Anonymous 2010. Appuntamenti, *La Repubblica*, 21 Dec. p.18 (Napoli)

collective identity in the mainstream media, but how does this process work at the micro level? How does the precarious identity evolve in different times and different contexts? And who is out of the borders of this collective identity?

This process has brought up a *narrative* (Polletta 2006) of precarity, that is a common set of stories that are told in the public sphere, describing the labour market from the point of view of young workers and pointing out the difficulties of their lives, all gathered around the central conceptual node of precarity. This narrative competes in the public discourse with the narrative of flexibility, and this competition is about storytelling factors as much as factual factors. As I have showed in the third section, individual stories, referring to «brains on the run», to «scientists» and to families that need welfare protection, are fundamental parts of the precarity discourse in the mediatised public sphere. But how does the narrative format interact with the social and political matter of precarity? How does the storytelling process in the media transform the concept of precarity in the public sphere? How do different social actors interpret the same story?

The width of the different social phenomena that are interpreted and narrated under the label of precarity suggests that precarity might also be analysed as a *master frame* (della Porta and Diani 2006: 79-81), a general paradigm of contemporary Italy, a key to the reading of the society in which we live. The last subsection of the third section hints at the idea of precarity as something that is everywhere, among young people. Some social and political actors use to say that «we all are precarious», from the working point of view and from the existential one, but this has only partially emerged in my analysis. In the context I have examined, precarity still has strong social and generational characterisations, with undefined but existing limits to the social actors able to assume this frame. Is it a matter of time? Is the extension of this frame the next step in its evolution in the public sphere? This is not a simple step: spreading indulgent stereotypes about the difficult life of young people is much easier than assume a precarity-based, and, therefore, labour-based general interpretation of our society. This process is all but neutral from a political point of view, and it might be interesting to analyse the attitude of social actors and the media towards it. Furthermore, it might be interesting to investigate whether the use of precarity as a master frame is an effect or a cause of the frame extension process I have already described.

These characteristics make precarity a useful resource and tool in the struggle for *hegemony*; social and political actors can profit from the centrality it reaches in the public discourse in order to gain cultural and political relevance and to create the conditions for social change. Some recent literature has already tried to use hegemony and other Gramscian concept to analyse the university movement (Caruso 2010). But where should we set the border of hegemony in a complex and plural society? Can there be one hegemony if there are multiples public sphere?

Different theoretical labels show in different ways how precarity has been a symbolic resource for social actors and bring to different questions for the evolution of research on this topic.

What is visible, even from this first step on this path, is that precarity has been a symbolic element able to transcend the matters merely related to the duration of a job contract, and to become a factor of common identification and belonging, which keeps together different actors in the university and allows them to promote a general message, to build connections with workers, to open a general debate about the future. The label of *precarious* has become relevant and charged with a strong unifying power also outside the strictly labour-related field, it has become a generational label charged with social and political connotations.

In the months immediately following the university mobilisation, Italy has seen some signals that point towards the emergence of a new mobilisation on precarity, involving students and workers, beyond the borders of the university. This mobilisation might become one of the protagonists of the traditionally contentious Italian public field, and research should be prepared, with the right analytical tools to understand what happens.

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EMOTIONS AND AFFECTS IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Transforming the Ominous into Happiness: How Antinuclear Drive Was Tamed in the Post-war Japan?¹

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The Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear power plant explosion that followed it brought great shocks to Japanese society. In a moment, the earthquake and tsunami effortlessly destroyed the communities, families, and way of life that local residents had built up over long years. The nuclear accident and subsequent radioactive contamination uprooted and drove out those people who were carrying on their lives in proximity to the nuclear power plant. The towns became ghost towns, places where only wandering pets and livestock remained to be found.

How did we find ourselves in such a situation? This has become a recurring question since 3/11. Earthquakes and tsunamis are beyond human understanding. While we cannot completely predict them, we also cannot artificially create them. In that sense, they are natural disasters. However, nuclear accidents are different. It is true that this accident began as a result of tsunami damage to the function of a nuclear power plant. But the building of a nuclear power plant along the coast of Fukushima prefecture, and even before that the utilization of nuclear energy generation itself, were decisions that we made. In other words, this was a man-made disaster.

We can illuminate the meaning of this decision more clearly by placing the disaster into historical context. In 1945, we Japanese went through Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Atomic bombs and all their consequences, from the burnt ruins to the radioactive contamination extending decades afterward, are things that only we Japanese know directly. The misery, grief, and suffering that began directly after the atomic bombs were dropped continue even now. In recent times, we as Japanese people have continued to probe the past, asking, “How did we end up at war?” Now, 66 years later, we went through Fukushima. We were supposed to have a new start after the war ended, knowing there were errors in our own actions. We were supposed to transition toward a “postwar” condition and walk a path that differed from the path that led to bombs falling. But this was not to be. Fukushima started from nuclear power generation that postwar Japanese people by themselves decided upon, chose, and implemented. How did we end up going through Fukushima even though we had gone through Hiroshima and supposedly swore, “We will not repeat this mistake”?²

We must now ask once again where we are. Just what kind of path did we come to walk upon? Having supposedly sworn not to repeat our mistake, we ourselves actively promoted the use of nuclear power as the basis of our postwar reconstruction. How could we make that kind of brilliant “transition”? This essay focuses attention on the question of how postwar Japanese people changed their attitudes toward nuclear power.

1 In writing this article, I obtained assistance in gathering materials from Reina Shimada (4th year student in the Sophia University Faculty of Foreign Languages). I would like to express my gratitude in writing.

2 Atomic Bomb Victim Memorial Stone. Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

The answer to the question why Fukushima occurred likely has three parts. These are, namely, postwar Japan's nuclear energy policies, the international relations and politics of the Cold War that had the US and the Soviet Union at its center, and a media represented by the likes of the Yomiuri Newspaper and others that extolled the peaceful use of nuclear power. In each domain a momentum in support of the "utilization of the atom" can be discerned. Certainly, the utilization of atomic power may have been driven by these kinds of "forces." Yet I cannot help but think that the problem was with us ordinary citizens. It seems that until Fukushima appeared before their eyes, many people, myself included, had forgotten the difficulties and suffering and moreover the horror that is brought by the use of the atom and by its malfunction. Perhaps they pretended not to see. While calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, it seems that before we knew it we unconsciously came to enjoy the "abundant society" brought about by nuclear-powered electricity. If this is so, we must discuss how we came to such an unconscious enjoyment of that abundant world.

In this essay, I first summarize the driving factors that set postwar Japan on a path toward utilization of nuclear energy by means of the three domains mentioned above. Next, I discuss the question "in what way" we ordinary citizens arrived at accepting nuclear power and enjoying the use of nuclear power.

Toward the use of nuclear energy

In postwar Japan it was in the 1950s that the government significantly changed course toward promoting nuclear energy policy. The international situation Japan faced at that time, domestic political trends, and further, the power of the media all played strong roles in this course change.

At the center of that postwar international situation was a structure of bipolar confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union. This appeared as a contest of military strength. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the first step in the nuclear arms race. By this dropping of atomic bombs the US showed the world in a big way that it was successful in developing atomic bombs. However, three years later in 1948, the Soviet Union caught up with the US with its successful development of the atomic bomb. But in another few years after that in 1952, the US successfully developed the hydrogen bomb. The Soviet Union caught up with this in 1953. This kind of nuclear arms race formed the military basis of the postwar "Cold War."

In reaction to the intensification of this nuclear arms race, the US became alarmed by the further proliferation of nuclear arms. This was because the US feared its "nuclear superiority" would crumble if nuclear arms development were to advance in other countries. In order to protect its nuclear superiority, the US restricted the military use of nuclear technologies by other countries and moreover took measures to prevent new entrants in the race for nuclear arms development. These measures were "Atoms for Peace." In December, 1953, US President Eisenhower, while invoking "Atoms for Peace" in the United Nations General Assembly, proposed the establishment of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). The IAEA was aimed at cooperative international control of nuclear technology.

Though it may have referred to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, the US had no intention to discontinue its own development of nuclear weapons. Even the IAEA inspections from that time down to the present have not been applied to American military facilities. In fact, several months after its address to the UN, the US carried out a test of the hydrogen bomb on the Bikini Atoll.

The peaceful use of nuclear technology was, in actuality, a continuation of the US-Soviet arms race. In the period that followed, the world's bipolarization progressed as the US and Soviet Union conducted intensive containment strategies. In this kind of international situation, Japan was pressed into making a choice. Already Japan had no option of developing nuclear weapons. If Japan was to undertake nuclear energy development, the only remaining method was to declare its peaceful utilization and in exchange be allocated uranium from a country like the US. Japan joined nations such as West Germany, Italy, and South Korea under the American nuclear umbrella. Thus Japan advanced upon the path toward the peaceful use of nuclear technology. In response the US proposed the construction of nuclear power plants in the Far East, that is, Japan, in December, 1954. Further, in the following September of 1955, the US sent a mission on the peaceful use of nuclear power led by John Hopkins of General Atomics. This delegation gave lectures all over Japan, speaking of peaceful utilization.

In this way the international conditions of the 1950s prepared the way for Japan to advance toward the "peaceful use of nuclear power" in its close relationship with the US, but Japan's domestic politics, too, worked in accord with those international conditions. Already in February, 1953 a budget estimate for the construction of a nuclear reactor had been submitted by Yasuhiro Nakasone to the National Diet. This proposal was approved by the Diet in March of the same year. This was the Japanese government's first step in nuclear energy policy.

The Japanese government's attitude toward nuclear energy research began to change rapidly then. In the same year, the nuclear energy research budget passed the House of Representatives, and the Special Committee on Nuclear Power was set up in the Cabinet. In the following 1954, the Basic Law on Atomic Energy was established. After that the Ministry of Science and Technology was established in 1957 to become the organ of the national government that conducted policy on and investigations into the use of nuclear power. The private sector responded accordingly as, also in 1957, the nine electric power companies at the time made a joint investment to form a pilot company called Japan Atomic Power Generation. This was Japan's first experimental nuclear power plant and was significantly involved in the later construction of the Tokai Nuclear Power Plant. In this way Japan's domestic policy greatly changed course on the use and generation of nuclear power during the early to mid-1950s.

Finally, the way the media reported on nuclear development policy to the public and, moreover, supported such policy, must also be discussed. The media of that time, especially the Yomiuri Newspaper, was a force that actively backed the nuclear energy development system. The visit to Japan of the above-mentioned "mission on the peaceful use of nuclear power" was invited by Matsutarou Shouriki. In truth, there exists also the point of view that the impetus for the visit was the Japanese people's acceptance of the peaceful use of nuclear power.³ Matsutarou Shouriki became the chairman of the newly established Nuclear Power Committee in 1956, and in 1957 assumed office as the first generation chief of the Science and Technology Agency.

During this period, the media's peaceful utilization campaign went on visibly increasing, and the Yomiuri Newspaper began a series of columns at the start of 1954 on the peaceful use of nuclear power with the title, "At last we have captured the sun." Further, the "Atoms for Peace" Exhibition, held in 1955, was also reported by the media in a grand fashion. There a bright future utilizing the power of the atom was depicted. In this way the media at the time provided strong backing to the system of nuclear power development in postwar Japan by connecting nuclear development with a bright future.

3 Mikio Haruna. "From nuclear bombs to nuclear power." World, June issue, 2006.

The conversion of civil society

Those who felt the effects of the atomic bombs in 1945 most strongly were the citizens. The atomic bombs sent tens of thousands of people to their deaths. Even now the after-effects of radioactive contamination are creating more suffering. It is true that the war was the nation's policy. But most of the victims were ordinary people and not in the national government organs that were made up of various cabinet ministers and government officials organizing the nation or otherwise military officials working under the military apparatus. Numerous victims were those whom we today call "innocent deaths," ordinary civilians who become pointless casualties while trying to live their daily lives amidst the calamities of war.

Even today, Hiroshima remains among the people's memories as a symbol of "innocent deaths." And that memory is bound up with nuclear technology. Hiroshima is necessarily tied together with nuclear radiation by the scenes we associate with it. Upon a momentary flash and the sound of an explosion, a black mushroom cloud covers the sky. The radiation that follows cloaks the people in exhaustion. The people, bathed in radiation and a massive heat wave, practically chase after each other one by one on the way into the land of the dead.

The postwar period began for Japanese people with Hiroshima. With this in mind, a significant question appears. Why did people who went through Hiroshima accept postwar nuclear development? As mentioned below, there existed in postwar Japan an atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement. The precious voices of this atom-hydrogen bomb opposition can by no means be ignored. But if we take an overall view, we see that postwar Japanese civil society shifted toward making nuclear energy an important energy source in the center of Japan's postwar revival and expansion.

This becomes clear also by our state of mind in the present era. Many of us realized with Fukushima for the first time the true nature of the balance that nuclear energy, by the electricity it produces, maintains with the activities of modern society. Surely this shows how much nuclear energy and the industry based upon it have entered into our daily lives.

If that is so, we must ask how we reached this state of silent approval of nuclear energy. At Hiroshima nuclear power and the atom became a dangerous weapon that created terror and inflicted torment upon people. How did that become an object of approval? What led people to choose nuclearization? We must trace the footprints left by this change.

In tracing the footprints of nuclearization approval by civil society, I would like to discuss the civil society divided into three parts. Namely, these are the intellectuals, the people of learning and experience, and regular people. The focus of the debate in this discussion is the way people understand nuclear technology. How has understanding in relation to nuclear technology changed since Hiroshima, and further, in what way have understanding and the giving of meaning been achieved. In my discussion I would like to touch upon the focal points in the change in forms of understanding related to nuclear technology in postwar Japanese civil society in the three domains mentioned above.

Nuclear power became an object of discussion for Japanese scientists after the war in the second half of the 1940s. The scientists at that time in occupied Japan had a naïve, utopian understanding of nuclear power. To them, the era of nuclear power was to be an era in which nuclear energy would replace the labors of humans and further would provide fundamental solutions to many problems. For example, Sagane (1949)⁴ dreamed of creating large-scale canals and lakes, changing ocean currents, moving great mountains with public works, and altering the course of typhoons through the use of the massive, explosive power of nuclear energy. Further, Watanabe (1949)⁵ predicted the arrival of an era in which machines could produce anything and advocated that nuclear fuel be used as an energy source instead of fossil fuels.

In their words a separation from Hiroshima can already be discerned. Hiroshima was a horrific wound to be avoided, and this association was always connected with nuclear technology. On the other hand, the above-mentioned words of Sagane and Watanabe treat nuclear technology as something detached from Hiroshima. Here, nuclear technology was pure, clean energy rather than an object of abhorrence. Indeed, it was being established as the foundation of a future utopian society.

Nuclear energy was again discussed as a source of power in 1952. Since the atomic bombing by the US, the US-Soviet race for nuclear development had continued to advance the world's bipolarization. Tensions in world politics were heightening in this period as the strain was felt in the situation on the Korean Peninsula. As naïve arguments for using nuclear energy purely as a source of power fell away, voices expressing misgivings about nuclear energy research and development rose. For example, at the 13th General Meeting of the Science Council of Japan, Mimura argued, "Until the use for peaceful purposes is settled upon, until US-Soviet tension is cleared up, research and development must not go forward." Mimura was a victim of the bombing. The words of a man who knew well the terrible spectacle of the bombing with his own eyes bound nuclear energy tightly with Hiroshima.

Yet among people of learning and experience, discussion concerning nuclear energy was in flux. There was disagreement even at the above-mentioned Science Council of Japan, one viewpoint calling for the advancement of nuclear energy research and development and another viewpoint calling for caution. A gap developed between connecting nuclear energy development with Hiroshima and the possibility of separating the two. It was a speech by Taketani that bridged this gap. Taketani argued that nuclear power development should be advanced at the hands of the Japanese people "also for the sake of the spirits of those killed by the bombs." That is, he felt that research into nuclear development was also for the sake of those who lost their lives by nuclear technology.⁶

The speech by Taketani neatly connected nuclear energy research with Hiroshima. The means of that connection were "peaceful utilization." Japan would never abuse nuclear energy. Rather, Japan would contribute to the world by shifting toward peaceful utilization, and the logic was that this would be a way of mourning for the people who became victims at Hiroshima.

4 Ryokichi Sagane. "Talk on the atomic bomb." Dai Nippon Yuubenkai Kodansha (1949), pp. 252-3.

5 Satoshi Watanabe. "The atomic age and morality." Shisou no Kagaku Kenkyuukai. Gendaibunmei no hihan. Academia Press (Japan) (1949), p. 67.

6 Mitsuo Taketani. "The direction of Japan's nuclear power research." Kaizou Special Issue, Fall 1952, p. 72.

The dispute over nuclear development among people with learning and experience continued after Mimura's speech as well. In the latter half of the 1950s, after the construction of Tokai Nuclear Power Plant, voices in the Science Council of Japan arose with doubts about the safety of the nuclear reactor. Obstructing the discussions were issues such as the earthquake resistance of the improved Calder Hall model nuclear reactor, the ground under Tokai village, the countermeasures against accidents and disaster damage, and the maximum permissible amounts of radiation. But it seems that the logic of, "The homeland being bombed is all the more reason to support peaceful utilization," as seen in Taketani's words, always put a lid on the voices raising such doubts.⁷

The way intellectuals reacted after that to the use of nuclear power is interesting. We can catch a glimpse of the exact moment in which the meaning of "the nuclear" underwent a change. Furthermore, the location of the change in meaning was precisely the same location where nuclear power use was being advanced. I will give two examples. Taijun Takeda, fascinated by nuclear power, went to the Tokai Nuclear Power Laboratory to collect information. He wrote up a traveler's journal about his time looking around the laboratory and connecting with the people who worked there.⁸ Kenzaburo Oe interviewed married couples working as scientists at the Tokai Nuclear Power Plant, and he suggested there was a bright future associated with their efforts. Both Takeda and Oe gathered information at Tokai.⁹ However, they did not touch the pros and cons of nuclear generation or issues lurking in the background of the utilization of nuclear power. In these works, "Japan's overall goal of nuclear power development"¹⁰ was an unquestioned given. While a story took shape about the lives of individual scientists and the activities of the community at Tokai Nuclear Power Laboratory, questions surrounding nuclear power itself ended up being driven into the background.

I do not know what may have been behind the shaping of these kinds of depictions by Takeda and Oe. But the meaning of this treatment of theirs is clear. Namely, it was the creation of new connections between "the nuclear" and people's lives and communities. They reversed the meaning of "the nuclear" by describing the Tokai community and the people working there. The power of this reversal came from figures devoting themselves to a noble mission and the vitality of young people gambling their lives as researchers. The "nuclear" of Hiroshima had been defeated. For decades after that, "the nuclear" seen at Hiroshima was relegated to the background. Thus they stealthily brought "nuclear" to a position of new merit associated with the energy of people supporting the future and the prosperity of a community of scientists.

In this way nuclear energy development and research have gradually gained approval among intellectuals. In a process of extraordinary naïveté, nuclear energy has been removed from the context of Hiroshima, segregated as "history," and become lost in oblivion. Moreover, when that segregation was in jeopardy due to the international conditions of the Cold War, the victims of Hiroshima themselves were used as the basis for legitimizing the promotion of nuclear energy development. This was, namely, the approach of mourning the victims of Hiroshima by supporting the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The active use of Hiroshima, a source of agony, as the basis for nuclear technology amounted to a reversal in meaning that seamlessly joined postwar nuclear development with Hiroshima. A similar process occurred among

7 Interestingly, this logic can also be found in present moment as we go through Fukushima. "[The Japanese] are the nation that best knows the horror of nuclear power, having also experienced Fukushima. All the more reason to bounce back and thoroughly work out the issue of safety using our strength in technology [emphasis added]," asserted Sasaki, pointing positively to this option. (Yomiuri Shimbun, August 7, 2011, Morning. Tokyo Edition.)

8 Taijun Takeda. "Tokai Observation Record." Chuuoukouron. Chuuoukouron Company, July 9, 1957, pp.182-90.

9 Kenzaburo Oe. "Young, married nuclear scientists." Mainichi Graph. Mainichi Newspaper Company, September 3, 1961, pp. 19-21, 32.

10 Taijun Takeda. Work mentioned above, p. 190.

writers. As said, this was the work of separating “the nuclear” from that Hiroshima which took the form of a negative legacy. Even so, there was none of the earlier naiveté in this work. Rather, separation and neutralization were carried out in a forced confrontation with “the nuclear.” Namely, the types of rhetoric postwar intellectuals used whenever relating nuclear development to Hiroshima were decontextualization, neutralization, and meaning reversal. By means of these three rhetorical devices, postwar nuclear development became legitimized among intellectuals and researchers.

The anti-nuclear movement is one of the largest among the movements postwar Japan has experienced. The impetus for this movement was the Daigo Fukuryu Maru accident. The crew of the Daigo Fukuryu Maru became bomb victims at the time of a US hydrogen bomb experiment on the Bikini Atoll while in neighboring international waters. The Daigo Fukuryu Maru returned to port, but the crewmembers were immediately admitted to the hospital. The boat had been bathed in radiation, and a large quantity of tuna was discarded due to the detection of radiation. Through its repercussions this incident led to suspicions of radioactive contamination in fish meat, vegetables, rice, and even drinking water.

These were the circumstances in which the atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement began. The movement that began with the cry of the Suginami housewives is famous as likely the largest postwar signature-collecting campaign. It is said that the National Conference Signature Campaign for an Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb Ban that formed in August, 1954 collected 20 million signatures by the end of that year. Based on such a large number of signatures collected in the short time of just a few months, we can guess at how great a feeling of insecurity people felt with regard to going through their daily lives. The campaign seemed to indicate a clear recognition by large numbers of people that the atom-hydrogen bomb issue had an impact on their daily lives.

Be that as it may, the movement against nuclear power was not prominent in this campaign. In February of the previous year, 1953, Yasuhiro Nakasone had proposed the draft budget for nuclear reactor construction to the National Diet. This budget received the Diet’s approval in March of the same year. Then, the Basic Law of Nuclear Power was set up in December, 1954. That is, by that time the nation of Japan had already changed course toward nuclear energy development. Under these circumstances, there was a possibility that the atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement could become an anti-nuclear power movement. But this was not to be.

Why? It comes down to the exact same basis upon which this movement expanded to such a rapid degree. The atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement was a mainstream movement awakened by feelings of insecurity in everyday life. Of course I am not suggesting this to be negative. But a movement touched off by insecurities in everyday life such as food insecurity, if these insecurities are removed, would move toward resolution. In other words, the movement ended up cycling between insecurity in everyday life and the dissolution thereof. When the wheel in this cycle was closed, the movement transitioned to a state that lacked momentum to expand into an anti-nuclear power movement.¹¹ The discussion on the “peaceful use of nuclear power” may have been a little far from people’s minds at that time. However, the remoteness of the movement from the issues of nuclear energy and nuclear development can be understood if we take

11 Akihiro Yamamoto. “After the atomic bombing, before anti-nuclear power.” *Gendai Shisou*, vol. 39-3. Seidosha (2011), pp. 123-9.

fear regarding toxic food sitting on the dinner table and danger in people's everyday lives as making up the core mentality of the atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement. More than that, it is reasonable to conjecture that the transition would have occurred even without any remarks of consequence in relation to the peaceful use of nuclear power.

A similar pattern can be seen in the Kansai nuclear research reactor opposition movement. This was an opposition movement carried out with regard to the establishment of an experimental nuclear research reactor at Kyoto University. In January, 1951 Uji, Kyoto was nominated as a candidate site to establish a new experimental nuclear research reactor being set up by Kyoto University. But the construction site of the candidate was upstream on Osaka's source of water, the Yodo River. Furthermore, if a nuclear reactor were constructed at Uji, then there was a possibility that Uji's tea manufacturers would have been subject to business damage from negative publicity. Because of that, an opposition movement arose. In response, the city council of Uji, in June, 1957, declared its opposition to receiving the nuclear reactor. After that and until 1959, names such as Takatsuki, Shijounawate, Kitakawachi were raised as candidate sites, but all of them met local opposition and failed to materialize.

One finds in these campaigns such elements as fear of economic damage and health hazards as well as distrust regarding nuclear reactor construction that was supported by industry, government, and academia in cooperation. From that standpoint, the campaign also became the seed for later nuclear power opposition movements. But these movements, too, had limits. At the core of these campaigns was naturally radioactive contamination. This was a link that bound together the local people participating in the campaign and provided solidarity. On the other hand, if the horror of radioactive contamination disappeared, this link would loosen and dissolve. Each time the candidate site for Kyoto University's experimental nuclear research reactor changed, a campaign occurred at the newly nominated location. When the candidate site moved to a different location, that campaign would conclude again. These kinds of campaigns quickly and easily gained strength in the context of a common enemy that stirred up extreme insecurity in everyday life. On the other hand, when the root of that insecurity would go, the campaigns would wither away in the same manner.

Differing from the atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement several years before, the opposition movement to the establishment of an experimental nuclear research reactor actually advocated an anti-nuclear power stance. However, the mentality seen in these movements does not seem to have gone so far as to approach the questions of whether to set foot into nuclear energy development or whether Japanese society should choose nuclear power. Rather, it seems that the mentality of the people connected with these movements was mainly concerned with preventing their own regions from becoming radioactive contamination damage sites.

One can see that both the atom-hydrogen bomb opposition movement that started with the housewives of Suginami and the experimental nuclear reactor opposition campaigns in Kansai were movements that started with insecurity that threatened people's everyday lives. In this context, they were movements that took on an aspect of consumer movements protesting contamination of vital resources or perhaps NIMBY campaigns. Movements with this kind of psychological origin head toward conclusion when the root of their fears is removed.

By what mechanisms did the immediately postwar anti-nuclear movement arrive to this state of affairs? As we saw above, one factor was the divergence of “Hiroshima” from everyday life. The atom brought us Hiroshima. But in 1954 Japan, everyday life was already in a place far away from “Hiroshima.” This is clearly indicated by the reality that only when contaminated fish were brought in or a plan to build an experimental nuclear research reactor was floated did people become strongly aware of nuclear contamination and the insecurity it brings. Nuclear was already outside of everyday consciousness and far away. For that reason, moreover, neither the opposition movement to atomic and hydrogen bombs nor that to the establishment of an experimental nuclear research reactor actively made an issue out of nuclear energy and the acceptance or refusal thereof. These movements existed, but they were severed from the history of Hiroshima.

Until now, we have looked at the mentality of postwar intellectuals and the mentality of people who participated in movements. Well, what were ordinary citizens like?

Takeda introduced us in his work to “Old Man Uranium” of the 1950s.¹² Old Man Uranium was Zensaku Azuma. Azuma was a man who went walking around the mountains with a Geiger counter in hand. He was not carrying a Geiger counter with the goal of avoiding danger. His goal was to find uranium ore. He dreamed of discovering a vein of uranium ore and making a fortune selling it to the nation. Walking around the mountains in Western Japan, Old Man Uranium finally confirmed the presence of a uranium vein at the Ogamo mine in 1955. After that he further ascertained a uranium vein at Ningyo-toge with a uranium deposit bigger than that of the Ogamo mine. Then, Old Man Uranium set up a uranium mining company that held mining rights and concluded an agreement with Atomic Fuel Public Corporation (later Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation, or “Dounen”) to supply it with uranium ore.

For the public in those days, it was as if everything was nuclear. The Atoms for Peace Exhibition was held all over the country, and the notion of using the energy of atomic bombs for peaceful goals was spreading. The state of affairs was pervaded by the sense that if we did not hurry up and develop nuclear energy, we would end up missing the bus.¹³

Azuma tried to ride this “nuclear boom.” He quickly discovered uranium veins and then secured mining rights. Azuma had sketched out a scenario in which, with mining rights in hand, he would make a fortune from the contract he agreed with the nation, while the nation pushed ahead with nuclear energy research and development.

From this it becomes clear what significance uranium had for Azuma. Namely, for Azuma uranium was meant to bring economic wealth. Since uranium was nothing more than a means of gaining wealth, the way the uranium would be used after it was mined was outside his concerns. Here is to be found yet another appreciation for the power of the atom, apart from its use.

The story goes even further. For Azuma uranium was not merely a source of wealth. Azuma considered uranium to be good for health. He grew vegetables using fertilizer mixed with uranium with the notion

12 Toru Takeda. “This is how we chose to be a ‘nuclear great power.’” Chuuou Shinsha Rakure (2011).

13 Japan Atomic Energy Agency home page (<http://www.jaea.go.jp/>).

they would grow well that way, and he also used uranium in baths. This kind of thing was not confined to just Azuma. At Ningyo Toge after uranium ore was discovered, souvenir shops for tourists sold “uranium buns” and “uranium-ware” (dishes). At the Misasa hot springs on the Sea of Japan side of the Chugoku Mountains, there was once a “uranium garden” that was popular with bath customers. In addition, there were “radiation wine,” “radium-filled charms,” and so on (Takeda 2011).

From all this, it is clear that the power of the atom was understood as having a connection with the health and well-being of individuals. Evidence of this is the treatment of uranium as if it were a health-promoting panacea. But this kind of understanding, too, was precisely because the following psychological manipulation was accomplished. Namely, having been separated from the history of Hiroshima, “the nuclear” became decontextualized. “The nuclear” escaped the connotation assigned to it by its connection to 1945, acquiring instead a new connotation encompassing the promotion of personal economic well-being and contribution to personal health.

Private life was not the only domain in which “the nuclear” gained a positive significance. The same kind of thing occurred in the social domain. The discourse on using the energy from atomic bombs for peaceful goals spread, and the “Atoms for Peace” Exhibition was held all over the country. Under these circumstances came the opening of the Tokai Nuclear Power Plant. It is said that the Tokai Nuclear Power Laboratory was so popular that it had over 10,000 visitors per month, reaching its maximum admissions limit. The road to Tokai was called the “Atom Road,” and in Mito, “atomic bean dessert” was sold.¹⁴ In August, 1957 when a critical experiment was carried out at the experimental nuclear reactor, every major newspaper was colored by a celebratory mood.

In this way “the nuclear” was connected directly with a bright society of the future. Nuclear energy was the “dream energy” that would supply infinite energy to a Japan lacking in fossil fuels. It was thought that it would take shape as the foundation of Japan’s industrial development. Expressing this recognition symbolically was the 1970 World’s Fair. The opening ceremony of the World’s Fair put future aspirations up front, and Japan Atomic Power Company’s Tsuruga Power Plant began operation in tune with this ceremony. The electric scoreboard inside the convention area displayed the message, “This is electricity from nuclear power.”

In the 1950s “the nuclear” had already become a source of personal well-being. By 1970, it was positioned in the heart of Japanese society as a source of society’s well-being and progress. How could “the nuclear” accomplish this kind of change in meaning? It seems unmistakable that, as mentioned above, the push came from the social circumstances that existed at that time, a time that was called the “nuclear boom.” But even under such circumstances, certain conditions were still necessary for this change in meaning to be achieved. Namely, this was the work of whitewashing “Hiroshima” with its connection to innocent deaths and coming away with “the nuclear” by itself. Free of historical connotations, “the nuclear” could easily be connected to the national policies of that time. Namely, riding a series of policy measures supporting nuclear power, and moreover propelled by agitation from the media, “the nuclear” was easily manipulated. “The nuclear” as seen by regular people had finally become a source of well-being and a symbol of societal progress.

¹⁴ “‘Atomic flame’ lights up for the first time in Japan.” *Asahi Shimbun*, August 27, 1957; “At 5:23 this morning, ‘flame of the sun’ lights up,” “Dawn of atomic Japan.” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 27, 1957; “The prospect of nuclear civilization: upsides and downsides.” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 28-9, 1957.

The road to Fukushima: How did we come to accept “the nuclear”?

How did we, after the war, find our way from Hiroshima to Fukushima? After August, 1945, we set off with fear and awe toward the nuclear and a vision of a dark future. Vowing never to return to that place, we took our first step into the postwar period. 66 years later, however, we went through Fukushima.

Fukushima made communities in the region into ghost towns. It pulled up by the roots the lives of 80,000 people and threw them, defenseless, into a world of instability. In addition, it produced societal insecurity on a global scale due to radioactive pollution to the environment and food supply. In this regard, Fukushima is no different from Hiroshima. Only in one regard does Fukushima differ from Hiroshima. Hiroshima was a tragedy brought on by the dropping of atomic bombs that we did not directly choose. But Fukushima was a tragedy brought on by nuclear power plants that, after the war, we decided upon, chose, and made a reality. How did we, who went through Hiroshima, end up also going through Fukushima?

A few things have happened as we slipped from Hiroshima to Fukushima. One can say that postwar Japan's nuclear energy policy, the international relations and politics of the US and Soviet-centric Cold War, and the media that extolled the peaceful use of nuclear power were driving forces behind our skid from Hiroshima toward Fukushima. But in just what way did the skidding occur? How did the citizens who supposedly suffered so much at Hiroshima end up accepting “the nuclear”?

The answer to that lies in a conversion of meaning. After the war, in a relatively short time period, we brought about a conversion in the meaning of “the nuclear.” Namely, we switched “nuclear” from connotations in 1945 of abhorrence and horror to the connotations of personal well-being and a bright society of the future. Even before this conversion, we carried out a number of manipulations. The first was to whitewash the meaning. We freed “nuclear” from its immediate postwar value associated with the loss of Hiroshima. Having whitewashed “nuclear,” we gained the chance to attach a more positive value to the word by decontextualizing the substance of “nuclear” from the history of the loss of Hiroshima. The second manipulation was to legitimize the attachment of the contrary meaning. This meant excluding “nuclear” from “Hiroshima.” The very existence of the “nuclear” to exclude necessitated a process to legitimize the conversion to a “nuclear” that would receive a new value. To this end, without feeling any guilt, people took up “the nuclear,” made it a topic of discussion, and were able to study it. The last manipulation was the active assignment of a positive meaning to “nuclear.” “Nuclear” was then reborn new and different as a source of individual well-being, as an inexhaustible supply of energy necessary for the postwar revival of Japanese society, and as a support for the bright future of Japanese society.

At the end of the path we followed after the war was Fukushima. The tragedy of Fukushima is occurring now. What I am apprehensive about now is what comes after Fukushima. Surely we should not pick the same path again after this. That is what is frightening to me.

RETHINKING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Aproximación a los Movimientos Sociales como Sujetos de Emancipación

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Abstract

Este paper forma parte de un trabajo más amplio que tiene por objetivo realizar un enfoque teórico de los movimientos sociales como sujetos de emancipación; analizando las aportaciones cognitivas, relacionales y materiales que construyen los movimientos en sus procesos de búsqueda de estrategias para superar las realidades de subordinación. El proyecto aspira también a cuestionar y replantear el papel de la producción de conocimiento académico en esos procesos de emancipación. En este paper realizamos un breve recorrido crítico por los diferentes enfoques y perspectivas analíticas que se han desarrollado en las últimas décadas en el estudio de los movimientos sociales, e iniciamos una apertura a los necesarios debates epistemológicos en los estudios-acción sobre movimientos sociales.

Keywords

sujetos colectivos, emancipación, pensamiento crítico, colonialidad, conocimiento situado.

Introducción

La complejidad y pluralidad de los cambios sociales a los que estamos asistiendo en las últimas décadas están haciendo emerger diferentes convulsiones, crisis y movilizaciones sociales; y, al mismo tiempo, están modificando sustancialmente los esquemas y las categorías de pensamiento con las que interpretábamos las luchas y prácticas emancipadoras.

Asistimos a convulsiones o crisis de diferente tipo: financieras, energéticas, climáticas, laborales, alimentarias, crisis de cuidados en los hogares, etc. Y, como no podía ser de otro modo, asistimos también a convulsiones socio-políticas; protestas, movilizaciones y diferentes modos de expresión del descontento y la indignación que provoca la prevalencia de los poderes económicos y sus elites, sobre los poderes políticos de un sistema de democracia formal en evidente crisis de representatividad y credibilidad.

La euforia mercantilista y capitalista que supuso la caída del muro de Berlín en 1989, trajo consigo un cierre de los debates políticos bajo la fuerte hegemonía de la ideología ultraliberal, que entronaba a los mercados y sus lógicas especulativas como mecanismo fundamental de regulación social. De este modo, con el creciente protagonismo de instituciones supra-estatales y su afán des-regulador de lo económico y minimizador/privatizador del sector público, se acrecienta el poder de las empresas transnacionales y las elites financieras. Otros fenómenos globales como el proceso de expansión de las tecnologías de la comunicación, la densidad de los flujos migratorios o la emergencia de otros polos de poder económico en Asia y América Latina, han venido

transformando también de forma significativa las coordenadas de un sistema-mundo que agitado por convulsiones de escala global comienza a plantearse las crisis como síntomas de una crisis sistémica y civilizatoria.

El poder creciente de élites económicas y tecnócratas globales, y el consiguiente descentramiento del estado y la administración pública como centro de decisión de las políticas que regulan y transforman la vida social, ha generado mayor complejidad en los debates sobre el poder político, la identificación de antagonistas y las estrategias de lucha de los movimientos sociales. Desde principios de la década pasada venimos asistiendo a escala global a procesos de intensificación de las luchas sociales enfrentando directamente la concentración de poder de algunos de esos agentes transnacionales. Las protestas contra la OMC, el FMI, el Banco Mundial, o el G8; o las movilizaciones contra grandes empresas transnacionales y sus megaproyectos, o contra Wall Street como exponente máximo de la especulación financiera, vienen cuestionando la hegemonía que el capitalismo neoliberal expande a nivel mundial desde el fin del orden mundial bipolar.

En este contexto, especialmente reseñables serán las luchas y prácticas emancipadoras de los movimientos sociales en el continente americano, ya que por su potencia desestabilizadora y su creatividad propositiva influyen en activistas y movimientos sociales de todo el mundo.

Efectivamente, los levantamientos y prácticas constructivas de organizaciones y redes campesinas, indígenas, feministas y barriales en Latinoamérica alimentan desde los márgenes una serie de debates que cuestionan las bases de la modernidad y el capitalismo con referentes hasta ahora silenciados por el colonialismo cultural que establecía, también en la producción de conocimientos e ideologías críticas, la prevalencia de los parámetros teórico-conceptuales de la modernidad occidental. Es por ello que en este trabajo nos acercaremos de manera preferente a las propuestas teóricas y analíticas de lo que daremos en llamar el pensamiento crítico emergente desde Latinoamérica, recogiendo así el desafío de abrirse a una comprensión no únicamente occidental de los análisis sobre los movimientos sociales. Una perspectiva pos-colonial que nos permita aprender con y desde los márgenes o las periferias, desde cuyos espacios en resistencia a la dominación se pueden hacer más visibles las estructuras de poder y de saber establecidas. Por esta misma razón, prestaremos también especial atención a la producción cognitiva realizada por el pensamiento feminista, que se ha revelado en las últimas décadas con una capacidad excepcional de cuestionamiento crítico de los postulados epistemológicos y teóricos dominantes.

De la mano de los nuevos conceptos y planteamientos que los movimientos introducen en el debate social y político, activistas e investigadores revisan y modifican las categorías y las aproximaciones con las que se venía analizando e interpretando el accionar de los movimientos sociales. Se inicia una transición paradigmática (B. Sousa Santos, 2006), que permite replantearse la manera de observar la realidad socio-política y el papel no neutral que juega el observador/a y el conocimiento experto que genera¹.

Un recorrido analítico del estudio de los movimientos sociales

Las opciones analíticas de la década de los setenta y ochenta

En ese tiempo entendemos que existen básicamente dos perspectivas teórico-analíticas matrices:

¹ “De ahí el interés de esta perspectiva por la geopolítica del conocimiento, esto es, por problematizar quién produce el conocimiento, en qué contexto lo produce y para quién lo produce” (B. De Sousa Santos, 2008: 46)

A) Un enfoque “**racionalista instrumental**” en el análisis de los movimientos sociales. La teoría de movilización de recursos (Resource Mobilization Theory, RMT) implantada a partir de la década de los setenta establece que los movimientos sociales expresan conductas colectivas perfectamente racionales, con objetivos políticos y sociales muy precisos y con estrategias de movilización, de adquisición de recursos (humanos, organizativos, materiales, tácticos, etc) deliberadamente adecuados a esos objetivos. Este enfoque propugnaba la existencia de delimitadas y previsibles cadenas causales, de un tejido no demasiado espeso y por ello científicamente determinable de motivaciones, efectos, influencias contextuales y ciclos por los que se puede seguir y comprender el nacimiento, vida y desaparición de un movimiento social.

El enfoque de movilización de recursos toma partido, eligen una dimensión del proceso. Lo relevante, se nos reitera desde esta teoría, es **cómo el movimiento se organiza**; organiza a sus gentes y organiza a su entorno para obtener, con sus reivindicaciones dirigidas a las autoridades dentro del sistema político, avances en los intereses colectivos que representa. La RMT margina en este sentido tanto la relevancia de las causas del surgimiento del movimiento como la dimensión identitaria del mismo; cómo el movimiento es también una forma colectiva y alternativa de definir y proponer el mundo que va más allá del sistema político institucionalizado.

Conectada con esta perspectiva se extiende a partir de los ochenta el enfoque del **proceso político** en general y el de la **estructura de oportunidad política** (Political Opportunity Structure; POS) en particular. El Estado, y su sistema político-institucional, aparece como principal conformador de la estrategia de los movimientos. En la relación interactiva entre movimientos y sistema político e institucional lo que se destaca desde este ángulo analítico, no es lo que el poder político institucionalizado decide o cómo organiza su proceso decisorio a partir de la acción de los movimientos, si no cómo los movimientos ajustan y reajustan sus recursos y estrategias movilizadoras y discursivas a partir de la menor o mayor apertura o cierre del sistema político, o de las relaciones y fracturas entre las élites políticas, o de cuáles son los posibles aliados políticos institucionalizados del movimiento, etc.

B) La opción analítica del RMT es contestada por el enfoque de los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales (NMS). Ahora lo relevante no es tanto los procesos organizativos y los contextos políticos, **si no la causalidad de origen y la construcción identitaria**. Ahora lo que es destacado es cómo determinadas crisis estructurales (sobre todo de índole cultural) hacen surgir los movimientos y como estos tratan de distinguirse del mundo circundante creando su propia identidad colectiva, siendo distintos y propugnando una realidad distinta. Si la RMT da por supuesto que los movimientos sociales son *otra* forma normalizada de comportamiento político, el enfoque de los nuevos movimientos, entiende que los mismos son una forma distinta, una forma alternativa de conducta política colectiva.

Con este enfoque conectan las perspectivas más discursivas. Desde ellas, y especialmente desde los acercamientos del *frame analysis*, se trata de observar cómo el movimiento construye su particular y polémica visión del mundo y cómo con ese discurso asienta su identidad y moviliza a su entorno, a sus simpatizantes.

Este enfoque culturalista tiende a subrayar las dimensiones **simbólicas** –principios, valores, esquemas de pensamiento–, **expresivas** –repertorios y formas de comunicación, de acción y de vida–, y **rupturistas** –planteamientos políticos que va más allá de los límites de compatibilidad con el sistema social instituido– (Melucci). Lo relevante es la cotidianidad de los movimientos y las afirmaciones alternativas que se construyen en ese mundo de la vida cotidiana: sentimientos de pertenencia (identidad) a partir de esquemas de

pensamiento críticos que identifican abusos, privilegios y discriminaciones; identificación de adversarios con los que se entabla una relación de conflicto y antagonismo; y, por último, un cuestionamiento ideológico y cognitivo de los pilares estructurales del modelo de sociedad instituido. Por ello, esa originalidad constitutiva también cuestiona el marco cultural dominante (Touraine) o la estabilidad estructural, política y económica (Offe).

A finales de los ochenta el panorama se presentaba francamente dividido entre –podríamos así llamarlos– instrumentalistas y culturalistas; entre los que acentuaban cómo se organizaban los movimientos y su relación con el sistema político-institucional, y los que resaltaban el por qué se organizaban y qué producción identitaria, discursiva y política alternativa construían. A finales de los ochenta, sin embargo, se inicia un proceso de confluencia o de reconocimiento más ecléctico de esa pluralidad de dimensiones y planos a tener en cuenta.

De estos dos enfoques, al margen de sus mayores o menores confluencias podemos extraer **algunas conclusiones**:

- **Los análisis más instrumentales**, dirigidos al estudio de cómo los movimientos utilizan recursos disponibles para lograr -o no- sus objetivos, se insertan en una visión conformista del mundo. Dan por supuesto que la realidad económica social y política es intransformable y que por tanto, un movimiento social, como cualquier otro actor colectivo hace lo que puede hacer. Y lo único que puede y debe hacer es tratar de cambiar, en favor de sus homologables y racionales intereses, algunas condiciones de vida de ese mundo dentro, por supuesto, de las dimensiones fundamentales de ese mismo mundo.
- **En los análisis más culturales**, ligados a la interpretación de los NMS, la idea fuerza que se destaca es la de ser y aparecer distintos. Vivir y actuar colectivamente en el mundo de forma distinta, e interpretarlo también de forma distinta. Se rechaza así la inevitabilidad, la naturalidad, tanto de las estructuras realmente existentes como de la lógica cultural -mercantil, instrumentalista- dominante. A diferencia de los instrumentalistas, los análisis culturalistas abren la perspectiva y no se sitúan en una posición teórica que da por supuesta la inevitabilidad del sistema y el modelo de sociedad, creen que los movimientos cuestionan esa (solo aparente) inmovilidad y están de acuerdo con que así sea.
- **Desvalorización del movimiento feminista**. En las décadas de los 60 y 70, en el contexto de la guerra fría, las luchas de liberación anti-coloniales, la proliferación nuclear, las luchas estudiantiles y la contra-cultura que cuestiona los valores y modos de vida de las sociedades occidentales burguesas; una serie de movimientos sociales se articulan en torno a protestas y reivindicaciones antimilitaristas, pacifistas, anti-imperialistas, ecologistas, antirracistas (por los derechos civiles), anti-represivas y anti-disciplinarias. Son movimientos sociales que se conforman y movilizan en torno a sentidos de pertenencia y ejes de conflicto diferentes a los del movimiento que constituía la referencia fundamental hasta entonces en los análisis sociales, el movimiento obrero/sindical. Un movimiento progresivamente integrado en el sistema político-institucional.

La etiqueta de “Nuevos” Movimientos Sociales (NMS) atribuida a esos movimientos que emergen en los 60-70, entre los que se incluye también al movimiento feminista, pone de manifiesto la centralidad hegemónica del movimiento obrero en los análisis sociales, en clara desvalorización del movimiento feminista cuya trayectoria histórica hunde también sus raíces en el siglo XIX. Se considera, poniendo de manifiesto

un evidente sesgo de género en los análisis sobre movimientos sociales, que surge algo novedoso, inédito, que por lo tanto exige un análisis nuevo. Y esto sólo es posible dejando de lado la continuidad histórica y los rasgos específicos que el movimiento feminista ha manifestado en su trayectoria; su carácter no-violento, anti-vanguardista e internacional, o sus postulados sobre lo personal como político, lo sitúan como precursor histórico de algunas de las “novedades” que se atribuyen a los movimientos que emergen a partir de la década de los 60. Es decir, hasta esta década los análisis sociales otorgaron al movimiento obrero un casi exclusivo protagonismo, el sesgo androcéntrico de estos análisis ha continuado interpretando los procesos de acción colectiva irruptiva en función del carácter primigenio del movimiento obrero, sin reconocer ese mismo carácter al movimiento feminista y desvalorizando las concepciones, valores, reivindicaciones y formas de organización y acción de este movimiento.

El alterglobalismo

Transcurren los años y los análisis sobre movimientos sociales siguen su curso. Aparecen intentos de confluencia entre culturalistas e instrumentalistas, pero en general siguen prevaleciendo los estudios más procedimentalistas, los análisis sobre la trayectoria y los impactos de determinados movimientos en la contienda política por alcanzar sus objetivos.

Tal y como señalan diferentes autores (Ibarra, 2000; Klandermans y Roggeband, 2007; Bringel, 2011) podemos afirmar que desde finales de los 90 el campo de estudio de la acción colectiva y de los movimientos sociales, se ha convertido en un campo más dinámico y con mayor apertura a nuevas disciplinas, áreas de estudio, formas de contestación y nuevas visiones del mundo, pero también se ha convertido en un campo más fragmentado y complejo, de forma que:

“Las anteriores divisiones entre escuelas de interpretación y paradigmas son sustituidas por abordajes más plurales, eclécticas e inclusivas, sin que los enfoques “clásicos” hayan perdido totalmente su influencia, ya que gran parte de la teorización reciente no supone una renovación radical del debate, sino más bien una actualización a los nuevos tiempos y contextos” (Bringel, 2011:2)

A pesar de que las teorizaciones recientes sobre movimientos sociales y acción colectiva suponen una actualización del debate, y no una renovación radical del mismo, se producen nuevos acontecimientos que reactivan los estudios más estructurales y generalistas. Nos referimos al surgimiento de los movimientos alterglobalistas en la década de los 90. Con esta denominación, hacemos referencia al conjunto de movimientos que a partir de su rechazo a la globalización neoliberal plantean la posibilidad de un mundo alternativo. El movimiento alterglobalista supone una ruptura respecto a las tendencias dominantes instaladas en la movilización social de los años 90 y plantea un quehacer distinto en la lucha social. Tal y como señala Hoetmer:

“dentro de la tormenta de la ofensiva neoliberal, aparecieron ya en 1989 nuevas resistencias frente a la dominación capitalista y sus consecuencias en la vida cotidiana alrededor del mundo. El caracazo (1989), el levantamiento indígena en Ecuador (1990) y la marcha por la dignidad y el territorio en Bolivia (1990) pasaban primero desapercibidos o entendidos como restos del viejo orden. El levantamiento zapatista en Chiapas (1994), la huelga general en Corea del Sur (1996-1997), los encuentros en el marco del proceso del Foro Social Mundial (desde 2001), y las protestas contra la Organización Mundial del Comercio en Seattle (1999), contra el G8 en Génova (2001), y a escala mundial en contra de la invasión norteamericana a Iraq (2003), evidenciaron que en realidad había otra globalización en marcha, que

ha sido llamada por Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003, 2006) «la globalización contrahegemónica²» y por Francois Houtart y Francois Polet (2000) «la globalización de las resistencias» (Hoetmer, 2009: 86).

Pero ya han transcurrido doce años de las protestas de Seattle en 1989, protestas que marcaron su surgimiento mediático, y el movimiento ya no puede seguir siendo caracterizado por los rasgos que marcaron sus inicios y sus primeros años, siendo necesario hacer un amplio y diverso ejercicio colectivo de evaluación y comprensión de lo aprendido en estos años y de los desafíos que han ido apareciendo³. Más allá de las múltiples terminologías empleadas para caracterizar el movimiento (antiglobalización, anticapitalista, altermundista, movimiento de movimientos, activismo transnacional, entre otras) y de la heterogeneidad que lo conforma, una parte importante de las innovaciones conceptuales y estratégicas que los movimientos sociales van desarrollando en sus luchas contra las políticas neoliberales y globalizadoras, tienen que ver con la adopción de cierta distancia respecto al imaginario y la práctica política “progresista” que la izquierda venía desarrollando en las décadas anteriores. La repercusión del zapatismo en los debates de los movimientos sociales a nivel internacional, marcan un punto de inflexión en ese sentido:

“... el zapatismo conllevó una reformulación del horizonte de las izquierdas (...) un movimiento a contracorriente de las visiones vanguardistas del poder. (...) esto fue lo que dotó al zapatismo de una gran capacidad de atracción e irradiación: por un lado, su poderosa interpelación específica hacia los pueblos indígenas (...); por otro lado, su interpelación global a una forma de concebir la política desde abajo, que reclama la autonomía, la horizontalidad de los lazos y la democracia por consenso como valores estructurantes, valores compartidos con los nuevos movimientos sociales surgido en los años 60. La noción de auto-determinación fue la llave que unió estas dos dimensiones de la autonomía, provenientes de experiencias tan diversas” (Maristella Swampa, 2011: 391)

La teoría del poder y de la transformación social que fue hegemónica en la izquierda partidaria y revolucionaria, establecía la necesidad de la toma del poder gubernamental-estatal como palanca desde la cual realizar modificaciones estructurales en la economía -propiedad de los medios de producción y planificación estratégica- que permitiría superar la sociedad de clases al resolver la contradicción fundamental entre capital y trabajo. De este modo se abordaba la tarea de transformar la sociedad en su conjunto, atendiendo prioritariamente a la educación, la salud y la atención social a los sectores sociales más necesitados desde políticas públicas de carácter igualitario, homogeneizante y centralista.

Organizaciones feministas e indígenas hacía mucho que planteaban que la subordinación u opresión no sólo es cuestión de la relación entre capital y trabajo, o de leyes, instituciones y políticas públicas; las discriminaciones son también cotidianas y en las diferentes esferas de interacción social, incluidas las organizaciones políticas de izquierda⁴. No es posible, por lo tanto, reducir la política a estrategias por la toma de poder, planteando como contradicción fundamental (casi única) la que enfrenta a la clase trabajadora con la burguesía capitalista, y relegando el resto de opresiones y luchas a un segundo plano de relevancia que instrumentaliza a otras subjetividades políticas.

2 Boaventura de Sousa Santos entiende la globalización contrahegemónica como “la actuación transnacional de aquellos movimientos, asociaciones y organizaciones que defienden intereses y grupos relegados o marginados por el capitalismo global” (Santos, 2006:84).

3 Para profundizar en los análisis que se han centrado en interpretar los orígenes y principales características del movimiento alterglobalizador así como identificar las diferentes fases por las que el movimiento ha ido pasando, se recomienda una lectura secuencial del anuario de Movimientos Sociales editado por la Fundación Betiko (<http://www.fundacionbetiko.org>).

4 Tal y como nos recuerda Hoetmer, atendiendo mínimamente a la complejidad y pluralidad de la izquierda en su desarrollo histórico debemos relativizar el carácter novedoso de algunos planteamientos que a continuación vamos a subrayar, ya que dentro de la izquierda siempre hubo voces disidentes que cuestionaron el vanguardismo, las tendencias economicistas, el centralismo y, en algunos casos, el machismo, el racismo o el personalismo elitista presentes en sus seno. (Hoetmer: 2009).

Tal y como nos planeta Boaventura (B. De Sousa: 2001), el debilitamiento político de la identidad obrera y *por ende* del movimiento obrero, tanto en sus expresiones más espontáneas como institucionalizadas⁵, permite emerger la denuncia de formas de subordinación más allá de las relaciones de producción. Formas de opresión que no afectan sólo a una clase social específica y sí a grupos sociales transversales a todas las clases, o a la sociedad en su conjunto: machismo, colonialismo y guerras, opresión nacional y cultural, racismo, deterioro del medio y el territorio en nombre del progreso (productivismo, consumismo),... Por lo tanto, comienza a tornarse dominante la idea de que todas las formas de dominación deben ser consideradas por igual en las tareas emancipatorias, tanto las relaciones de producción como las de convivencia y reproducción de la vida en todos los ámbitos de lo cotidiano. No hay posición o protagonismo central de la clase obrera o del movimiento sindical, porque no hay una única o prioritaria pre-constitución estructural del sujeto de cambio, de los grupos o movimientos de emancipación.

“... la caída del muro de Berlín (1989) liberó una serie de movimientos sociales que se encontraban confinados hasta entonces por la estrategia ideológica de la guerra fría. Es como si el espíritu de los años sesenta pudiese, finalmente, emerger en la escena política mundial sin las descalificaciones que venían de ambos lados de la guerra fría” (Porto Gonsalves en Hoetmer 2009: 92)

En términos del trabajo por la transformación del modelo de sociedad, el cambio social no es sólo estructural, y no debe ser una promesa de futuro una vez que se halla conquistado el poder gubernamental institucionalizado. La emancipación debe plantearse en términos de transformación de las prácticas personales y colectivas que en lo cotidiano inferiorizan y subordinan a las víctimas de la opresión; transformación emancipadora, por lo tanto, desde las propias prácticas en el presente, y no en un futuro de cambio estructural total. Lo cotidiano y cercano deja de ser algo supeditado a una estrategia general de lucha en las relaciones de poder, para comenzar a ser el campo privilegiado de lucha por un mundo y una vida mejores.

La tarea de identificar prácticas de subordinación y de construir prácticas alternativas no opresoras, se torna una tarea nunca del todo finalizada y sin una identidad o subjetividad específicamente titular de ella, porque las dominaciones son múltiples. La emancipación y la democratización nos aparecen, por lo tanto, como principios sin fin, como procesos siempre abiertos, siempre inconclusos.

Este cuestionamiento de la limitada perspectiva sobre el cambio social construida desde la izquierda clásica se complementa con un cuestionamiento teórico-ideológico del poder, reubicando el Estado en el conjunto de las relaciones de poder de la sociedad. Atendiendo a Michel Foucault, y sus trabajos sobre las relaciones de dominación como relaciones sostenidas sobre concepciones, imaginarios y prácticas construidas históricamente como hegemónicas para así naturalizar y justificar la dominación, el Estado es una práctica social de manejo de la sociedad que forma parte de un campo más amplio de prácticas de poder.

Una de las matrices centrales en esas prácticas de poder, es la práctica del poder colonial moderno (“Colonialidad del poder” Anibal Quijano: 2003), que parte de un mito fundacional de carácter evolucionista por el que la historia humana es una línea desde el estado de naturaleza hasta la modernidad europea, que a través del contrato social sale del estado de naturaleza estableciendo una serie de codificaciones

5 En ello han intervenido diferentes factores y vicisitudes históricas, García Linera destaca “los procesos de reestructuración productiva, el cierre de las grandes empresas, la modificación en la composición técnica del trabajo asalariado que ha fragmentado las concentraciones obreras, ha reducido drásticamente el número de obreros sindicalizados y ha creado una nueva cultura del trabajo fundada en la competencia obrera; pero también es innegable que el propio movimiento obrero no tenía un horizonte propositivo que vaya más allá del corporativismo dentro del estado de bienestar y del uso instrumental de las libertades democráticas” (García Linera, A. 2010; 14)

binarias entre civilizado/primitivo, moderno/tradicional, conocimiento científico/saberes populares, razón/emoción, hombre/mujer, blanco/indígena. Presentando la colonización y subordinación de lo primero sobre lo segundo como algo natural en la evolución de la historia del ser humano, y no como el resultado de relaciones de poder opresoras.

“La idea de que la dominación de la naturaleza implica su transformación en “civilización”, revela una comprensión y práctica del poder colonial-moderno, en la cual el polo dominante/activo tiene el deber de civilizar/formar/disciplinar al polo subordinado”. (Hoetmer, 2009: 94)

Las prácticas políticas de los movimientos sociales en las últimas décadas han pivotado, por lo tanto, hacia un cuestionamiento más integral de las relaciones de poder y de dominación en la sociedad. Planteamientos no solamente de condicionar el poder político institucionalizado, sino de transformar el poder desde prácticas políticas que cuestionen las formas de hacer y los modelos de vida dominantes desde identidades o subjetividades específicas: mujeres, indígenas, estudiantes, jóvenes, gays y lesbianas, campesinos/as sin tierra, parados/as o piqueteros/as, etc.

De esta manera, los movimientos actuales aparecen como procesos de aprendizaje, laboratorios para la construcción de prácticas y relaciones sociales (parcialmente) no-capitalistas, en vez de responder a estrategias pre-definidas para resolver la contradicción fundamental entre capital y pueblo trabajador (Hoetmer, 2009: 97). Este entendimiento del “movimiento social como un principio educativo” (Caldart 2004, citado en Bringel, 2010: 6), torna como elemento de importancia en los movimientos la generación y sistematización de conocimiento: el movimiento autoconstruye y articula sus saberes para alimentar su proceso transformador emancipatorio (Gohn 2005, citado en Bringel, 2010: 6).

Además de las anteriores destacamos a continuación, de forma sintética, otras cuestiones referentes a los debates y prácticas de los movimientos alterglobalizadores (en realidad red de movimientos) señaladas desde diferentes análisis:

- Destacan el carácter emancipatorio de estos movimientos en cuanto contestación y resistencia a la hegemonía del pensamiento único neoliberal, y al fatalismo y conformismo que conlleva; resistencia al cierre de los debates ideológicos y a la negación de la contingencia de los procesos históricos y de las decisiones políticas que los guían. Las redes de movimientos se sitúan en una visión más amplia que, frente a la negación de la agencia humana en los procesos globales en curso, identifica y señala mediante la movilización los agentes y centros de decisión que guían el proceso globalizador neoliberal, contraponiéndose antagonicamente a ellos mediante el conflicto. El movimiento de movimientos ensancha el debate y el antagonismo ideológico y político, reivindicando opciones y alternativas hacia “otros mundos posibles” (Martínez, Z. 2003).
- Son redes o a veces solo confluencias, que niegan legitimidad al sistema no solo en sus expresiones de exclusión más frecuentes sino en su misma razón de ser. Son redes que afirman que la construcción de alternativas prácticas a nivel local, que mantengan comunicación y conexión a nivel global, es la opción prioritaria para visualizar y vivir esas otras alternativas posibles. Defienden la proximidad, la cercanía y la igualdad en la diferencia, frente a la excluyente homogeneidad de la globalización; cuyo verticalismo impositivo y mercantilista se disfraza de horizontalidad, democracia, libertad, desarrollo, progreso, etc.

- Otros análisis de estos movimientos destacan también la ausencia de conexión entre discurso y práctica de los movimientos por un lado, y los logros políticos específicos de cara a una realidad social y política emancipada por el otro. Constatan su potencial emancipador basado en su radicalidad constitutiva, pero no logran las mediaciones políticas necesarias para lograr tal impacto emancipador. Se trata de dificultades y cautelas que en este caso se adecuan al propio discurso de las redes. De alguna forma las mismas se han negado a establecer un programa de transición general en que se establezca por ejemplo qué hacer y cómo gestionar el poder político institucionalizado. Hay rechazo frente al Estado, frente al poder centralizado, la democracia representativa y frente al mercado controlado por oligopolios y multinacionales, pero no se formula un modelo estructural alternativo en su conjunto.

Nos encontramos así en este caso, con unas teorías sobre los movimientos sociales como sujetos de emancipación, en las que el análisis sobre causas, formas nuevas y aspiraciones generales supera en densidad y aportaciones al dirigido a estudiar lo que podríamos denominar las condiciones y características de los procesos emancipatorios, entendidas como emancipaciones estructurales en el conjunto de la sociedad. La precisión resulta inexcusable en cuanto que la emancipación también es entendible y practicable en el seno del movimiento y sus prácticas de construcción de alternativas en sus comunidades de referencia.

Por ello, diferentes analistas advierten de la necesidad de prestar atención y profundizar en el conocimiento de las condiciones y características concretas de los procesos emancipatorios en construcción, puestos en marcha por diferentes movimientos sociales en las últimas décadas, pero la mayoría de estos autores también señalan la necesidad de investigar cómo se están construyendo dichos procesos desde presupuestos epistemológicos e ideológicos renovados.

En este sentido, Bringel advierte de la importancia de no caer en lecturas superficiales de los procesos protagonizados por los movimientos sociales, y señala que es preciso resolver cuanto antes una limitación de falta de bidireccionalidad entre universidad y movimientos en los estudios e investigaciones que se hacen desde lo que se podría denominar intentos académicos de apertura epistemológica y diálogo de saberes (B. Sousa Santos, 2009).

Así, cada vez es más frecuente encontrar estudios que entienden a los movimientos sociales como sujetos generadores de “conocimientos otros”. El problema es que estas afirmaciones en muchas ocasiones se basan en, análisis poco profundos de los procesos puestos en marcha por los movimientos, y además de esta escasa profundidad, estos análisis no prestan suficiente atención ni a la lógica de la acción colectiva, ni a la forma empleada por el movimiento para construir y reconstruir sus complejos procesos en curso.

Pensamiento social crítico emergente desde América Latina

En la última parada de este recorrido de perspectivas analíticas sobre el estudio de los movimientos sociales, nos vamos a acercar a las reflexiones y debates abiertos por lo que podríamos llamar un pensamiento social crítico emergente. Pensamiento que emerge de los márgenes del sistema-mundo de donde también emergen los procesos de movilización social contrahegemónica que lo alimentan, estos procesos son protagonizados y contruidos por organizaciones y redes campesinas, indígenas, feministas, estudiantiles, trabajadoras y barriales que se articulan de forma cada vez más amplia (local, nacional, regional, intercontinental, etc.) y compleja.

Efectivamente, la necesidad de generar nuevas formas de conocimiento sobre la realidad, la emancipación y los movimientos no surge de una brillante inspiración académica, sino que son los propios movimientos sociales los que en parte han forzado esa necesidad de innovación cognitiva. Con sus procesos demuestran que no solo es posible cuestionar, desde la práctica, la modernidad capitalista y patriarcal entendida como sistema múltiple de dominación, sino que además es posible ir rompiendo (aunque sea de forma parcial, es decir con limitaciones) con esas múltiples dominaciones (antropocentrismo, capitalismo, patriarcado, eurocentrismo, colonialidad, etc.) al poner en marcha la construcción de alternativas a las mismas. Desde estas claves analíticas, es en Latinoamérica donde los movimientos sociales han demostrado una mayor actividad en los últimas décadas (desde el zapatismo, a los piqueteros argentinos, pasando por el MST) incluso irrumpiendo en la escena política y llegando a ser piezas clave en la definición de políticas, gobiernos y participando en los procesos de replanteamiento del modelo de Estado (como en los casos de Bolivia y Ecuador).

Aunque siguiendo nuestro recorrido analítico, no resulta fácil hacer una distinción tajante y clara entre el movimiento alterglobalizador y los movimientos latinoamericanos, ya que muchos de los segundos forman parte del primero y comparten luchas y procesos. Pensamos que es importante hacer esta distinción, dedicando un apartado específico a las emergencias Latinoamericanas con la intención de destacar; por un lado que los movimientos sociales latinoamericanos tienen rasgos propios, especialmente por su origen y su cosmovisión alternativa, pero también por construirse desde los márgenes del sistema-mundo moderno; y, por otro lado, que los análisis latinoamericanos probablemente por el tipo de procesos puestos en marcha por los movimientos sociales de la región, y también por formar su pensamiento académico desde los márgenes del sistema-mundo moderno, han profundizado más en la cuestión de la emancipación y no solo en su aspecto conceptual sino también en algunas dimensiones más operativas. Todo ello hace que América Latina sea actualmente un referente muy importante para el campo de estudio de la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales, por ser un lugar donde se están gestando y emergiendo nuevas e interesantes propuestas analíticas sobre, pero también desde, los movimientos sociales contemporáneos.

Quizá por razones históricas, pero también por su capacidad crítica, emancipadora y propositiva, nos sentimos cerca de estas propuestas analíticas y por ello hemos querido dedicarles un espacio propio. Esta “corriente de pensamiento” plural y diversa se ha propuesto, entre otras, la difícil tarea de re-pensar la emancipación social desde una perspectiva que desmitifica y cuestiona la modernidad capitalista entendida como sistema múltiple de dominación, al tiempo que reivindica la urgente necesidad de apertura a una comprensión no (exclusivamente) occidental del mundo y de las diversas realidades que en él existen.

Desde esta perspectiva la emancipación social se contempla como un complejo proceso de ruptura y liberación de las múltiples dominaciones instauradas en y por la modernidad capitalista. En nuestro caso y debido al objetivo de este texto, prestaremos especial atención (aunque no sólo) a las voces críticas que proceden de un concreto campo de estudio, el de la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales, desde el cual diferentes analistas e investigadores/as vienen señalando en los últimos años, que no sólo son posibles sino que ya existen otras formas, otras prácticas y otras posiciones relativas al conocimiento que resultan necesarias para entender tanto la realidad social con sus violencias y tensiones como determinadas respuestas que desde esa misma sociedad se dan contra esas realidades.

Por tanto, situarse en esta perspectiva implica situarse frente a grandes y complejos desafíos, entre otros, el de aprender con y desde los márgenes del sistema-mundo, llevando a la práctica la “Epistemología del

Sur”⁶ o el “Conocer desde el Sur” de B. Sousa Santos (2006; 2010) ya que, como señalábamos páginas atrás, es desde los espacios de resistencia a la dominación (márgenes del sistema-mundo) desde donde se hacen más visibles las estructuras y lógicas de poder y saber establecidas.

Repensar las formas de entender el conocimiento, su producción, su función social y su uso es un ejercicio de reflexividad al que cada vez se suman más voces dentro de la teoría social crítica, esta suma de voces consigue tomar forma de grito en algunos ámbitos de conocimiento llegando a cuestionar con fuerza los principios epistemológicos que han guiado la producción de conocimiento de la ciencia moderna, pero esas voces, también han sido y siguen siendo silenciadas en muchos otros ámbitos. Este silenciamiento se explica porque la perspectiva epistemológica que vamos a exponer a continuación es crítica con el paradigma positivista y objetivista que domina en la producción de conocimiento técnico y científico.

En nuestro caso nos sumamos, a los diversos esfuerzos que buscan tomar cierta distancia de los requerimientos experimentales y matemáticos de la ortodoxia de la ciencia moderna sobre la producción de conocimientos. Ortodoxia que se auto-atribuye un acceso privilegiado al conocimiento de la realidad (objetivo, neutro, experto,...) que crea la “ilusión de la verdad” y la certeza del conocimiento experto.

Este enfoque objetivista, además de generar una arrogancia bastante discapacitante para la escucha y el aprendizaje, deposita la responsabilidad de sus conclusiones y de sus consecuencias en una supuesta realidad/verdad independiente de la persona observadora o investigadora. Presentar algo como conocimiento objetivo, fundamentado únicamente en una realidad exterior a las personas que lo han elaborado y a su proceso de construcción, es intentar imponer un argumento de autoridad (voz experta y autorizada por la legitimidad atribuida a su elaboración científico-académica). En palabras del biólogo chileno Humberto Maturana presentar algo como conocimiento objetivo es una petición de obediencia, un argumento para obligar.

En no pocas ocasiones el conocimiento experto, revestido de esa supuesta objetividad incuestionable, se nos presenta como si no tuviera nada que ver con los valores, ideas y enfoques de trabajo de las personas que lo han producido. Es decir, se utiliza para establecer una verdad o criterio técnico incuestionable que bloquea la participación y el debate social, ya que niega y cierra los debates ideológicos y políticos, alimentando un tipo de gestión del conocimiento tecnocrática que refuerza la concentración del poder y no su democratización. El conocimiento experto que se presenta como objetivo, difícilmente se puede someter a debate social y puede utilizarse para establecer una verdad hegemónica y excluyente, se trata por lo tanto de un peligroso instrumento de poder.

Frente a los planteamientos epistemológicos hegemónicos que acabamos de exponer, cada vez es más habitual leer y escuchar que está en marcha lo que algunos llaman una “revolución epistemológica”, otros prefieren llamar a este proceso “giro epistemológico”. En nuestro caso pensamos que tendrá que pasar un tiempo para poder precisar, con algo más de perspectiva, el calado de estos debates epistemológicos y su traducción en la práctica investigadora, solo entonces se podrá esclarecer si estamos ante un giro, un tránsito o una revolución epistemológica. Lo que sí podemos afirmar sobre el debate epistemológico y la

6 La Epistemología del Sur de Boaventura de Sousa Santos es una propuesta (epistémica y ético-política) de comprensión del mundo mucho más amplia que la comprensión occidental del mundo. Con ella Santos señala que urge hacer visible lo invisible; pensable lo impensable y presente lo ausente; para ello propone el paso de una epistemología de la ceguera, producida desde la limitada y perezosa razón indolente (razón dominante desde la modernidad occidental) a una epistemología de la visión (que aprecia la diversidad), es decir una Epistemología del Sur (para una adecuada exposición de este concepto y sus diversas implicaciones, ver Santos, 2006 y 2010).

emergencia de “epistemologías alternativas” son dos cuestiones: la primera de ellas es que se trata de un proceso plural y acumulativo de años de evolución; la segunda es que más que un hecho, se trata de una necesidad. Profundicemos un poco más en estas dos ideas, al tiempo que vamos señalando los debates que abren a su paso la emergencia de “epistemologías alternativas”.

En primer lugar, cuando decimos que se trata de un proceso plural y acumulativo, nos referimos a que es un proceso que se ha ido enriqueciendo de contribuciones procedentes de diferentes geografías y calendarios, y que quizá por la complejidad de la coyuntura actual estamos en un momento en el que este debate puede empezar a cuajar y tomar especial fuerza. Además de las críticas realizadas desde la hermenéutica y la teoría crítica de la escuela de Frankfurt, entre las contribuciones más recientes que alimentan la apertura de grietas en los planteamientos epistemológicos hegemónicos, queremos destacar las realizadas desde la “**epistemología feminista**”⁷, la cual surge y se construye como reacción y en contra de la tradición científica positivista⁸, instaurada en la modernidad capitalista y patriarcal. Sus contribuciones, nos parecen especialmente reseñables por su histórica invisibilización y por su importancia en el proceso de apertura del debate epistemológico (no solo en las ciencias sociales).

El concepto de **conocimiento situado** (Haraway, 1995) ha sido una de las aportaciones más importantes de la epistemología feminista, este concepto no alude solamente a dominaciones del sistema sexo-genero sino que va mucho más allá. Que el conocimiento sea situado, nos desvela al menos dos cuestiones; por un lado, se entiende que los múltiples factores y situaciones sociales que nos conforman y sitúan como sujetos (clase, etnia, sexo-genero, ideología, etc.) forman parte del conocimiento que producimos, de manera que “lo que se conoce y cómo se conoce depende de la situación y perspectiva del sujeto conocedor” (Nicolás, 2009: 38); por otro lado, nos desvela que las representaciones de la realidad son siempre parciales y así deben ser interpretadas. De esta forma, se hace explícita y se reconoce la imposibilidad de dar una visión holística y completa de la realidad.

El conocimiento no se recoge, se produce y se construye; y esa actividad de producción de conocimiento es siempre una tarea que se desarrolla en un contexto socio-cultural determinado, el conocimiento es siempre un conocimiento situado. La ciencia objetivista todo lo ve (mirada panóptica) desde una atalaya científico-técnica que supuestamente no se sitúa social y culturalmente en ninguna parte; pero en realidad esconde y disfraza la mirada socialmente situada de un sujeto concreto, normalmente hombre, occidental, blanco, heterosexual, de clase media alta y perteneciente a un grupo etno-lingüístico dominante.

Otra aportación importante desde la epistemología feminista ha sido su particular y acertada forma de señalar que la ciencia es siempre para algo, por algo y para alguien, desvelando la falacia de la objetividad positivista de la ciencia moderna (supuestamente neutral, autónoma e imparcial) ya señalada al inicio de este apartado. Podríamos pensar que esta falacia es un error epistemológico de larga duración, pero la

7 Existe una clasificación de los estudios epistemológicos feministas, realizada por Harding en 1986, que establece tres categorías a las que llamó empiricismo feminista, punto de vista feminista y postmodernismo feminista. A pesar de que esta clasificación o tipología es aceptada generalmente por la mayoría de autoras feministas, en la actualidad las fronteras que separan los tres tipos son cada vez más difusas, existiendo un par de cuestiones que son comunes a los tres tipos: la defensa del pluralismo y el rechazo a las teorías totalizantes (Nicolás, 2009). En este texto haremos alusión a la epistemología feminista de forma genérica, ya que nos vamos a detener en las cuestiones que son comunes, en concreto en las ideas de: “conocimiento situado” y en la noción de objetividad.

8 La epistemología feminista “estudia la manera en que el sistema sexo-genero influye y debería influir en nuestras concepciones del conocimiento y en los métodos de investigación y de justificación [...]. Al hacer esta reflexión rompe al igual que otros pensamientos críticos, con el positivismo (Harding, 1991)” (Nicolás, 2009:26).

historia y los estudios sobre los sistemas de poder y dominación realizados desde diferentes corrientes de pensamiento crítico (feminismo, posestructuralismo, posmodernismo y poscolonialismo) han demostrado que se trata de una estrategia ideológica de mantenimiento de la hegemonía de los grupos dominantes (Nicolas, 2009) que es necesario seguir cuestionando hasta conseguir romperla.

En segundo lugar, cuando decimos que el debate epistemológico y la emergencia de epistemologías alternativas más que ser un hecho, son una necesidad. Hacemos referencia a lo que señala Boaventura de Sousa Santos cuando afirma que:

“no necesitamos alternativas, *necesitamos un pensamiento alternativo de las alternativas* porque muchas alternativas existen hoy, pero no son reconocidas como tales; son marginadas, son invisibilizadas, son excluidas, son despreciadas y también desperdiciadas” (Santos, 2008. las cursivas son nuestras).

Identificar y tomar conciencia de este vacío epistemológico y las dificultades que supone querer resolverlo, nos obliga a tener en cuenta, por lo menos, dos cuestiones; por un lado tal y como señala Ceceña (2008) el espacio de los saberes es un espacio de luchas, que también forman parte del proceso emancipatorio; por otro lado y siguiendo a Hoetmer, una de las tareas principales de los investigadores comprometidos con la construcción colectiva de conocimiento emancipador, consiste en:

“(re-)evaluar los conceptos analíticos, teorías de cambio y metodologías que usamos para analizar, explicar, criticar y cambiar la sociedad. Es decir, requerimos de análisis, interpretaciones y teorizaciones de los caminos de transformación social presentes en las acciones, conceptos, imaginarios, y propuestas políticas de los movimientos sociales actuales” (Hoetmer, 2009: 13).

Así, diferentes autores/as señalan que es necesario y urgente superar esos vacíos y lastres, que venimos arrastrando desde hace décadas, siendo insuficiente la toma de conciencia de los mismos, y por tanto haciéndose necesarias la puesta en marcha de vías para su superación. Uno de estos lastres se hace todavía más patente cuando nos enfrentamos al desafío de interpretar los movimientos sociales latinoamericanos contemporáneos, ya que como señala Bringel:

“nos volvemos a encontrar con una problemática fundacional mal resuelta: las nociones, las categorías y los conceptos utilizados por la “sociología de los movimientos sociales”, emergente en las décadas de 1960 y 1970, estaban contruidos principalmente a partir de las experiencias europeas y norteamericanas (en particular, las luchas estudiantiles del 1968 o las inflexiones del movimiento obrero en Europa; y las luchas por los derechos civiles en Estados Unidos) y no a partir de las luchas anticoloniales extendidas por África o aquellas de carácter antiimperialista presentes en América Latina [...] Estudios pioneros criticaron de diferente manera, tanto en América Latina (Gohn, 1997) como en África (Mandani y Wmba-dia-Wamba, 1995) el sesgo eurocéntrico -o más bien “occidentocéntrico”- de muchos análisis y la necesidad de buscar un “paradigma propio” -apenas delineado- que se construiría a partir de las experiencias y las especificidades de las luchas sociales de cada lugar y región” (Bringel, 2011:3).

Por tanto, a los esfuerzos y aportaciones realizadas desde la epistemología feminista, tenemos que sumar aportaciones más recientes y con un fuerte carácter Latinoamericano (por razones antes expuestas). Nos referimos a múltiples y diversas iniciativas que están haciendo un gran esfuerzo por reunir y poner en dialogo a voces críticas individuales y colectivas, académicas y extra académicas. Todas estas aportaciones y esfuerzos están unidos entre sí por la asunción de una serie de retos comunes (al menos de forma

implícita), estos retos podríamos resumirlos en; la superación de las dicotomías tradicionales de la ciencia moderna (sujeto-objeto, teoría-práctica, naturaleza-cultura, individuo-colectivo, estructura-acción, etc.); el rechazo a la hegemonía de la epistemología positivista (desde donde la relación entre conocimiento y poder queda totalmente camuflada); y la crítica a los universalismos abstractos.

Una de las iniciativas intelectuales colectivas con mayor impacto y trascendencia en los últimos años es el surgimiento y consolidación del programa “modernidad/colonialidad”⁹ y su perspectiva o Teoría decolonial¹⁰. Entre otras cuestiones y sintetizando demasiado la compleja propuesta que hacen estos autores y autoras, este grupo plantea que las regiones colonizadas, tras el fin del colonialismo han seguido expuestas a tres tipos de colonialidad: la colonialidad del poder (que afecta al ámbito económico y político) colonialidad del ser (que afecta a las subjetividades y sexualidades) y la colonialidad del saber (afectando al ámbito epistemológico, filosófico y científico). Veamos a continuación como lo plantea una de las voces académicas que se suma a estos planteamientos. Boaventura de Sousa Santos afirma que la modernidad capitalista tiene una violencia fundacional, que es su carácter colonial e imperial, cuyo rastro no ha desaparecido:

“el colonialismo político terminó, pero no el colonialismo social y cultural [...] no se puede entender la dominación y la desigualdad sin la idea de que seguimos siendo, en muchos aspectos sociedades coloniales” (Santos, 2009: 58).

Históricamente la producción de conocimiento crítico en Europa podría ser un buen reflejo de lo que está señalando Boaventura en estas líneas, ya que ha sido bastante mono-cultural, es decir, bastante occidental y sujeta por lo tanto a los parámetros teórico conceptuales de la modernidad capitalista. Sin embargo hoy en día necesitamos de una racionalidad más amplia acorde con la realidad intercultural de nuestro tiempo y capaz de entender la complejidad de los fenómenos contemporáneos. Una racionalidad capaz de reconocer la existencia de otras racionalidades construidas a partir de experiencias hasta ahora invisibilizadas y silenciadas; y entrar en dialogo desde una lógica de relación cooperativa y no de dominación, para llegar a construir un tipo de conocimiento que sea emancipador. En palabras de Arturo Escobar, uno de los autores que participa del programa Modernidad/Colonialidad, la principal fuerza orientadora de este programa de investigación es la inclusión y puesta en valor del conocimiento subalternizado de los grupos explotados y oprimidos.

“Si se puede decir que la educación popular, la teoría de la dependencia, la teología de la liberación y la investigación-acción participativa han sido las contribuciones más originales de Latinoamérica al pensamiento crítico en el siglo XX –con todos los condicionales que pueden aplicarse a tal originalidad-, el programa de investigación Modernidad/Colonialidad (M/C) emerge como el heredero de esta tradición. Sin embargo, existen sustantivas diferencias. Como Walter Mignolo ha argumentado, la (M/C) debe ser vista como «un paradigma otro». Antes que un nuevo paradigma «desde Latinoamérica» –como puede ser el caso con la teoría de la dependencia-, el proyecto de M/C no se encuadra en una historia lineal de paradigmas o epistemes; entenderlo así significaría integrarlo en la historia del pensamiento moderno. Al contrario, el programa M/C debe ser entendido como una manera diferente del pensamiento, en contravía de las grandes narrativas modernistas –la cristiandad, el liberalismo y el marxismo-, localizando su propio cuestio-

9 Este programa de pensamiento crítico, está formado por numerosos intelectuales de distintas disciplinas (filosofía, sociología, antropología, semiología, economía) y de muy diversas latitudes (EEUU, Asia, África, América Latina y en menor medida Europa). En este grupo participan autores/as como Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Sousa Santos, Arturo Escobar, Catherine Wals, Ana Esther Ceceña, Enrique Dussel, etc.

10 La perspectiva decolonial (en construcción) es una propuesta epistémica, teórica y metodológica para comprender y superar las relaciones de poder/dominación instauradas por el sistema múltiple de dominación de la modernidad-capitalista. Esta perspectiva es asumida por un número creciente de autores/as como espacio crítico para analizar la realidad contemporánea y el presente de las Ciencias Sociales y Humanas, hoy puestas en jaque. En el libro *Colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales*, compilado por Lander (2000) se puede ampliar información sobre el surgimiento y primeros pasos del programa Modernidad/colonialidad y la perspectiva decolonial.

namiento en los bordes mismos de los sistemas de pensamiento e investigaciones hacia la posibilidad de modos de pensamiento no-eurocéntricos”. (Escobar, A. 2003; 53-54)

Además del programa modernidad/colonialidad, nos parecen especialmente reseñables iniciativas como la del “Consortio de investigación sobre movimientos sociales y transformaciones político culturales del S.XXI” de la Universidad de Massachusetts-Amherst (Umass) o los “Talleres internacionales sobre paradigmas emancipatorios en América Latina”¹¹, en estos talleres participan diferentes organizaciones y redes junto a académicos, investigadores, activistas sociales y políticos, educadores populares y personas interesadas en buscar el Diálogo de Saberes (Ecología de Saberes para Sousa Santos) acerca de los problemas de la emancipación social y humana en América Latina.

En suma, desde estas concepciones epistemológicas se hace evidente que la construcción de conocimiento válido y legítimo no se produce sólo en la academia, y que por tanto, emprender un trabajo de investigación desde estas posiciones requiere; una permanente auto-reflexión sobre los condicionantes socio-culturales propios y sus no deseados sesgos; reconocer el carácter incompleto y limitado de nuestra aproximación para, desde una pre-disposición prudente y responsable, estar receptivos a una mayor pluralidad cognitiva; poner en práctica la apertura y dialogo real con los conocimientos que se generan en ámbitos extra-académicos y extra-científicos (culturas populares, movimientos sociales, cosmologías y filosofías no occidentales, etc.); y por último, explicitar el por qué y el para qué de aquello que se analiza e investiga. De esta forma, nuestras reflexiones, conclusiones y propuestas no serán la verdad de lo que ocurre sino una invitación, entre otras posibles, a mirar e intervenir desde la perspectiva que propongamos.

11 Desde 1995 el Grupo América Latina: Filosofía Social y Axiología (GALFISA) del Instituto de Filosofía de La Habana (Institución académica cubana perteneciente al Ministerio de ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente) convoca cada 2 años estos talleres en los que participan entre otros: Vía Campesina/ Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (CLOC), Marcha Mundial de Mujeres (MMM), Red Latinoamericana Mujeres Transformando la Economía (REMTE), Movimiento Trabajadores Sin Tierra (MST) Brasil, La Otra Campaña/EZLN, México, Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE).

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Social Movements in Post-Political Society: Prefiguration, Deliberation and Consensus

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Abstract

This theoretical paper takes as its starting point the sociology of Alain Touraine, and applies it to study the mobilisations of the ‘indignados’ that have become manifest in square occupations from Madrid to New York. However, where Touraine stressed the task of his sociology to be the study of social movements in an era of the ‘programmed’ society, this paper engages recent literature and research that analyses contemporary society as ‘post-political’. Writers such as Rancière or Žižek make the case that today’s society is defined by a foreclosure of public debate, which would allow for an alternative vision to the neo-liberal order to emerge. The central question of this investigation is then to what extent the new mobilisations challenge the character of the post-political society. The paper is divided into three parts: a) a review of Touraine’s work on the ‘programmed’ society and its application today, b) an analysis of the ‘post-political’ character of society, c) the application of this theoretical framework to the new mobilisations.

Keywords

Alain Touraine, consensus, deliberation, post-politics, prefigurative politics

Introduction

With criticisms of economic globalisation making it less and less to the surface of public debate, and the fundamental questions of social organisation so completely monopolised by the stated necessity for economic growth, it took many people by surprise when signs of a new global conflict emerged that seemed to signal a complete upheaval of current forms of formal democracy and financial governance. Some of these tensions appeared in unlikely places. Suddenly, pro-democracy protests took grip of the Arab World and gradually influenced and inspired new mobilisations in Europe, North America and elsewhere. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, and the economic crisis management that has followed it, it was not the organised labour movements or anti-poverty campaigns that were at the forefront of the new conflicts – though they were certainly present. Rather, the activists self-identified with a global popular class – the 99 percent. This paper then makes the case that these new mobilisations cannot be understood in the traditional terms of class struggle centred around property relationships, nor in terms of political-ideological affinity. Instead they question the very terms on which politics is possible.

I begin this paper with a brief review of Touraine’s earlier work (1971; 1977; 1981; 1988) that analysed social movements in programmed society, and paid special attention to the concept of ‘historicity’. For Touraine, a social movement is a particular moment in the historical trajectory of society understood as collectivity making and remaking itself. Historicity here refers to the ability of social actors to produce the

modus operandi of society. As such, in this paper I argue that we must understand new mobilisations such as the 15-M protests in Spain, or Occupy Wall Street, as products of and challengers to the social conditions in which they emerge. From this perspective we can analyse the movements' positions on questions of, for example, democracy or political economy.

In a second section I look at how writers who have stressed a process of post-politicisation (for example Badiou, 2005; Mouffe, 2005; Rancière, 2007; Žižek, 1999) assert that the political sphere is being closed by a hegemonic dominance of neo-liberal ideas over the realm of public discussion and deliberation. They argue that political economy, rather than being contested or criticised, is increasingly being policed and administered by technocratic arrangements that leave no space for political debate. As such, the existing neo-liberal arrangement becomes immune from critique and posits itself as a consensual agreement, with social change reduced to non-fundamental 'improvements'. Politics is here defined as the struggle of competing and conflicting views and ideas of social and public affairs. Post-politics thus refers to the overcoming and banning of public debate and contest to the benefit of a 'consensual' way of social administration and management. Rather than defined by a clash of ideologies, post-political society closes down the avenues for any challenge to the present socio-economic relations.

A third section applies this theoretical framework of post-politicisation to analyse the new mobilisations. In Touraine's terminology, the central question then would be: to what extent are they a manifestation of society acting upon itself; and therefore to what extent do they form a social movement? We will seek to answer this question with reference to the society in question, namely the post-political condition of our age and so ask: to what extent do the new mobilisations result from and break out of the post-political; or in other words: are they capable of producing a system of knowledge and action that (re)politicises issues of democracy, government and society? The paper analyses what are regarded as common characteristics of the mobilisations around square occupations in Europe and North America: that they are to a certain extent prefigurative, especially through their focus on deliberation in General Assemblies; that they put value on extra-parliamentary consensus decision-making; and that they seek greater transparency and regulation of economic (financial) processes.

The social movement in programmed society

Alain Touraine argued that the practical task of movement research is

... to discover the social movement which in programmed society will occupy the central position held by the workers' movement in industrial society, and the civil liberties movement in the market society by which it was preceded (Touraine, 1981: 24).

The objective of this research paper is to develop a sociological framework regarding newer mobilisations that have occurred globally during the recent period of crisis management in the wake of the 2008 financial crash; a framework which would reaffirm the task set out by Touraine. As such we can identify global student protests in places as diverse as Chile and the UK, new labour struggles in Europe and North America, democracy movements in the Mediterranean and Arab world, the global Occupy Wall Street movement, or anti-corruption protests in Russia. Such movements respond to an increasingly technocratic management of economic crisis and imposition of austerity programmes, which opens up questions about transparency and democracy. They are actors within an increasing process of 'post-politicisation' where

political and deliberative spheres are being closed by a hegemonic dominance of neo-liberal ideas over the realm of public discussion. These new mobilisations bring to light the argument that political economy, rather than being a contested field, is increasingly being policed and administered by technocratic arrangements that leave no space for political debate.

In this regard, there is something distinct about these new mobilisations. They no longer simply fit into the categories of counter-globalisation struggles that we witnessed at the turn of the millennium. These latter were characterised by responses to globalisation processes, market ideology and the flow of finance capital. Movements affirming human rights and global social justice represented the case for a defence of individual and collective identities against the encroaching effects of the neo-liberal market. They were global in their analysis, but often local in their forms of action, seeking to influence particular local adjustments to global economic processes. Today this is no longer what is at stake. While counter-globalisation movements struggled against an ‘enemy’ who advocated the free market and neo-liberalism, the new mobilisations face a situation in which the very project of neo-liberalism is in question. What is at stake now is the very question of the formal democratic consensus. The new movements seek to break this consensus open and respond with a call, or rather a proclamation, of real democracy.

I would argue that the earlier work of French sociologist Alain Touraine is particularly suited to begin an analysis of these new mobilisations. Why? First, Touraine’s emphasis on social movements – and especially on their relationship to society – is an appealing prospect for any attempt at understanding the new mobilisations as both a product of and a challenge to the present economic crisis and its management. Second, Touraine’s focus on social actors and historicity, rather than a systems theory, allows for an investigation that puts social movement agitation at the very centre of analysis, and indeed makes no separation between social and historical change and social movement action. Third, Touraine’s sociology of the programmed society emphasises a number of social characteristics (of production) that can inform the analysis of the current ‘post-political’ social arrangement. Most intriguingly, the engagement with Touraine’s sociology requires an understanding of the social movement as an actor springing from a relationship with, and acting upon, the *modus operandi* of society. When we identify prefiguration, deliberation and consensus as key qualities professed by the new mobilisations, we therefore cannot derive these from the consciousness of their participants, but must explain them in their endogenous relationship to the production of society itself.

As a key author of literature on new social movements, Touraine’s sociology bears witness to a transformation of production methods that calls into question the importance granted to the labour-capital relationship by traditional Marxist analyses. Alongside the work of writers such as Habermas, Gorz, Offe or Melucci, Touraine aimed to identify the new fault lines in post-industrial society. New social movements opened up new terrains of struggle beyond class conflict. The feminisms of the 1960s and 70s, the student revolts, the anti-nuclear and anti-war movements all abandoned the traditional emphasis on economic class interests in favour of a more ‘post-industrial’ and cultural outlook on political struggle. In Habermas’s words for example “the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life” (Habermas, 1987: 392). At the heart of such an approach lies the analysis of a changing pattern of social organisation. Touraine, in particular, considers a shift from an industrial to a programmed, post-industrial society (Touraine, 1971). The repertoires and interests of new social movements corresponded to the emergence of post-Fordist and de-centralised patterns of production and consumption. Melucci, for example, abandons the concept of class relationship as economic reductionist and instead regards the new antagonism as a struggle over information. As such he holds that “[t]he action of movements

reveals that the neutral rationality of means masks interests and forms of power” (Melucci, 1994: 102). For the new social movement theorists, movements oppose the instrumental rationality of administered society and seek to defend an alternative mode of living.

Touraine’s sociology of action is situated between two seemingly opposing sociological perspectives, between structure and agency. His ‘actionalism’, as he terms it, intends to place the social actor at the centre of analysis. Rather than a systems theory of society, Touraine reintroduces the agency of actors into the framework of analysis, rejecting the opposition of objective (system) and subjective (actor). Accordingly, a society’s central mode of organisation, its historicity in Touraine’s words, not only gives rise to a particular form of struggle, but is also understood as a dynamic process of human activity. Touraine is thus concerned with, as are other theorists of the new social movements, identifying the historical subject of systemic change that is capable to formalise revolutionary values in collective action. While in industrial society, struggle was centred on ownership and redistribution of material wealth, Touraine analyses post-industrial or programmed society as shaped by technocratic concerns:

A new kind of society is being born. If we want to define it by its technology, by its ‘production forces’, let’s call it the programmed society. If we choose to name it from the nature of its ruling class, we’ll call it technocratic society. (Touraine, 1971: 27)

In programmed society economic decisions are no longer purely based on accumulation of capital through the direct exploitation of profitable labour. Decision-making is more bureaucratized and rationalised on a societal scale unseen before. It is a result of scientific and technological investment, something that did not define the period of industrial society where investment was focussed on direct profitability. Society is therefore more able to ‘act upon itself’, as communication and knowledge have taken the central role of exchange:

Technocracy does not mean the replacement of political choices by technical choices. Such an idea does not correspond to any society and can only suggest a utopia of little importance. No society can reduce ends to means and function without making choices among objectives or, in other words, without the exercise of power. Technocracy is power exercised in the name of the interests of the politico-economic production and decision-making structures... (Touraine, 1971: 98)

Recent formal responses to the eurozone crisis are telling. The appointments of, for example the former university rector and EU Commissioner Mario Monti both as Prime Minister of Italy and Minister of Economy and Finance, or of ex-European Central Bank employee and Harvard professor Lucas Papademos as Prime Minister of Greece, can be thought of very much as an a-political, technocratic response. Their service is not to a political ideology, it is to the economy, and to economic growth, as a whole.

It is more difficult to define the social movement, the group of people whose interests are vetted against those of the technocratic class. Touraine no longer defines the new class, the new social movement, in terms of the property relation of wage-earners and owners of means of production. Instead, the new “dominated class is ... defined ... by its dependence on the mechanisms of engineered change and hence on the instruments of social and cultural integration” (Touraine, 1971: 54). For Touraine, the new social actors at the forefront of student and workers struggles in 1960s France were not those most removed from the centres of elite decision-making. On the contrary, they were those that stood in a new particular relationship to the social transformations taking place. If the traditional labour movement as a class of wage-earners had stood in a relationship of exploitation with the capitalist class, so the new social movements were populated by those

that related most closely to the new struggles over control of information and knowledge. The predominance of social tension in the universities, the urban centres and in the most advanced industries was a sign of this.

Nonetheless, more than other theorists of new social movements (notably Gorz), Touraine insists on the continuing importance of class struggle for a sociological analysis of social movements. His sociology of action is decidedly still a conflict theory. For him, new forms of production and the centrality of information did not lead to a dispersal of struggles to the point that their common purpose is indiscernible. Rather the social movement is still present in the centrality of conflict. Thus, while the central orthodox Marxist tenet of class antagonism can no longer be maintained, the new central question relates to the continuing possibility of anti-systemic conflict. Touraine remains true to a critical materialist study of movements by focusing his attention on the historical agency of movements – via his conception of historicity. He defines historicity as “the symbolic capacity of social actors to construct a system of knowledge and the technical tools that allow them to intervene in their own functioning, act upon themselves, and thereby produce society” (Touraine, 1977: 6). So social movements are not independent from society in which they act, but stand in a dialectical relationship to it: “Social life is not ordered by natural or historical laws but by the action of those who fight and negotiate in order to endow the cultural orientations they valorize with a firm social form” (Touraine, 1988: 18).

As such the discipline of sociology is tied in to the emergence of a social movement. In Touraine’s words, the “proper object of sociology [is] the formation of collective action through which the consumer will become the producer, a maker of his society and culture” (Touraine, 1971: 26). The re-emergence of politics in antagonism to the post-industrial society that was signalled by May 1968 calls for the reinstatement of a social research programme that questions the present political economy, that investigates power relations, and that seeks answers for a different future, a future that is not predetermined by the current system but that is open to be shaped and re-shaped. The identification of new social movements that can open up new visions and alternative paths of social development in the framework of post-industrial, programmed society emphasises the contest of different political and cultural trajectories.

The social movement in post-political society

The application of this earlier work of Alain Touraine to study contemporary movement must note the economic processes that have moved us beyond a programmed society towards a ‘post-politicisation’ of society. We might want to analyse the post-political condition of the present as more than simply the triumph of neo-liberalism. Of course the collapse of real-existing socialism and the rise of an economic consensus based on market ideology contributed to the foreclosure of actual and practical possibilities to imagine alternative forms of social organisation. What is even more, however, the present crisis of neo-liberalism has done little to change that fact. Despite the awareness of income inequality, corruption, lack of accountability and so on, as well as discontent directed at austerity programmes, it remains hard to think a way out of the current crisis.

The global economic crash has proven the ‘end of history’ thesis wrong. While it found advocates in global institutions, university economics departments and financial sectors, today the project itself is in crisis. And yet, neo-liberalism, despite having lost its all-powerful ideological grip and political advocates, continues to reign – in the words of the Turbulence Collective – ‘zombie-like’:

Neoliberalism is dead but it doesn't seem to realise it. Although the project no longer 'makes sense', its logic keeps stumbling on, like a zombie in a 1970s splatter movie: ugly, persistent and dangerous. ... Such is the 'unlife' of a zombie, a body stripped of its goals, unable to adjust itself to the future, unable to make plans. A zombie can only act habitually, continuing to operate even as it decomposes. Isn't this where we find ourselves today, in the world of zombie-liberalism? The body of neoliberalism staggers on, but without direction or teleology. (Turbulence 2009: 5)

This seems to be the current nature of the post-ideological or post-political society. Despite the apparent crises perpetuated by the dominant economic framework, alternative visions remain largely hidden from public view. Writers like Rancière or Žižek explain this as the foreclosure of what is properly political; whereas the political sphere promotes the ability to fundamentally debate and question the way society is organised, and the way we live collectively. The critics of post-politicisation processes emphasise the importance of antagonism or disagreement between different visions of the social and the economic. But more than that, they charge post-politics with denoting and delimiting the very localities and subjectivities of the political realm.

Political 'consensus', especially over question of economics and ecology makes it impossible to hold fundamental discussions over issues of power relations. Instead of politics, the post-political society is one of administration and management of the existing society and of socioeconomic relations and matters of ecological concern. Rather than ideological debate being the driving force behind social change, it is bureaucrats and technocrats that act as gatekeepers and promote certain interests over others. So the processes of post-politicisation are not to be equated with de- or a-political conditions. On the contrary, they simply describe the complete monopoly over the political by the liberal democratic and neo-liberal consensus.

Moreover, increased populist measures to enhance participation in formal democratic processes are not enough. In fact they often go hand in hand with attempts to keep politics out of policy:

The identification of formal democracy with the liberal economy in fact manifested itself more and more in the so-called democratic regimes. It appeared as the internal exhaustion of democratic debate. The end of the socialist alternative, then, did not signify any renewal of democratic debate. Instead, it signified the reduction of democratic life to the management of the local consequences of global economic necessity. The latter, in fact, was posited as a common condition which imposed the same solutions on both left and right. Consensus around these solutions became the supreme democratic value (Rancière, 2004b: 3-4).

In contrast to the real democracy demanded and enacted by the global occupy activists, liberal democracy has carried with it the spectre of the 'end of politics' since the collapse of real existing socialism. Not that real existing socialism was the only alternative imaginable, but its collapse and the triumphant rise of neo-liberalism as the only thinkable economic logic has had as an effect the foreclosure of political utopia. This does not mean that democracy in itself is not a field where differing positions are possible. Formal democracy is still contested, yet only so far as it needs to be tweaked and perfected – via the inclusion of participatory elements and populist measures such as referenda or citizen consultations.

Consensus, for Rancière, is the negation of politics, and therefore of social change. Politics (the notion he terms *le politique*) instead needs to be understood as antagonism, as disagreement. This disagreement is precisely a necessary outcome of differing values and notions of 'the common'. Politics is nothing other than the playing out of competing visions of what is common to all. In contradistinction to the idea of politics as disagreement stands the consensus promoted and upheld by what Rancière terms the 'police order'.

The police order denotes the ‘proper place’ in which politics takes place. It not only delimits the realm of the political and guards its boundaries, but also fixes the persons proper to this realm who are party to the political. The *indignados* pose a challenge to this police order. They react against the idea that it should be left to experts (economists, elected representatives and so on) to decide on the best representation of the common. The proclamation ‘we are the 99 percent’ represents an ‘axiomatic claim of equality’ by the majority to take part in the political determination of public matters.

The police order defends the very perimeters of the possible and the impossible, a certain “distribution of the sensible” determining “the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience” (Rancière, 2004a: 13). It involves “not so much the disciplining of bodies as a rule governing their appearing, a configuration of occupations and the properties of spaces where these occupations are distributed” (Rancière, 1999: 29). This can at times play out very literally as the policing of protest and public assemblies. In fact, the occupation of spaces, and their transformation into political arenas of their own right, seemed to threaten the police order more than the protests directed at established channels of politics:

Police interventions in public spaces consist primarily not in interpellating demonstrators, but in breaking up demonstrations... It consists, before all else, in recalling the obviousness of what there is, or rather of what there is not, and its slogan is: ‘Move along! There is nothing to see here!’ The police is that which says that here, on this street, there’s nothing to see and so nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space for circulating is nothing but the space of circulation (Rancière, 2010: 37).

It is the very act of reclaiming public space that poses the challenge to this order in the first instance. The occupations of squares, parks, streets and buildings – turned into publically accessible sites of not only protest but debate and participation – in themselves represent the axiomatic claim that public spaces are the loci of political deliberation and action.

The Occupy movement and the protests of the *indignados* did not begin in a predefined political space, or in the attempt to capture an established political realm for its own ideas. It is no coincidence here that it rejected parliamentarianism. In many instances, political parties and established trade unions were not permitted to promote their agendas or organisations in the occupied spaces and squares. Instead politics began with the struggle for space, with the struggle over the realm where one could legitimately speak of an exercise of democratic deliberation. Hence, the slogan ‘this is what democracy looks like’. As such the new mobilisations are centred on questions of “what can be seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time” (Rancière, 2004a: 13).

Prefiguration, deliberation and consensus

Where the fundamental aspect of post-political society relates to a hegemonic closure of deliberative space, a social movement would be precisely the challenge to that paradigm. We posit the hypothesis that the global Occupy movement, and similar new mobilisations, both mimic and challenge post-political society. The movement is characterised at once by a re-politicisation and deliberation of the fundamentals of what Touraine establishes as the programmed society, namely economic growth. On the other hand, the movement remains post-political and decidedly post-ideological. It refuses to define itself in traditional terms as either left or right, it does not exclude on the basis of political ideology, and the slogan ‘we are the

99 percent' very much belongs to a discourse that stresses consensus rather than conflict. Moreover and fundamentally, the self-understanding of many participants paints the movement not as a protest but as a prefigurative enactment of direct democracy.

Prefiguration

The idea of prefiguration is often tied in with anarchist political theory. Rather than a Leninist conception of history, in which revolution is the final outcome of stages of class struggle, prefigurative theory makes the case that the means and ends of struggle should not be separated. Social change, or revolution, here is an act of the present, not a goal to be achieved in the future. In activist politics, prefiguration thus denotes the desire 'to be the change we want to see', or 'to build a new world in the shell of the old'. In his pamphlet *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, David Graeber, who was also a key organiser of the Occupy Wall Street protests, describes the anti-globalisation movement in terms of a prefigurative politics:

When protesters in Seattle chanted 'this is what democracy looks like,' they meant to be taken literally. In the best tradition of direct action, they not only confronted a certain form of power, exposing its mechanisms and attempting literally to stop it in its tracks: they did it in a way which demonstrated why the kind of social relations on which it is based were unnecessary (Graeber, 2004: 84).

Graeber also defines direct action in prefigurative terms:

For those who desire to create a society based on the principle of human freedom, direct action is simply the defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free" (Graeber, 2011)

Prefiguration is thus a performative act. Its utterance or performance is inseparable from what it pronounces. In the context of Tahrir Square or the Puerta del Sol, where thousands of people participate in General Assemblies, enact the 'human microphones' or participate in decision-making by signalling their approval or disapproval using hand signs, the speech act 'this is what democracy looks like' adopts a performative meaning and indeed creates the possibility for 'real democracy' to occur. This does not mean that real democracy exists in the uneven experiments of the squares and parks; rather the participants begin to experience a different kind of democratic structure. Where it is successful, prefigurative politics breaks through the post-political deadlock; the police order that denotes where politics is possible and where impossible becomes subverted.

The occupation of space, of squares and public parks, has acted as a prefigurative element to the Occupy movement. The movement is explicitly not demand based. It does not ask concessions or policy implementations of an already pre-established political order. It acts out these politics itself, without the necessary executive power to act. We might want to quote here, at length, a letter sent from some occupiers of Tahrir Square to those of Wall Street:

So we stand with you not just in your attempts to bring down the old but to experiment with the new. We are not protesting. Who is there to protest to? What could we ask them for that they could grant? We are occupying. We are reclaiming those same spaces of public practice that have been commodified, privatised and locked into the hands of faceless bureaucracy, real estate portfolios and police 'protection'. . . . Why should it seem so natural that they should be withheld from us, policed and disciplined? Reclaiming these spaces and managing them justly and collectively is proof enough of our legitimacy.

What you do in these spaces is neither as grandiose and abstract nor as quotidian as 'real democracy'; the nascent forms of praxis and social engagement being made in the occupations avoid the empty ideals and stale parliamentarianism that the term democracy has come to represent. And so the occupations must continue, because there is no one left to ask for reform. They must continue because we are creating what we can no longer wait for (Comrades from Cairo, 2011).

These protests act as an ontological force, a presence of social actors that act out the changes they want to see. In terms of 'real democracy', the deliberative practices in consensus decision-making that we have seen on the squares, implemented by thousands, are not simply a tool to achieve an aim. It is the very process towards achieving outcomes that is construed as a goal in itself.

Hence, the slogan 'this is what democracy looks like' is inconsistent in itself. On the one hand it is to be taken in a literal sense; while rudimentary in fashion with recognised limitations, the process prefigures the possibility of a 'real democracy' that draws participation from the 99 percent. On the other hand, it is perhaps limiting to think of it in a prefigurative sense. What does it mean when protesters carry placards and banners proclaiming 'we are an image of the future'? They might declare, in a performative sense, the possibility of historical change. And yet, the gatherings and assemblies are just as much an image of the present. Prefiguration here could be charged with employing the language of 'dropping-out', of asceticism, of the creating of spaces that would somehow lie on the outside or beyond the social reality of the present. It might make more sense to treat the global experiments in real democracy as negative expressions of discontent (see for example Noys, 2010; 2011). Rather than on the impossible showcasing of an alternative and future participatory democracy, our emphasis would be on how the new mobilisations expose the contradictions within the presently existing society.

Deliberation

The Occupy Wall Street protests in the United States were publicised by an advert in the anti-consumerist magazine *Adbusters* asking 'what is our one demand'. Much has been made of the fact that the Occupy movement ought to remain free from demands. Rather it is a deliberative process where all citizens can engage in rational debate, especially about those (economic and financial) policies that they are affected by.

Demands have of course resulted from this process of deliberation and discussion. They often relate to greater transparency, redistribution of wealth and regulation of the financial sector. In Spain, the movement of the *indignados* had already phrased their one demand: 'real democracy now'. But this was not to be delivered by political parties or parliaments, but a performative and prefigurative act that was carried out through its utterance by thousands of people in the streets. Here deliberation stood at the forefront of the movement.

We can point here, maybe most usefully, to the social movement theory of Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1981; 1987). Habermas's theory of communicative action considers democratic politics to be a result of the capacity of rational deliberation and interaction. This definition of the democratic, or of the political, follows logically from the human capacity to debate and discuss, to listen and speak. The occupied squares of Madrid or New York, the human microphones, or the General Assemblies, are all manifestations of this deliberative realm; they are expressions of human interaction against instrumental rationality. The construction of such a deliberative and rational space for the 99 percent is not accidental. It is the very means to achieve participation and an objective assessment of diverging arguments, through the objective distinction of fact and value. It is performative in the sense that it assumes that participatory processes would allow for arriving at a consensual agreement that reflects not only the view of the majority but that of the 99 percent.

But this Habermasian focus on communication, deliberation and language is unsatisfactory, as much as it appears to guide the project of General Assemblies and consensus-decision making. As Rancière (2004b) writes, it is always an argument and disagreement over what could constitute a ‘common’ value. The assumption that if open debate will only go on for long enough human interests must converge is symptomatic of a consensual style of post-politics. At the same time of course, the deliberative practices of the new mobilisations do nonetheless present an antagonistic challenge to the formal democratic and economic consensus. Democracy is the participation of those who are not properly constituted as political actors. By attempting to take hold of political debate and redefining the boundaries delimiting the spheres where politics is possible and not possible, the new mobilisations constitute a social movement grappling with the possibility of social change.

Consensus

A related question is that of consensus. Consensus-decision making has been championed by feminists, anarchists, eco-movements and others as a method adapt to the current situation of horizontal movement struggles. The recent mobilisations have popularised the method and its principles.

As a tool for movement participation, consensus decision-making practices have been powerful. However, combined with the slogan ‘we are the 99 percent’, this has presented problems. Consensus is also a key fragment of the post-political era. In Touraine’s terms, consensus would move the question of politics away from the idea of power towards the discussion of the best form of decision-making. The content of these decisions is not central, but rather the way they have been achieved. Critics of post-politicisation processes thus point out the limits of such attempts at participatory decision-making and instead postulate the values of conflict and, in Chantal Mouffe’s terms, ‘agonistic pluralism’ (Mouffe, 2000; 2005). Mouffe reiterates the point that increased participation does not necessarily lead to more direct forms of democracy. The use of new social media that has been heralded by many as a key contributor to the new mobilisations is a case in point. Mouffe charges it with creating voluntarily exclusive arenas in which people are not confronted with views they disagree with. Nonetheless, public space is important for Mouffe, which she understands it as agonistic. The squares and streets of Cairo, for example, became political spaces where new democratic visions were being expressed, clashing (at times all too literally) with the established regime.

The critique of consensus models of democracy thus does not object to the use of deliberative practices that lead to passionate expressions of a movement’s diversity or of opposition to established channels of governance. Rather it warns against a notion of (formal) democracy that sees questions of social, economic or ecological importance not in political terms, but as problems to be solved and administered by means of an instrumental rationalism. Where Occupy activists argue that political ideologies and traditional categories of left and right are to be transgressed, in the name of ‘we the people’ or ‘the 99 percent’, this has the effect of banishing partisan and oppositional politics in favour of a post-political technocratic and populist response to the existing democratic deficit. Assuming that political harmony must result from rational processes of deliberation and seeking consensus sets up the reconciliation and ultimate foreclosure of what is proper to politics.

The argument is also made by Žižek, though it points more to a Leninist conception of politics, when he writes:

...in Greece, the protest movement displays the limits of self-organisation: protesters sustain a space of egalitarian freedom with no central authority to regulate it, a public space where all are allotted the same amount of time to speak and so

on. When the protesters started to debate what to do next, how to move beyond mere protest, the majority consensus was that what was needed was not a new party or a direct attempt to take state power, but a movement whose aim is to exert pressure on political parties. This is clearly not enough to impose a reorganisation of social life. To do that, one needs a strong body able to reach quick decisions and to implement them with all necessary harshness (Zizek, 2011b).

The Occupy movement does not present a political manifesto, a defined and demarcated alternative. Rather it seeks to, in an inversion of post-political domination, to re-open a deliberative space for discussion. The question is whether we should situate this deliberation within the realm of the process of post-politicisation, or within the counter-hegemonic narrative.

A deliberative and prefigurative space such as the encampments on public squares could easily be understood as symbols of the post-political. Rather than offering a challenge to the neo-liberal they create a narrative in which the process and method of discussion receives more emphasis than the eventual outcome. The challenge to the post-political does not lie in the prefigurative enactment of democracy in General Assemblies using consensus-decision making understood as an affirmative process, but in its negative conception as an antagonistic, if contradictory, challenge to technocratic society.

Conclusions

At this stage of the research the conclusions to be drawn from such an analysis are still tentative but they relate to the following two areas of concern regarding the call for 'real democracy':

- 1) Reflecting the post-political condition from which they emerge, the new mobilisations are concerned with administration and regulation of economic processes, rather than their ideological/political assessment. Democracy here becomes synonymous with transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms.
- 2) Processes of deliberation and consensus simultaneously banish and seek to reintroduce political dissent, both silencing and to amplifying disagreement within the movement. Democracy here is not conceptualised as a pluralistic contest between competing ideologies, but as a prefigurative process.

There is much that we can take from Touraine's analysis of programmed society. A social movement is not condemned to the fringes of society; instead we must understand it as society itself acting upon itself. If we understand current dynamics as linked to processes of post-politicisation, i.e. the further move towards technocratic solutions offered to the present crisis of neo-liberalism, we must analyse the new mobilisations as both challengers and products of the post-political condition. What we cannot detect is a new privileged subject, and new underlining fault line such as that sought by Touraine and others. Instead, the Occupy movement and related mobilisations are contradictory in themselves, and at times reflect the post-political dynamics that they have emerged from.

Moreover, while for Touraine technocratic governance gave rise to anti-technocratic opposition movements, this is not quite as unequivocal with regards to the gatherings in, say, Madrid or New York. Can one speak of a social movement if its global nature is hardly apparent, and its internal logic ravaged by contradiction? The divergences between different groups of participants are so profound that it hardly makes sense to speak of even localised movements. Nonetheless, heterogeneity evident in Puerta del Sol or on

Wall Street, or declining numbers at their General Assemblies, do not necessarily signal a decline of the social movement in post-political society. A social movement cannot be reduced to simply a succession of occupations, demonstrations and direct actions. The Occupy Movement as a social movement might not progress in a linear fashion; disruptions, discontinuities are part of it.

The new mobilisations are indeed manifestations of a social movement, i.e. they are social actors attempting to take control of the possibility and impossibility of doing politics and of social change. Its aims, as contradictory as they may seem, must not be understood in terms of consciousness and ideology of its participants. Nonetheless, its actions are political in the sense that they present a challenge to and a possible going-beyond the post-political condition that they have been born out of. It is from the contradictions and inherent conflicts of society that these mobilisations have emerged, and as such they are both delimited by it and a vision of something new. In Rancière's terms, the move from the social to the political is an act of dissensus; it represents the negation of the formal divide between the political and the private. Or in Žižek's words: "Their basic message is: the taboo is broken; we do not live in the best possible world; we are allowed, obliged even, to think about alternatives" (Žižek, 2011a).

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‘Environment... but for other reasons’: Asserting control, sovereignty, and transgression in the Casc Antic of Barcelona

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Abstract

During the past fifteen years, the Casc Antic, a traditionally low-income and immigrant neighborhood in Barcelona, has been the site of community-based organization to revitalize abandoned areas and improve environmental conditions. The mobilization of residents and their supporters is situated within a context of urban political and socio-economic changes, as the transformation of the urban economy towards a decentralized, global, and technology- and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality and displacement. However, in the urban environmental arena in particular, few studies are framed within a broader context of urban change and offer specificity of the purpose, intent, and goals that poor and minority residents frame as they understand, resist, and challenge their marginality. Why do residents of marginalized neighborhoods and their supporters organize to proactively improve livability and environmental quality? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities serve as means to advance more complex political agendas in the city? Through the examination of an emblematic case of neighborhood organization for livability -- the Casc Antic in Barcelona, -- I analyze how activists use their environmental endeavors as tools to address stigmas about their place, control the land and its boundaries, and build a more transgressive form of democracy.

Keywords

urban movements, environmental revitalization, marginalized neighborhoods, land control, borders, deepening democracy

Introduction

During the past fifteen years, the Casc Antic, a traditionally low-income and immigrant neighborhood in the old town of Barcelona, has been the site of much community-based organization to revitalize abandoned and degraded areas and improve local livability. First, residents and their supporters self-constructed parks and playgrounds, managed a community garden, and beautified public spaces, and this despite the opposition of municipal officials. In parallel, from the 2000s on, other neighborhood groups organized to advocate for structural and sanitation improvements to existing housing, create better recreational and

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sports opportunities for at-risk kids, improve options for healthy and affordable food, and improve waste management and recycling practices.

This activism illustrates how, despite the fragile socio-economic conditions of their community and the vulnerable situation of many families, residents of historically marginalized neighborhoods proactively work to improve local living conditions and build broad support around them. Previous research has shown that minorities and low-income populations have historically been victims of greater environmental harm and have received less environmental protection than white and well-off communities. Deprived urban neighborhoods have also tended to get the poorest environmental services, such as street cleaning, open space maintenance, and solid waste management while wealthier and white communities have benefited from environmental privileges –parks, coasts, open lands – often in a racially exclusive way. However, local struggles for improved livability, such as the ones in Barcelona, challenge assumptions that residents in urban distressed communities do not have the power or resources to organize over the long term and are not committed to their neighborhood.

Resident mobilization is situated within a broader context of urban political and socio-economic changes. The integration of cities in the global economy has transformed them into nodes within a network of financial services and corporate headquarters that attempt to efficiently organize the internationalization of production, finance and information. In parallel, the transformation of the urban economy towards a decentralized, global, and technology-, finance-, and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality, gentrification, and displacement. In Europe, new urbanization processes mesh traditional working-class residents in center neighborhoods with professional groups seeking to move to the urban cultural centers and with new immigrants overpopulating deteriorated districts.

Theories of urban development provide a helpful framework for understanding the context of urban socio-economic and political dynamics as well as racial, social, and spatial inequalities within which resident mobilization takes place. Yet, urban processes are not simply a background in struggles for improved local environment and health conditions. Previous research, however, has not examined the relation between urban change, community organizing for long term environmental quality in marginalized neighborhoods, and the deeper rationale behind community organization. Few studies analyzing proactive environmental justice initiatives have been situated within the larger historical context of urbanization and urban change. Furthermore, much of the environmental justice research in cities has examined particular types of pollution without giving enough attention to the every day characteristics of urban landscapes and the more mundane but chronic manifestations of socio-ecological injustice in the urban space.

In this paper, I focus on the following questions: Why do residents of seemingly marginalized neighborhoods proactively organize to improve environmental quality and livability? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities serve as means to advance more complex political agendas in the city? Through the examination of a critical and emblematic case of neighborhood organization for long term environmental revitalization -- the *Casc Antic* in Barcelona, -- I analyze how residents and their supporters use their environmental endeavors to address stigmas about their place, control the land and its boundaries, and build a more transgressive and spontaneous form of democracy. Environmental initiatives are not merely an end per se, but become a tool and a mechanism towards advancing broader political agendas in the city.

Urban development and the rise of local contestation

Processes of urban change

In the 1920s, the Chicago school of sociology undertook early studies of urban neighborhood change. At that time, scholars such as Ernest Burgess advanced a deterministic ecological model of invasion and succession of low-income classes in the city by picturing concentric circles of groups and activities. Later, scholars presented urban change differently, arguing that urban elites, rentiers, and the economic and political coalition formed around them were the motor of unregulated economic growth and private capital accumulation, and this at the detriment of social redistribution, community cohesion, and strong local government. The recent integration of cities in the global economy has transformed them into nodes within a network of financial services and corporate headquarters that attempt to efficiently organize the internationalization of production, finance and information, and attract new residents. In this process, because investments move from place to place in cycles of growth, devalorization, destruction, reinvestment, and mobilization, development ends up being spatially uneven throughout the city.

The city is often seen as the socio-spatial unit where the contradictions of capitalist development are produced and reproduced. Indeed, the transformation of the urban economy towards a decentralized and technology-, finance-, and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality between workers with higher education and technological skills and workers who rely on manual skills. Concurrently, the power of poor workers has been declining, as capitalist accumulation geographically disperses investments away from politicized center locations as a means of labor control, and this in a variety of cities around the world. In the United States, the growth of suburban sprawl has led to decreased job opportunities and neighborhood degradation for inner city poorer and minority residents. In Europe, entrepreneurial cities such as London and Barcelona compete to position themselves favorably but fail to properly regulate capital investment. As a result, in inner city neighborhoods, working-class residents often intermix with professionals eager to live in urban cultural centers and with immigrants moving to degraded districts.

Because the urban space is dynamic and constantly evolving, understanding processes of inequality and exclusion within urban communities calls for examining the spatial implications of such a relation. In fact, the political organization of the urban space is a particularly powerful source of spatial injustice. Spatial injustice is defined as the unequal allocation of socially valued resources (i.e. jobs, political power, social status, income, social services, environmental goods) in space, as well as unequal opportunities to make use of these resources over time. A dialectical dynamic is present at the center of spatial injustices: social and human processes shape spatial patterns, as much as spatial patterns shape social processes (Soja, 2009). Examples range from the redlining of urban investments, purposeful residential segregation, open space planning, among others. Spatial injustices are viewed as constructed on a space that systematically creates oppression, and inequities as the consequence of spatial domination practices.

The rise of multiple forms of contestation

Amidst these processes of development and exclusion, the urban space has long been the object of political struggles, as a constraint at times, or a facilitator of collective action at others. Tensions tend to arise in urban life when two sets of urban actors – place entrepreneurs and community residents – compete against each other. Conflicts are often interpreted as the reflection of the underlying tension between capital

and labor, as the resistance of violent capitalist accumulation, or as the embodiment of struggles over the “production, management, and use of the urban built environment”.

In many cases, the neighborhood is the space and focus of collective action. Here, the intimate bond of community identity among residents is the source of social cohesion, shared interests, and neighborhood collective organization. Residents take action to defend economic and housing development, poverty reduction or social welfare programs. Residents’ sense of community and place attachment together with the identification of environmental threats also prompt residents to fight for the preservation of local environmental quality.

In addition, groups in cities may articulate demands around other spatially-defined identities and dimensions, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Race, as a core and salient factor of urban inequality, manifests itself through multiple experiences, such as mortgage lending practices, territorial apartheid, or environmental inequalities. For instance, environmental justice (EJ) activists claim that racism was at the root of environmental contamination and dumping within historically marginalized communities, and questioned democratic promises of equality for all races and classes. Such conflicts were (and still are) first and foremost seen as political (and not environmental): They are spaces of contestation for groups that usually have no place or name.

More recently, urban movements seem to coalesce around broader and more encompassing claims. For instance, EJ organizations have redefined “environment” in a holistic way as the place where people live, work, learn and play. As a reflection of such an expanded definition, the EJ agenda has come to include the right to clean transit, healthy and affordable food, green and affordable green housing, and to green jobs. In other instances, urban residents demand a revitalized, cosmopolitan, and just city, with both concrete outcomes and open processes of participation, contestation, and democratic planning. Many claims resonate with the idea of the “good city,” a city with a self-organizing and active civil society, resisting within a framework of democratic institutions, and establishing minimal political, economic, social, and ecological conditions necessary for communities to thrive.

Such demands often seem connected to the “right to the city.” This right is earned through taking part in the daily making of the urban fabric by living in the city, as well as by meeting particular responsibilities which entitle people to participate in decisions that control social and spatial relations. In return, the “right to the city” has given rise to new coalitions. In the US, for instance, a coalition called “Right to the City Alliance” is animated by economic and environmental justice demands while, at the same time, fighting pressures of real estate speculation, privatization of community space, gentrification, along with rights to land, and demands for greater democracy.

Last, cities are the space of more subtle and daily forms of contestation. This contestation takes the form of place identity (re)construction and disavowal. Residents within marginalized neighborhoods often contest traditional meanings and stigmas associated with neighborhood degradation and living in substandard housing conditions, and in turn create meaningful and autonomous images of place and community. For instance, the lived experiences of residents in HOPE VI projects in the United States reveal the presence of well-functioning networks, which allows residents to lay down roots and create bonds of mutual support with neighbors. Residents engage in a broad range of activities to create and sustain a new and positive personal identity tied to a place.

These theories of urban development and contestation provide a helpful framework for understanding the broader processes of inequalities and exclusion against which marginalized neighborhoods organize. The recent rise of holistic claims in the city suggests that residents' demands can be encompassing, and do not only reflect class or race inequities. So far, however, theorists of resistance have offered only little specificity on the purpose, strategic mobilization, and goals that poor people frame as they understand, resist, and challenge their marginality. In fact, urban processes are not merely a background in local struggles for improved local environment and health conditions. They impact neighborhood stability and community organization, and influence the mindset, positioning, and visions of residents and their supporters. Yet, few studies on urban environmental inequities and injustice have been framed within a broader context and history of urban change. Most environmental justice studies in cities have focused on different types of pollution without giving enough attention to the every day characteristics of urban landscapes and the more mundane but chronic manifestations of socio-ecological injustice in the urban space. More empirical work is needed to understand the relation between urban change, community organizing for environmental quality in marginalized neighborhoods, and the deeper vision behind their engagement. Such an endeavor is the focus of this article.

Methods

In this paper, I analyze a critical and emblematic case of a minority and low-income neighborhood where residents and their supporters mobilized for improved environmental quality and livability: The Casc Antic of Barcelona. Here, local activists successfully managed to organize and advocate for improved environmental and health conditions through parks and playgrounds, sports courts and centers, community gardens, healthy food providers, waste management, and healthy housing. The Casc Antic has traditionally welcomed waves of national and international migrants, and today 31% percent of population is made of foreigners from Northern Africa, Latin America, or Pakistan, many of them illegal immigrants. In the areas of Sant Pere and Santa Catalina, the majority of residents live in conditions over poverty, without stable employment, and during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s witnessed the degradation of their neighborhood.

My data collection consisted in two months of fieldwork, and primarily semi-structured interviews with 45 participants. Interviews were conducted with leaders of neighborhood organizations, NGOs working on improving environmental conditions, and a sample of active residents and community leaders. My questions were meant to help me understand (1) the process and context that initially led activists to mobilize for their neighborhood, (2) how they view the space and place they defend, and (3) what are the broader meanings of their engagement. I also identified the types of relations activists developed with planners and officials, the historic role that residential segregation and urban planning played in environmental quality, and how these historical conditions influenced neighborhood organization.

In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with officials and professionals from municipal offices to understand the nature of the broader political environment in which activists organized action, and which official plans and vision activists have responded to. I also examined to what extent officials and professionals attempted to consider activists' demands in the planning of local (re)development projects, and to what extent they eventually listened to the residents and organizations' demands. I used snowball sampling to select appropriate interviewees and I recorded interviewees upon their permission.

In parallel, I observed numerous meetings and events, and engaged in participant observation of projects focused on environmental and health improvements, in order to better understand the goals and visions of residents and their supporters, the development of their engagement, as well as the hurdles they encounter. I also went to organized events and meetings to celebrate the Casc Antic, organize a new environmental activity, or defend the neighborhood against a specific threat. In terms of participant observation, I volunteered at a local community center and urban garden a few times a week. Last, I collected data from a variety of secondary sources to identify official, media and other publicly influential perspectives on the city and neighborhood. Finally, I collected publications, reports, and records produced by organizations working on environmental and health issues and urban revitalization in the neighborhood.

I analyzed interviews, observations, participant observation, and secondary documents using grounded theory and the software Nvivo. This analysis consisted in two layers of line-by-line and paragraph coding. In a second stage of focused and axial coding, I used the most significant and frequent codes to synthesize, integrate, and organize the data into theoretical concepts. Through this grounded theory, I was able to build stories of activists and to understand their engagement in the neighborhood as well as their and goals for its revitalization. In parallel, I used process tracing techniques to explain decision processes which led from initial conditions of marginalization and degradation to positive outcomes for the activists. I analyzed how community engagement built upon residents' and organizations' collective identity, broader urban dynamics, social and political contexts, and their sense of marginalization and power in the city. Last, I developed historical and analytic narratives to contextualize the process of neighborhood mobilization and understand the role of the local history of marginalization and urban development projects in motivating the initiatives of activists for greater livability.

A convoluted process of socio-environmental revitalization in the Casc Antic

At the beginning of the 1980s, the legacy of Franco's dictatorship in the Casc Antic consisted of crumbling housing units, poor waste management, abandoned and unsafe public spaces, and upper class flight. In 1983 (and throughout the 1990s), the newly democratic Municipality of Barcelona developed Special Plans for Internal Reforms (PERIs) for degraded areas of the Old Town and reinvested large public resources, improving infrastructures and public spaces while promoting tourism and decreasing crime. During the revitalization, the municipality made changes to zoning and building norms in order to maximize the use of space. However, this revitalization was accompanied by practices such as mobbing – tenant harassment, which boiled down to forcing them to leave without claiming expropriation rights. Mobbing also consisted in the active or passive degradation of buildings and apartments and the participation in the active deterioration of the neighborhood. During the process of urban revitalization in the Casc Antic, 2,000 residents were displaced and 1,078 buildings destroyed. At the same time, private developers started buying old empty buildings, restored them, and sold them for much higher prices. As a result, today, in some streets of the Born part of the Casc Antic, the selling price of a home is twenty times the mean annual per capita income.

Despite substantial reinvestment in the neighborhood, at the end of the 1990s the state of most remaining buildings in the Casc Antic was in less than adequate state: Many were not structurally safe and required extensive repair and maintenance – only 58% of the buildings were considered in adequate state of conservation in 2001 against 80% in the other neighborhoods. From a sanitation and public health standpoint,

residents still lacked core infrastructure and many buildings were still receiving water through rooftop water deposits. Many water deposits leaked, creating structural damage to buildings and inadequate sanitation conditions. Waste collection and management was substandard. In addition, the destruction of entire blocks of old buildings produced landscapes that reminded visitors of the landscapes of Barcelona during the Civil War (1936-1939). In the place of buildings, visitors, residents, or contractors dumped waste and rubbish. In comparison with other neighborhoods, Casc Antic also suffered from extensive delay in the creation of green areas. Kids were playing in busy streets or small plazas or in the middle of crumbling buildings or streets with trash and rubbish, having only few opportunities to practice sports or physical activity. As a result of those social and urban dynamics, the health outcomes of Casc Antic residents were inferior in comparison to those of other neighborhoods.

Despite these adverse circumstances, local activists took the lead to improve the environmental quality in Sant Pere and Santa Catalina, two core areas of the Casc Antic. Back in 1975, the transition to democracy initiated in Spain had opened up the way for civic associations to propose plans for additional urban equipment in the Old Town, especially as former members of the Casc Antic Neighborhood Association took key positions in the municipality as urban managers and planners. Yet, this period of intense debate and urban transformations also produced disenchantment among the civil society. For instance, in the Casc Antic, PROCIVESA – the public-private company in charge of the old town remodeling – expropriated residents, and, in 1999, proceeded to demolish several buildings with the plan to build a new car parking and high-end apartments. For almost two years, the empty space remained abandoned until neighbors decided in December 2000 to rebuild the huge space – 6,500 m², -- which they had baptized “Forat de la Vergonya”, the Hole of Shame in Catalan. Residents, supported by squatters, students, social architects, intellectuals, and members of neighbors’ organizations from Barcelona, occupied the space and transformed it into a community garden, a green space, and a large plaza with playgrounds, soccer and basketball fields, – and with their own resources.

Over time, the Forat evolved as a self-managed area with social activities, cultural events, or community cleanups, and this despite the long fight that ensued – at times violent – between residents, local officials, and the police. At the end of 2003, Carlos Marti, the Old Town Manager, announced that the plan to build a parking would be cancelled and that the proposals of the neighbors respected by the municipality. That said, the reconstruction of the Forat into a permanent green space was not exempt of controversies, with much police repression, residents’ criticism of the municipality’s community engagement practices, and multiple protests in the neighborhood and beyond. In the end, however, the Forat reconstruction in 2006-2007 took into consideration most of the wishes of the residents and their supporters. The municipality built an area – renamed Pou de la Figuera – with trees, benches and fountains, kids’ playgrounds, a soccer and basketball field, and a space for community gardens. In addition, residents obtained the construction of two community centers, which are today places for cultural initiatives, physical and dance activity, and social events.

New environmental initiatives have emerged from the Pou de la Figuera. Residents have created a new self-managed and self-constructed community garden called l’Hortet del Forat. Volunteers organize educational workshops for kids and youth around environmental sustainability to encourage positive environmental behavior and prepare social events around the harvest from the garden based on the ethnic origins of the residents. The development of the garden is closely coupled with the work of local environmental groups fighting for sustainable food production and working for local immigrant populations. For instance, Mescladis offers cooking lessons to educate participants on multiculturalism, trains and integrates newly arrived

immigrants and jobless workers through cooking and catering training, and creates healthy eating habits.

The reconstruction of the Forat was made possible by a new Catalan law – Lei de Barris 2/2004 – which is considered a logical outcome of years community demands. The Lei de Barris has resulted in environmental improvements in the Casc Antic from 2005 until today for 2.04 million Euros of investment in public space and green area, 1.5 million Euros in building rehabilitation and sanitation, 9.6 million in collective equipment, and 460,000 Euros in improved waste management. In addition, the City has built small green spaces throughout Sant Pere and Santa Catarina, which was an investment that the environment NGO GENAB had lobbied for. Those spaces have improved public space quality by eliminating focal points of waste accumulation. The Allada Vermell plaza, an old public space in the neighborhood, was also rebuilt after resident complaints to the City, with much improvement to safety and to playground structures. The municipality also built in 2005 a pneumatic waste system. In addition, environmental organizations and the Neighbors' Association successfully advocated for the creation of a recycling center – Punt Verd – and worked to improve residents' recycling practices.

After years of demands for improvement in sports, recreational spaces, and physical activity, local organizations received positive responses from the municipality. The Associació de Veïns del Casc Antic and other community groups formed around sports (i.e., AECCA) had lobbied the municipality for a multi-purpose sports facility, which the city finally constructed and inaugurated in 2010. The Centro de Esportiu Municipal is a new state-of-the-art 4,300 m² sports facility. In parallel, groups of neighbors and community organizations such as AECCA, Fundació Adsis, and Fundació Comtal have developed sports leagues and activities for at-risk youth groups on different sports grounds throughout the Casc Antic.

In sum, residents and a broad variety of supporters and networks around them have framed and defended a neighborhood-based vision for environmental and health improvements in the Casc Antic. However, the engagement of community activists in environmental revitalization projects often reflects more complex and multi-level political goals, which the next session analyzes in greater depth.

The construction of complex and multi-level political agendas: Community power, land and border control, and deepening democracy

Combating outside threats while enhancing commitment to the neighborhood

The narratives of community activists in the Casc Antic reveal that their involvement in environmental revitalization work or advocacy is a segue to contesting urban policies in Barcelona and expressing a rejection of seeing their neighborhood and, more generally, the whole city, transformed into a “thematic park” for tourists and upper class residents. In that regard, the fights and reconstruction of the Forat into a green area was a way for activists to express their disapproval of urban projects, encroachment, and tourism expansion in the Casc Antic, as long-time resident and activist Paco explains:

“All the storefronts, as you can see, they are all closed. And if we had allowed them to do this [a parking in the Forat], it would then be a park for snobbish people. The neighborhood got lost once already and we did not want it to become lost again, and we believe that with a green area, and with life there, then the neighborhood could resist this.”

The green area was thus a symbol of rejection against speculative private investment, as expressed by the 2002 Manifest for a Green Old Town and Without Urban Speculation: “We believe that a popular initiative to defend a green area from the threat of speculative projects and to humanize an urban space devastated by massive and indiscriminatory destructions deserves respect from the public institutions.” Activists resisted a type of urbanism that ignored residents’ daily problems, such as access to affordable and healthy housing or environmental quality.

The engagement of residents is often inscribed into a broader framework of Right to the City, which connects groups working on different thematics in a mutually synergetic way. This framework is very explicit in the minds of workers in Casc Antic, such as social architects or social workers, who supported the neighborhood fights in the Forat through protests or technical assessment work. They saw their engagement as a way to make the city more livable for its residents, for the people who use it, as expressed by Lawyer Eduardo Moreno:

“The right to the city is that the citizen gets respected as a city and the city is done for the citizen, and not the citizen for the city. The city does not only belong to those who own land and do speculation, which are often gangsters. [...] So when the city wants to gain power to exploit it as an object of exploitation, then the city rebels, and says “listen” and they want to build green areas.”

Activists consider that re-conquering their right to the city means to develop projects that stem from residents’ decisions, as daily users of the space and to erase the presence of the municipality and of capitalist interests. Environmental work in the Casc Antic is a platform and a tool to help residents regain a right to their neighborhood.

While activists view environmental and health endeavors as tools to fight broad urban changes impacting their neighborhood, they also work to increase the commitment of residents and outside forces to their neighborhood and to create a movement for continuous socio-environmental change. For instance, the environmental NGO GENAB negotiated with the municipality the clean up and greening of small neighborhood plazas. In their mind, such improvement was meant to improve residents’ level of comfort, increase the value that they assign to their neighborhood, enhance their self-esteem, but also create impetus for greater resident engagement and participation. As much as activists worked to increase internal neighborhood support and participation in their initiatives, they also sought and found the help of external actors, such as lawyers, artists, social architects, university professors, movie directors, or squatters. For instance, community leaders invited organizations such as Architects without Borders to organize design *charrettes* for the permanent reconstruction of the Forat and help facilitate the meetings. This technical involvement eventually allowed community projects to move forward. Activists thus had to manage a tricky balance between the rejection of outsiders as threats and the call for a broad support. On the one hand, they vowed to preserve the neighborhood for its residents and create a stronger sense of place for them, but, on the other hand, had to gather a variety of outside supporters around them.

Fighting stigmas and creating rootedness

The Casc Antic was long imbued with negative images concerning its residents, their socio-economic conditions, and a state of degradation. Municipal reports or press releases often emphasized its dramatic state of disrepair, social bads, and unwelcoming atmosphere. By engaging in environmental and health

projects, activists worked to address such negative stereotypes. They “tried for it to be a plaza, not a ghetto”, explains an old activist, as he describes the broader meaning of the neighborhood fights in the Forat. Over time, as community-based revitalization projects physically transformed the neighborhood and became landmarks, they slowly contributed to changing its connotation. Local struggles took place to challenge the imaginary of public officials and planners who determine what developments need to be prioritized in the neighborhood and what place it must have in the city. As activists beautified the neighborhood with community gardens and playgrounds and created new recreational opportunities for kids, they attempted to increase the legitimacy of the neighborhood and of a community-based vision for revitalization.

Beyond changing the image of the Casc Antic, activists and their supporters emphasize that residents mattered and that they had to be treated with dignity and have their voice and vision – for a livable neighborhood with green and recreational spaces and affordable healthy housing – heard by public officials. They connect their involvement in the Forat and their demands for improved environmental conditions to fights against municipal abuse and against the misuse of EU funds geared towards urban rehabilitation projects. Residents fought against being considered second-tier citizens in their own neighborhood, witnessing powerlessly its destruction and abandonment, and bearing with daily substandard conditions of filth, noise, and crumbling. Other groups such as the GENAB environmental NGO emphasize how they connected their recycling workshops and projects to improving social coexistence and cohesion among neighbors and enhancing positive feelings towards themselves and the place.

As part of this resistance against neighborhood degradation, community leaders and workers helped older and vulnerable foreign residents resist expropriations and eviction and assert claims for the renovation of their degraded apartment unit. José, one of the coordinator of the community garden in the Casc Antic and an early participant in the Forat fights, explains how public space maintenance work in the Forat was the occasion to invite vulnerable residents and better understand their needs:

“[We organized assemblies] in the neighborhood to make sure we understood what was happening through the words of the people and to see in which ways we could confront the situations so that they did not see themselves defenseless, no? Solidarity.”

Activists considered they had a moral duty to speak for the underdogs who did not know how to challenge the system in Barcelona. Community workers and active residents also advocated for being provided with high environmental standards and receiving quality amenities, as shown by one of the manifestos from community organizations fighting for a new sports center in the neighborhood: The new gym had to have “all the necessary provisions”, and was not meant to be “a subterranean third-category sports center,” without proper ventilation and natural lighting.

Addressing issues of exclusion and vulnerability cannot be separated from claims for spatial equity in regards to environmental privileges. Activists emphasize the importance of balancing access to environmental goods across Barcelona and ensuring the availability of resources in their own neighborhood. For instance, Manolo, a garden volunteer, emphasizes the right of kids to have access to recreational areas in the Casc Antic:

“We were pushing for a park. A park is for kids to play and for a garden. I think this better than a parking. [...] Where would be kids’ recreation then? They have to go to another neighborhood? This is their neighborhood.”

In their accounts, activists often compare their neighborhoods with areas benefiting from superior and privileged environmental services and conditions – as reference points. They consider that residents are entitled to high environmental quality and to staying in their neighborhood to be able to enjoy these environmental goods. As such, the discourses of activists reflect broader demands for spatial justice, for the re-valuation of their neighborhood on the map, and for creating a sense of place, rootedness, and security for residents.

Controlling the land and managing borders

Community leaders and organizations in the Casc Antic realized early on the importance of controlling the land and its uses. Environmental revitalization projects are thus anchored more deeply in a need to re-conquer the land of the community in the urban space. As the neighborhood is affected by risks of encroachment and fragmentation, residents and their supporters worked to gain greater control over the land and transform it from an underutilized and mal-utilized space to an environmental friendly area and a true asset. An important component of land control is ensuring that policy-makers recognize the legitimacy of uses and the tenure of the land to the community. Community groups and organizations are very aware of the importance of ensuring a long term lease or zoning for playgrounds, park, community garden, or sports grounds so that residents can build a sense of control and stability.

Control over the land and territory does not stop at barren land and open space. It also includes the creation of enclosed spaces for physical activity, youth recreation, socio-cultural events, and community nurturing more generally, around which residents can grow a sense of ownership and responsibility for their neighborhood and city. For instance, the sports association AECCA successfully negotiated spaces for youth training at the new Centro Esportiu gym and at local schools, despite the resistance of the local administration to open up the schools in fear of losing control over the activities developed there. They use these spaces both for physical training as well as community building activities and multicultural exchange. In the long term, the words of activists reveal their attempt to go one step further and assert their own sovereignty and control over the neighborhood.

To achieve territorial control, neighborhood sovereignty, and at times, superiority over outside groups, residents' have built clear borders with outsiders in a process of differentiation of "us" versus "them". Three types of borders determine relations between dominated people and a dominant culture : Physical borders that define tangible territories; social and symbolic borders that define memberships; and cultural borders that separate worlds of meaning among people. Symbolic boundaries are "conceptual distinctions to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space" whereas "social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources and social opportunities." , p.168. Boundaries are permeable, salient, durable, and visible, and they can be crossed, dissolved, activated, maintained, or transposed.

In the Casc Antic, the construction of physical boundaries has been particularly important for residents to gain control over their territory, as they help maintain undesirable people outside and make territorial limits visible and salient. Some of the environmental projects in the neighborhood are borders and buffers meant to send a signal to outsiders that their presence is not welcomed. This is the case in the Forat de la Vergonya and the Allada Vermell green spaces, which constitute physical markers between "us" the residents and "they" – the gentrifiers or the tourists. They are concrete tools to counter the privatization of public spaces by restaurants and outdoor terraces affecting the nature of the space – making it a consump-

tion and entertainment space. In fact, the neighbors' refusal to build what they call a "plaza dura" in the Forat – a hard concrete plaza – and decision to use sand and grass is based to the connection they make between such a surface and the ensuing opportunity for bars or restaurants to take over kids' playing areas or community gardens with tables and chairs, as Eva, a social architect emphasizes:

"If in the Forat, you let them lay down four bricks, then it will be a terrace as well. It is then a space that you deprive people of. What we really wanted was a green space, because if you give concessions and you cede, there ends up being terraces.

Furthermore, according to residents, a green area without a hard surface encourages residents' spontaneous activities and use of space. Over the years, community workers have developed activities in the new public spaces to help youth re-appropriate their territory and re-construct a personal use for it. In the community garden fences and gates also create visible limits of the spaces in which outsiders do not have the right to enter without permission. It is a space to be protected, away from outside threats, from violence, drug trafficking, and dumping.

Community activists in the Casc Antic have also set up social and symbolic boundaries as a way to define group membership and socially acceptable behavior. The initial planting of a Christmas tree in the Forat in December 2000 was a symbolic border against the municipality and its contractors who were destroying buildings and abandoning spaces. Older residents explain how the tree was a "shield" symbolizing the neighborhood presence in the space and constituted the basis for the further spontaneous construction of the space by the residents, in opposition with the City-sponsored projects. Two broader groups are present in the neighborhood: On the one hand stand the supporters of the neighborhood fights – older and traditional residents, immigrants, social architects, alternative youth and squatters, and lefty intellectuals – and, on the other hand, stand the yuppies and tourists. Residents draw a clear distinction between the Born part of the neighborhood, which they consider as a fashionable area full of newcomers (the "guiris"), and the areas of Sant Pere and Santa Catarina. In the Born, residents feel that they do not have a place anymore.

Last, residents have developed cultural borders as a way to reinforce physical separation. Activists regularly organize cultural and festive events during the year to celebrate the cultural diversity of the neighborhood, organize sports competitions, and share the garden harvests with residents. Such events draw a clear difference between activists as owners of the space and outsiders who do not fit well with the mentality and habits of residents in the neighborhood. Long time residents also have set up a mental divide between who belongs to the neighborhood and who does not, based on the type of clothing or attitude people display. Often times, the alternative clothing or haircuts worn by squatters or hippies is a clear indication of neighborhood acceptance while hip and fancy clothes is a sign that you do not belong there and you are not always welcomed to the local celebrations in the green spaces, garden, or community gardens.

Re-building democracy and planning practice

Last, environmental revitalization projects are the occasion for residents and their supporters to question broader political arrangements in the city. First, community activists strongly believe they have a right and responsibility to engage in a more spontaneous and even anarchical form of participation in Barcelona. They are proud of self-construction of a green area in the Forat, which took root in popular support without a formal organizational structure, as an organizer emphasizes:

“We never wanted more than spontaneous neighbors. Through the simple design of signs in the middle of the Plaza, participants would just write their names down and explain what task they would be doing on a particular day: planting seeds, maintaining and cleaning up the garden, etc.”

The green plaza was a demonstration site of unplanned and independent while well-functioning participation. Here, residents put much emphasis on a “real participation,” the non hierarchical intervention of a multitude of people on a space, with few resources and much creativity in order to promote environmentally-related activities.

In some cases, active community leaders and workers articulate visions for democratic practices that reach the point of “self-management” (*auto-gestion*, in Spanish). They vowed to appropriate the space for themselves as well as decisions over it and to resist new forms of control from the municipality. For instance, some community workers working with youth articulated demands for autonomous organization and management of sports areas, such as the “campillo,” an open basketball ground which the municipality took down in 2009. More recently, the Pou de la Figuera, the new community center, has become a space functioning under the principle of “self-management” to reflect community demands. The municipality has no control over the use of the center. People just ask for the key and organize different activities in it. Such a space is a learning process for residents in how to take responsibility in the daily functioning of the new neighborhood site.

Often times, the fights for a more direct and transgressive form of participation reflect activists’ anger over the lack of meaningful engagement by the City of Barcelona throughout the redevelopment in the Casc Antic. Activists manifest disappointment at a municipality not taking their experience and lay knowledge about the neighborhood into consideration. A municipal staff member is very adamant about the imposition of ideas on residents:

“For the theme of the public space there was a very directing attitude by the municipality, that is to say we were the ones who would offer what would be done and it was then done. At most, we would explain things to the neighbors. There was no bottom-up decision-process, no debate, nor a consultation with affected people.”

Some community supporters are harsher, naming the practices of the municipality a “fantasmatic and fictitious type of participation led by people who are bought out.” They feel that planners imposed the urban plans (PERIS) upon them in the 1980s. During the construction of the Forat into a permanent green area in 2007, the municipality is also accused of having absorbed the strength of the citizens’ movement while “recycling the neighborhood actions into what they attempt to sponsor as their own project” (Rafael, Youth educator and supporter of the Forat fights 2009) and of having manipulated the practice of dialogue process.

As community leaders and active residents organize to deepen and strengthen existing local democratic processes in the city, their claims also reflect, at times, broader nation-building and sovereignty demands. This is particularly true for the older activists, such as Maria from the Asociació de Veïns del Casc Antic, who became engaged in the neighborhood in the 1970s and had to remain clandestine under the Franco dictatorship. Activists believe that they were “robbed” of a transition to democracy when Franco died. For them, the monarchy of Juan Carlos was imposed on the Spanish people who did not have a say on what type of new nation and regime they were eager to build. As a result, those activists have taken their national demands at the local scale and hope to build a new type of local democracy that would reflect their national ideals in relation to more direct and transgressive participation and sovereignty.

While individuals and groups vow to assert deeper political claims, several organizations have also become involved in the Casc Antic as a reflection of a long-term political engagement in territorial struggles. For members from Architects without Borders, supporting residents reflected many years of community involvement and political engagement in radical action, and struggles against expansionistic urbanism and a neighborhood transformed into a garbage dump. Their staff feel the thrill and adrenaline of being part of political actions in a city where social movements have always have a strong role and part of a mobilization encompassing a wide variety of people.

In other words, the stories of activists often reveal that their life has become their community work and that they them can not live outside the idea of conflict. The style and words they use to describe their engagement in the neighborhood reveal that they feel part of a social and political trajectory. People take pride in telling lengthy stories of their fights and their victories in the Forat despite the injuries they received. At times, activists seem in a situation of self-representation and *mise-en scène* of themselves and their engagement, which seem to become at times more salient than the meaning of the engagement itself.

Discussion

Theories of urban development and urban struggles provide valuable guidance for understanding the broader processes of injustice and exclusion against which marginalized neighborhoods organize. They help situate the fights of residents, neighborhood leaders, and community workers for improved socio-environmental conditions in Barcelona within a broader context of urban change. Further, as activists holistically transform their neighborhood through environmental projects, they use their environmental work as a tool to accomplish broader political goals. Community gardens, playgrounds, or green spaces are a mechanism to resist the disruption and degradation of their neighborhood as well as the violence of private accumulation, as illustrated by activists' critique of broader urban developments such as encroachment, gentrification, and tourism. However, the fights of residents and their supporters are based on broader and more complex multi-level political claims.

First, the fights of residents and their supporters shed a new light on the notion of Right to the City. As activists develop a new green area or a sports ground and work to address situations of precariousness, abuse, and vulnerability, they attempt to challenge the imaginary of public officials, planners, and media about their neighborhood and the "place" it must have in the city. They fight existing stigmas and stereotypes about low-income and minority residents in the Casc Antic and they work to create a greater sense of protection and rootedness. The framework of a Right to the City is also a Right to their Neighborhood with attempts to rebuild a sense of dignity, security, and nurturing to the residents. Struggles are also linked to notions of spatial equity, as activists are mobilized to address spatial inequalities in the provision of environmental goods in the city. Here, space is a constitutive element of collective action and not merely in the background. A neighborhood such as the Casc Antic is thus an iterative site of mobilization and an emblematic space of contention for the struggle of poor communities against spatial inequalities.

Second, community mobilization is closely related to land, border control, and sovereignty. The resistance to outside forces does not go, in the mind of community activists, without controlling the land and territory of the neighborhood, gaining sovereignty over it, and setting up clear physical, social, symbolic, and cultural borders with outsiders and dominant forces – private developers, city officials, police, or

gentrifiers. Socio-environmental projects are physical, social, and symbolic borders. Residents express a strong connection to the land and to the uses they have developed over time through parks, recreational areas, community garden, or sports grounds. They aim to re-conquer a damaged land and ensure that their new spaces do not get taken away from them and transformed into private developments. Boundaries are present internally within the neighborhood as some spaces delimit membership and what types of groups are welcome in the new spaces. Here, a park or a community garden, the activities organized around them, and the social codes developed in the space serve as buffer against outsiders.

While the claims of activists in the Casc Antic reflect a desire to achieve greater protection, they are also not exempt of desires to self-segregate. As a community workers and leaders attempt to control the land and its borders, they construct a self-sustained and contained community with its selected members. They re-privatize public spaces, appropriate the territory and make it, to a certain extent, exclusive. Living in a homogeneous minority neighborhood has been shown to reflect both a desire to protect oneself against threats to the social fabric, which can cause feelings of loss and alienation, and a self-declared preference to live among residents from the same ethnic or cultural group. Homogenous spaces provide a space for identity formation and confirmation, strengthen a shared racial identity while having a cathartic soothing effect away from the pressures of inter-ethnic relations. In Barcelona, homogenous spaces strengthen more than a racial identity, but also a socio-economic and political identity. They bring together low-income Spanish residents with immigrant populations, squatters, and intellectuals who fight together for a right to their neighborhood. However, activists are managing two delicate balances: A desire to be socially just, on the one hand, and a tendency to reprivatize the space and be exclusionary, on the other. They also walk a fine line between asserting control over the developments of the neighborhood but also rallying outside forces to help them maintain this control.

Last, and more generally, environmental initiatives serve as a means to build a different type of local democracy and planning practice in the neighborhood, and in Barcelona more generally. Building the type of neighborhood that neighborhood activists envision can not occur without a deeper questioning towards 'who makes decisions, 'for whom', and 'with which benefits.' As residents and their supporters construct autonomous and spontaneous of management of the urban space, they transgress existing norms of planning and participation in the city as well as political arrangements. Environmental projects thus become a tool to create new forms, at times anarchical, of participation and decision-making. Residents are offering through their environmental endeavors a space for debate which did not use to exist in the city. They aim at promoting a more direct form of democracy rather than a deliberative democracy, which does not lead, according to them, to the meaningful participation of community members and which reflects power imbalances. Their goal is thus to transgress and deepen existing democratic practices in the city, and at times in the country as a whole, reflecting nation-building claims.

Conclusion

In the Casc Antic of Barcelona, community activists are using their social-environmental projects and advocacy as tools to fight against broader development processes that affect the stability and homogeneity of their neighborhood. That said, their ultimate goal goes beyond resisting urban dynamics such as gentrification and encroaching. They aim at changing images and stigmas about their neighborhood since their neighborhood is imbued with negative images and racist stereotypes. More importantly, they aim at

taking control over their land and have established clear borders with outsiders in a process of differentiation of “us” versus “them.” Their environmental initiatives have helped construct and maintain physical, social, and cultural, and symbolic borders with a dominant society. Environmental endeavors become a mechanism for land and border control as well as for sovereignty claims, which at times become exclusionary. The question remains open of how urban movements can protect vulnerable residents while not seeming exclusionary and reproducing the patterns of exclusion they are combatting. Here, urban planners and decision-makers are confronted with balancing demands for self-retrieval and protection and creating greater diversity and mixity in the city.

At a broader scale, *Casc Antic* residents and their supporters frame political goals in regards to democratic processes. Their demands are more transgressive and daring than traditionally presented by the “just city” theorists: Activists ask for self-management of land and projects as well as more spontaneous forms of participation and dialogue – not just a reframed deliberative democracy. However, residents also often see themselves as part of a political trajectory and are in self-representation mode. Many activists cannot live outside political engagement protests and outside conflicts. Their life has become the political organization of and around their neighborhood, which might, at times, lead to greater inner-community conflicts and instability – between more radical activists and activists more willing to negotiate with the municipality and planners. Neighborhood cohesiveness and organization as well as the effectiveness of collective mobilization are thus at stake.

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MEDIA AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

What really matters in creating mass mobilization, classical organization or new social media?

A comparative case study of the mass mobilization process in France and South Korea

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Abstract

This paper explores why people adopt different processes to create (or participate in) mass mobilizations, using the 2006 anti-CPE ('Contract Premier Embauche', or first working contract) movement in France and the 2008 Candlelight movement (mass mobilization against American beef imports) in South Korea as cases. In France, initiators and participants followed the 'ready-made' way: Left-wing organizations and persons more or less led the whole process of mass mobilizations. By comparison in South Korea, initiators came from 'nowhere': They were middle school and high school students without any political affiliation or organization; among the participants were ordinary adults 'tainted' by the left wing political line, civil society organization members, and 'interested' politicians. This paper examines factors that account for this difference?

The key finding of this study shows that the levels of demarcation of political lines in people's everyday life, such as syndicalism, explain this difference. Strong establishment of a political line in people's everyday life brought less 'new actors' into the French movement, creating 'less surprise' but a solid mobilization where a classical organization is still important. In South Korea, the less-established political line in people's everyday life brought more 'new actors' into the mass mobilization, eventually creating 'more surprise' but a 'frivolous' mobilization where new social media were more important. The origin of this difference came from differences in the nature of democracy of the two societies.

Keywords

mass mobilization, Internet, mobilization process, establishment of political line, democracy

Introduction

Here are two pictures from Paris and Seoul: In May 2006, demonstrators filled the streets of the 'Quartier Latin' in Paris to protest Contract Premier Embauche' or first working contract. Under this law, an enterprise can lay off employees less than 25 years old without any compensation. This labor law was designed by the right-wing government to create *flexibility* in the job market for young people who are badly hurt by unemployment in France. The scene of mass mobilization was 'déjà vu': In the front of the cortege were the

leaders of major labor unions, some left-wing politicians, and the leaders of student unions. Behind them in the cortege were university students and high school students chanting together and some ‘adults’. A ‘new venue’ in the cortege though, because some retired people participated in demonstrations to express their solidarity for the movement. The social movement anti-CPE was a success from a mass mobilization point of view because the mobilization was realized on the national level, a great number of people’s opinion supported the protest, and finally the CPE law was canceled.

In May 2008, people holding candles filled every corner of the streets near the City Hall in Seoul, South Korea. The Candlelight movement (mass mobilization against American beef imports) had shaken the country for more than three months; in particular, the leadership of newly elected President Myung-bak Lee was seriously damaged. The most astonishing fact of the Candlelight movement compared to the movement in France is that the initiators were middle and high school students without any ‘tangible’ organizations. Like many other mass mobilizations cases in other countries, ‘after venues’ who proclaim themselves as an ‘organizer’ of mobilization share more or less the same political and social characteristics: labor unionists, politicians, civil society activists, etc. From a mass mobilization perspective, this movement in South Korea succeeded because tens of millions people poured into the streets every weekend for three months to protest the importation of American beef. Ultimately the trade agreement was revised.

These two scenes lacked a common thematic element. Unlike the international protests of the recent Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011-12, the South Korean and French protestors did not share an issue: The South Koreans opposed the importation of ‘risky’ American beef, while the French opposed a law making it easier for employers to fire their workers.

Then why compare mass mobilizations in these two countries? Examining these two ‘different’ mobilizations in different corners of the world, the following questions arose: In this 21st century Information Age, is the process of mass mobilization in France and in South Korea different? If so, what is the difference in how they created their mass mobilizations? Does this difference in the mobilization process reveal different functioning (or nature) of an ‘old’ (France) and a ‘young’ (South Korea) democratic society? Could this ‘young’ democratic society’s mass mobilization process bring new ‘inspiration’ to ‘old’ democratic societies like America in the 18th century did to Alexis de Tocqueville’s Europe?

Which part of process of mobilization will be treated?

Creating a social movement is not just affair matter of mobilizing resources, claiming actors’ identity, catching political opportunities, or moving people’s emotion. A social movement is a complex phenomenon per se; as a result, we need to analyze all these elements. This paper does not add another analysis ‘element’ to study the two social movements but propose to analyze the different *processes of mass mobilization* in these cases to find out how people decide *collectively* or *individually* to take an action, in these situations, to go onto the streets.

If individuals have questions about an issue or try to solve a problem, this is the normal process when they decide to act to achieve a specific objective¹: First, they gather information; then they try to understand

¹ Of course, this process is not just linear or irreversible.

the situation based on that information; and finally they decide whether to act. However, even if they *decide* to act, nothing will happen if they don't take an action. Thus the process of individual action has four steps: 1) ask questions/ gather information; 2) understand the situation; 3) decide to act; and 4) take an action.

The collective action process is more complicated because it requires an essential additional component: Others must agree to act in concert. Thus it is essential to know *whether others hold the same opinion and will take an action at the same time*. Here we are interested in learning what kind of processes individuals (or groups) follow to give their opinions or to know others' opinions and, finally, to take an action against what they consider 'unfair'? In other words, analyzing these two cases, this paper tries to identify the different processes of collective decision-making to participate in mass mobilizations: Were the participants content to *accept* existing mobilization resources such as left-wing or right-wing frames and organizations, whatever the forms, or were they trying to *find* new frames and completely different kind of organizations, and finally what explain this difference?

Why analyze the processes of mass mobilization?

Through such analysis, scholars can identify who the actors are, what they claim, how they act together, and can even find whom these people believe in. For example, South Koreans participating in the 2008 Candlelight movement showed their 'mistrust' or even anger against established media even though freedom of speech had been assured since 1987². The focus of this analysis is not whether the 'classical' media played their ethical role as a 'true voice' of people in South Korea, but what kind of result was generated by this 'collective disbelief' in established media at individual and collective actions levels. . In other words, what affected this misbelief in the process of mass mobilization? The most 'disbelieved sectors' in South Korea are politics (politicians) and established media. The South Korean people still have a vivid collective memory of their long dictatorship and its kept press.

Then whom do South Koreans trust? What do they believe in? The 2008 Candlelight mass mobilization process shows an interesting element. People trust what others trust. However, that does not mean that they merely followed the collective opinion of the populace because the 'majority' said (believed) so, like de Tocqueville's *tyranny of majority*³. In the case of South Korea's Candlelight movement, people trusted (approved) *others* opinion because it did not come from 'interested' people like political elites or established media, but from *others like me*, people who were '*disinterested*': Expressed another way, if others are more disinterested than I am, it is worth more worth to trust them and to act like them. The initiators of the Candlelight movement were not university students, labor unionists, or civil society activists but middle and high school students. They were the most *disinterested* and *pure* elements in the political field. That is why many adult participants and university students expressed their feeling of guilt toward these younger students who acted by going into the streets all by themselves to protest American beef imports. With time, as with many other large-scale social movement cases, in Candlelight case also the 'amateur' initiators of the Candlelight movement gave way to 'professional' activists to manage the movement.

2 In a strict sense, the level of 'independence' is always disputable even in an 'old' democratic society. The South Korean media gained independence from political suppression in 1987. However, that does not mean that the media played the role of a counter-power against political and economic rule; rather, the media rather served that rule.

3 A. De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Norwalk, Connecticut, The Easton Press, 1991, Vol. 1 Chapter 7, p. 228.

Why compare France and South Korea?

Beyond their different socio-historical experiences, these two countries have similarities, especially in the political field.

First, they have a similar president-centered power-sharing system of governance. In such a system, when a serious disagreement breaks out between ‘dominants’ and ‘domineés’, the latter tend to express their discontent on the streets. That is why there are so many mass mobilizations in France and South Korea. Sometimes such large-scale mass mobilizations ‘threaten’ not only the political elites, but also the representative democratic system itself. That was true in these two cases.

Second, the political party systems are also quite similar: Their political parties are organized mainly by politicians’ personal ability, not by the parties’ clear political lines. Historically in France, political lines are divided by left and right, and politicians take a political line⁴ from the start. However, the interesting thing is that candidates create new parties during almost every presidential election. It is not the presidential candidate who represents the party, but the party represents the candidate. In South Korea as well, the person is more important than the political parties’ line. That is why South Korean candidates frequently produce that same kind of political phenomenon before presidential elections. Because parties are controlled by the ‘person’ and not by the parties’ established lines, there is much more room for corruption. That is why both France and South Korea have experienced many political corruption scandals. With this kind of political system, if the public strongly supports their leader, everything is fine, but as soon as the public removes their support, the whole political decision-making system could be in danger because there is no intermediate zone to manage the disagreement.

Third, if we look at the initiators of these two mobilizations, the initiators were young people, although the South Koreans were younger than the French. In both countries, people generally—especially young people—are not interested in politics. It would be useful; to know why these young people who were known as individualists, even ‘egoists’, decided to act together. Since neo-liberalism came to govern most of the globe, French people aged 18-to-25 particularly suffered. Because of high unemployment, they have been obliged to accept part-time jobs and low-paid or unpaid internships; they also lack social protections and are called the CPE generation. South Korea also evidences the same socio-economic conditions among this age group, labeled the *880,000 won generation*⁵. It is beyond the scope of this paper to identify causes and consequences of these similar socio-economic conditions among this age group. Rather, focusing the analysis on the different processes of mobilization helps eventually explain the nature of democracy in these societies: How citizens conceive their democracy and how they apply that conception in political and everyday life.

Method

To explore why people decided to adopt different processes of mass mobilization in the two interviews, I conducted face-to-face and e-mail interviews among participants in the anti-CPE movement in Paris and

4 Today, we may be unable to find a ‘clear’ difference between left and right in the political field, but that demarcation is still important for politicians and the general public. .

5 This is a title of a 2007 book published by Korean economist and journalist Suk-Houn WOU, Kwon-Il PARK (2007) *The generation of 880,000 won*, Seoul, Ledian. The ‘880,000 won generation’ means that the young citizens aged 18-to-25 will receive a monthly average income of 880,000 won, equivalent to 600 Euros, because of their precarious job contracts.

participants in the 2008 Candlelight movement in Seoul. In Paris, I interviewed twenty university students and one of the most important student leader Bruno Julliard⁶. In Seoul, I interviewed twenty university students and 2 civil society activists, and 10 adult participants⁷; as the Candlelight movement had no ‘visible’ leader, the respondents were ‘ordinary’ participants. Because of prior large-scale interview-based research, that number of respondents was sufficient for this qualitative study.

Anti-CPE movement in France, 2006

Description of the Mobilization:

In 2006, socio-economic and political circumstances were unfavorable for Jacques Chirac’s right-wing government. 2006 was the last year of his presidential mandate, and his government had been weakened not only by his lame duck status but also by the riots of 2005. The riots first broke out in a Paris’s suburb⁸ and spread to other big cities where many African and North African immigrants had settled since the 1960s. Furthermore, the national unemployment rate was still high: 9.5 percent of the working-age population and 21 percent of the 15-24 aged population. In these socio-economic circumstances the government presented the CPE law that the General Assembly was supposed to vote on in March. Starting in February, left-wing university students unions⁹ organized a national level of protests against the law, including demonstrations on the street and blockage of university campuses and high school buildings. The protests successfully mobilized different age groups as well.

The anti-CPE protests went on for about three months, something that could not have been possible if most labor unions did not give strong support to the movement. For example, an inter-professional national strike was organized for March 28th; about 3 million people participated. On April 4th, labor unions again gave a notice of strike action; that day, 40 percent of primary public schools and 25 percent of secondary schools were disturbed because of a teachers’¹⁰ strike. Finally on April 10th, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin announced the cancellation of the law. Two particulars of this movement should be highlighted: 1) Mass mobilizations of university students were much more important and intense in regions other than in Paris¹¹; 2) Many retired people¹² participated in the street demonstrations with their *grandchildren (young people)*.

Who Were the Actors? Triple Actors

Because the CPE law principally concerned high school and university students, they were the main actors of the anti-CPE movement.

The second group of actors were labor unions. The CPE law did not directly apply to actual workers,

6 Interviews have been realized in Paris from December to February 2009.

7 Interviews have been realized in Seoul, from March to July 2009.

8 In Clichy-sous-bois, a Paris suburb, the majority of residents are migrants from Africa. On October 27th, two teenagers were killed accidentally by electrocution when they were chased by police. Many residents, especially the young, blamed the police for their deaths.

9 One of the most important unions is the left-wing organization, MNEF, which is highly influenced by the Socialist Party.

10 In France, teachers’ unions are among the most powerful labor unions. Among them; the left-wing union is the most influential.

11 Usually Paris ‘monopolizes’ many kinds of political, social, and cultural affairs.

12 In general they were members of labor union when they worked. Afterwards, they continued to support the same causes, such as workers’ rights.

but its principal characteristic was clearly against the ultimate purpose behind the very existence of labor unions: protection of workers. Naturally, union leaders could not compromise that principle; thus they supported the anti-CPE protests. For union leaders, that choice was political. In a sense, it was 'written' in the political game manual between right-wing governments and labor unions: attack versus counterattack.

However, it could have been another question for ordinary workers who already held 'secure' jobs. After all, they were not obliged to go into the streets to protect the security of their jobs; they could have stayed away from the noisy demonstrations and strikes, which could eventually bring many inconveniences into their everyday lives. But they showed a strong solidarity with the young people suffering from precarious socio-economic conditions.

The third actors were retired people. That was an interesting phenomenon because in many other countries it is unusual to see retirees participate in protests with young people. That was especially true in the French case because the anti-CPE movement did not concern their working conditions: they were no longer in the workforce. Their participation provides evidence that people move more promptly to realize their convictions than realize their interests¹³.

Then, how could these different aged groups act collectively together? This question leads to this paper's main subject: analysis of the process of mobilization. To analyze that process, the most important thing is to inquire into how the actors connected by political, social, and cultural networks. That can be discovered by examining how they communicated and decided to act collectively—in other words, 'go together'.

How Did they connect?

First, the high school students had national organizations supported by political parties—usually by socialists (left-wing) and the conventional right-wing party¹⁴. Most of those students know that such organizations existed but were not interested in those organizations except for a few politically mature students. Usually those students' family members were part of political organizations such as a party, local government, or national government. They were nourished with political lullabies from childhood. But most high school students did not fit that picture; in general they had 'no opinion' about politics. In an interview, this Science Po student explained why she participated in anti-CPE demonstrations while in high school.

Question: How did you decide to participate in demonstrations? Did you go to hear the debate between the students in your high school? How did it work?

Answer: I went once or twice to see the debate assembly. Well, in general because we had no fixed idea, we listened to the organizers. They prepared their speech before the debate, they had a strong argument about the subject, and they knew how to speak. In a sense, they were already trained to speak in public so we felt a little bit intimidated by their words. I know they 'repeat' what they learned from their parents or their older brothers and sisters, whatever. Still, it was impressive.

Question: Did you decide alone to go to the streets? You were not scared?

Answer: I decided with my friends and had permission from my parents. No, I was not afraid at all. In any case, we all knew how it would work at the street demonstrations: we met in the Metro station, where elder students and some of our professors waited for us and went together to the Place de la Nation or to the Quartier Latin. I had a lot of fun with my classmates.

¹³ Once again, the 'free rider' problem is solved.

¹⁴ It is difficult to give it a name because the name changes frequently; but in general the members do not change much.

Question: Did you use social media many times to know if your classmates, personal friends, or virtual friends were going to demonstrations or simply to discuss the CPE law or the movement? Did you have many virtual friends? How about your friends—did they have many?

Answer: No. Concerning who would go with me, I already knew with whom I would go. To discuss the movement, it was enough to go and see the debate and read a little bit in the newspaper. No, I don't have 'virtual' friends. My old friends and classmates are my major physical and virtual friends. With them I communicate, not others. I don't feel any need to find such friends.

Another interview was with one of the important leaders of the movement, Bruno Julliard:

Question: We saw a lot of high school students in the street. Did you frequently meet the high school leaders to prepare the demonstration together?

Answer: No, I was too busy preparing the communications with the journalists but one of my coordinators took charge of it. In general, we tried to help high school students to organize the demonstration properly to prevent any sudden incidents. Usually they listened to our advice.

These interviews show that high school students were in fact highly supervised, physically and mentally, by 'elder' people and political lines, even though their actions were not systematically 'controlled' by these two elements. In everyday life, they are tightly connected by a school system: classmates, neighbors, friends, sports clubs, etc. Such physical connections still play an important role in either their personal or 'public'¹⁵ life. The process of participation in a mobilization is 'ready-made' for them; there is no room for surprise. Because the road map was already drawn by the leaders of student organizations and helped by 'elders,' they did not need to find another way of communication to mobilize or to know others' thoughts. At any rate, they knew what their friends beside them thought. The mobilization of conscience and action were accomplished by their parents, elder students, and their teachers.

That is a great difference between South Korean high school students and their French peers. The French students could be operated by 'classical organizations' even though they were not interested in them, but that was not the case for South Korean high school students. South Korean students do not have any kind of political organizations, and in their everyday life they prefer to chat via the Internet with their virtual friends than with their classmates. This paper will discuss the South Korean situation later.

Second, as for the university students, they have clearly divided left-wing and right-wing student unions. At the universities in general, the right-wing unions are not very popular and their activities are less visible. In some regional universities such as those in the city of Rene, the extreme-left students unions historically have 'controlled' the important mobilizations. During the anti-CPE movement as well, there were different independent mobilizations in regional universities, but their mobilizations did not influence the mainstream. It is nearly impossible to reverse the current if a big wall already exists: the major national student union MNEF (a branch of the Socialist Party) is supported by most labor unions.

With the labor unions' entrance into the anti-CPE movement, the picture became more than clear. Protesters entered the political field and engaged in a political battle between left and right, even though their claim was labeled economic'. Most students replied that they were not interested in politics; by participating in anti-CPE demonstrations they chose to be politically involved, whether they wanted to or not. Then

¹⁵ Although they cannot participate in 'public' life (for example, elections) as adults, they temporarily enter the political field through occasional demonstrations on the street.

what was the picture of ordinary university students' process of mobilization? Here is an excerpt from an interview with a woman who was a University Bordeaux student in 2006:

Question: How did you decide to go to the general assembly (assemblée général)? Were you alone or with your friends?

Answer: I went there from curiosity. That was first time I was in the middle of some 'exciting things' on campus. I was brought up in a 'left-wing family'. My mother was a civil servant, my father is a train driver. In my family we have had many political discussions with my parents' friends. They never forced any political lines on me, but with time I became left.

Question: Are you a member of any student unions?

Answer: No. Even though I say to myself I am left, and they do something useful for students, I don't think I will join them because I don't like their 'all-settled' mind. They are too inflexible. I mean left-wing student unions. I don't even think about the right-wing unions. I know they exist but I've never seen any of them personally.

Question: Why did you participate in the demonstration? Why do you think other generations also participated? Was it an economic protest or deeper?

Answer: I think it was more than economic protest. Of course we were angry about the CPE law. We knew that even with the university diploma, we could not find a job. This law told us that 'even if you get a job, you should be afraid of being laid off in two years!' Our parents' generation thought that if such a law passed, all the social achievements that they and their parents struggled for would collapse. They were afraid for their children's future.

To sum up the process of mobilization in the anti-CPE case: Participants followed the 'conventional' way of mobilization and they were connected by pre-existing social networks. Politically colored organizations put out their arguments or proposed a solution to a problem of concern, and the participants accepted playing their role on this political stage. In a sense, they 'consumed' a social movement product and allowed established organizations to speak in their name.

Candlelight Movement in South Korea, 2008

Description of the Mobilization:

On April 18, 2008, the South Korean government announced an agreement on hygienic conditions for American beef imports; several media had already evoked visions of the economic damage American beef could pose for Korean breeders. A documentary aired by one broadcasting company (MBC), had already reported that the actual agreement about hygienic conditions for American imported beef could not prevent possible contamination with BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). That documentary provoked anxiety and anger among ordinary people, especially middle and high school students. The government has decided to use American beef first for school meals because it was 'cheap and good quality'¹⁶; the public interpreted this measure to mean that students would be an 'experiment'. In another false step by the government's, the police arrested the documentary's producer and journalist, and then prohibited its screening, claiming that it disseminated false information and caused severe unrest in society.

At that stage, nothing noteworthy happened until some middle and high school students proposed Candlelight Assembly on an Internet café. (On this South Korean portal site, anyone can easily create a café to share information). In a surprise to all, that Candlelight Assembly not only continued for more than three

¹⁶ These terms were used by the President: he expressed his incomprehension about why people were so angry about the American beef imports. One of the famous picket phrases was 'Mad cow, you eat it'

months but also drew tens of millions of people of different ages across the country into the streets. Finally, the President presented his excuses and revised the agreement with Americans.

Who Were the Actors? Quadruple Actors

The people directly and immediately concerned by the American beef imports were the South Korean breeders, so the protest against could have been limited to a protest by only one ‘interested group’. Although there were protests organized by the breeders and some NGO organizations, the public did not pay attention until middle and high school girls¹⁷ organized a Candlelight Assembly in the plaza of Seoul City Hall¹⁸. So the initiators and main actors were middle and high school students. At the end of April, the minister of education announced the ‘liberalization’ of middle and high school management, including concerning, stream, augmented class hours¹⁹, and more weight to English-language classes²⁰. For parents, this new education policy meant a higher cost for their children’s private educations. In 2008, they already were spending more than 23 percent of income for private schooling²¹. After the announcement, more middle and high school students and their parents participated in the Candlelight Assembly.

Thus the second actors were parents with an average age between the mid 40s through 50. Members of that generation had experienced the 10th June Democracy Movement in 1987 and were the ‘main actors’ of the Democracy Movement. Since then, they had returned to a ‘normal’ train of life: work and their own families. Twenty years later, they found themselves in a similar place, but now with their children.

Here is the explanation from one ‘parent participant’ in the Candlelight Assembly.

In 1987, I was in the protest after the death of Lee Han Yol²² when one million people gathered. I was at the same city hall. We were so proud and enthusiastic... but with life going on, our dream blurred away. Independence, justice, anti-Americanism, pride, these words lost their colors and became tasteless... But today, I am happy. It reminds me of our energy in June 1987.

Another interviewee described the difference in the atmosphere of the Candlelight Assembly demonstrations compare to the 1987 generation and the worry about the high cost of private education under the government’s new education policy.

17 One of the ‘mysteries’ of the 2008 Candlelight movement is why the initiators and the majority of teenage participants were female. One NGO, NANUM-MUNHWA (For share of culture), created its character as an image, *Candlelight Girl*: a little girl holding a candle, which became a popular symbol of this movement.

18 This place is called *Gwang Hwa Moon* (one of the ancient main gates of Seoul), It was a symbolic place for the democratization of South Korea, especially after 1987, the year of the turning point of South Korean political conditions.

19 Middle and high school students already spent more than 11 hours a day in school; they were obliged to stay at school even after classes to study. Especially during their last year of high school, students arrive at 7h30 and leave at 22h. The Ministry of Education has ‘tolerated’ this kind of practice for students in their last year. But this ‘liberalization’ means that the principal of school can decide on class hours and extra classes. In South Korea, harsh competition for admission to good universities starts in elementary school; this measure meant that most students stay longer in school than before.

20 To enter a major university in South Korea, English is very important. That is not because speaking English is important per se, but it became a important means of selection for university admission. Members of the privileged class can provide expensive extra private English classes or can send their children to an English-speaking country during vacations, but many parents have difficulty affording such measures. Thus, giving more weight to English classes means closing major university doors for most students except those in the privileged class.

21 Source: Web site Statistics Korea, <http://kostat.go.kr>.

22 The student who died during the demonstration against the military government in 1987 became one of the icons of the democracy movement of the 1980s with Jong-Chol PARK. We can compare this incident with a similar example in Europe, that of Iyan PALACH of the Czech Republic, who immolated himself to protest against the invasion by Soviet troops during the Prague spring of 1968.

I participated frequently in demonstrations in 1987. I was a leader of a national organization of Catholic students. At that time, this organization did not have a 'religious' character but rather was a pro-democracy and anti-military government organization.... I am now a middle management executive in a big company. I have been so occupied by work and my family life that I have not seen my campus friends in ages. Guess what? I met one of them here, at the very plaza where we shouted together 20 years ago! ... Now, we are holding candles instead of stones, signing instead of crying... It's like a feast..In an ironical side of history, now we are being lead by our children... holding candles... I feel ashamed but at the same time feel pride at these young middle and high school students.

...

About education, I don't know where and when this never-ending competition for our children and never-ending spending to private education by parents started. It just cannot be going on like this... Compared to other unprivileged people, economically I am in better condition. But even for me, if it continues like this, I cannot prepare my retirement correctly because of the private education cost.... We should stop this spiral.

The third actors were university students. In numbers, they were more important than parent participants. At first, they were quite 'indifferent' about the Candlelight Assembly, but in the course of time, that changed due to the anti-neo liberalist government's policy, starting with American beef education, and the character of new members of the ministry²³. People aged 18-25 were suffering from unemployment. The rate in 2008 reached 7.6 percent for the 15-29 aged population and 3.1 for the total active working-age population²⁴. From a global point of view, those statistics were not bad, but for the South Korean population it meant a large percussive hit to the collective physiology because they had experienced almost full employment for fifteen years²⁵. For the time being, the choice these young people had made to surmount that 'worrying' social and economic situation was to adjust themselves to the demands of the job market, not to protest. For example, most large Korean global companies demanded the TOEIC test²⁶ when they recruited new employees. Most students prepare for the test for a whole university year.

The fourth actors were not uncommon: NGO activists and some left-wing politicians. Even though they were 'after-venues' of the Candlelight Movement, the movement could continued without major accidents thanks to their 'know-how'. One of the major NGO²⁷ activists interviewed shows how they felt helpless before the middle and high school students' Candlelight Assembly.

I was stunned when I saw the middle and high school students assembled in the City Hall Plaza. They came with funny pickets made by themselves, chanting together, criticizing government's education policy, risky beef etc. I said myself, 'God! It is my job to protest, not yours!' I spent my whole life for that. I was so ashamed. ... What was going wrong?.

Then how could these different actors have decided to act together? This question leads to an analysis of the process of mobilization of the 2008 Candlelight movement in South Korea.

How Did They Connect?

23 They all come from the highly privileged class; people have judged that they are not concerned with ordinary people's everyday life.

24 Source: Web site Statistics Korea, <http://kostat.go.kr>.

25 Except 1997, financial crisis.

26 Another practical issue for members of the unprivileged class: The test is expensive, and the more opportunity you have to spend times in an English-speaking country, the better the chance of a good result.

27 Chamyong Yondai (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy).

First, middle and high school students had no political organization, unlike I in France. They had student committees in their school but those had no political character. Under age 17, they are not allowed by law to participate in any political activities. These teenagers, like those in many other countries, spend a lot of time on the Net. They chat and converse on the Net with their virtual friends rather than with their classmates. These interview excerpts illustrate character of teenagers in South Korea:

Question: Why do you prefer to chat on the Net rather than with your classmates or your neighborhood friends?

Answer: I don't know but... I think the relation is simpler and lighter than with neighborhood friends. You just share your opinion or information, that's all. You need not see them. You have no risk of getting angry with your virtual friends. If you get angry, you just quit chatting or quit being a member of the Internet Café. It's cool. You are not obliged to see them.

Question: How much time do you spend chatting on the Net?

Answer: It depends. Sometimes four or five hours per week. But I also spend time with my neighborhood friends and classmates too. We use a lot of SMS. It's more efficient and you don't disturb others. I think our generation is addicted to the Internet and cellular phone. For example, if I find the battery of my phone is discharged, I became nervous. Somebody can call me or send me a SMS but I cannot respond.

By choice, they connected more on the Net rather than in their physical surroundings like in France. Their references for everyday life are neither their elder brothers nor sisters nor their peer groups, nor their parents but their virtual friends.

The same mode of connection was found for university students, as this interview excerpt shows:

Question: How did you decide to go the City Hall Plaza?

Answer: Well, I am a very 'rational' or 'individual' person. I don't like to talk about a topic if it does not concern me directly. But I learned about the problem of American beef imports by Internet. I read some private opinions in the blogs and 'independent' media²⁸. When I participated in the Candlelight Assembly for the first time, I listened carefully to others' opinions and realized that if we allow the importation, it could be dangerous for my family. After that, I participated in mobilization as long as I could.

Here again, the decision reference for university students was not based on their surroundings but another sphere: the Internet, more specifically, others' opinions on the net nobody else, neither political elite nor established journalist. An interesting process is that these people realized a 'cross encounter' by participating in the mobilization. That's why a lot of diverse Internet Café members met by appointment in the City Hall Plaza under their own flag or picket, whatever they decided to recognize. These Internet Café members could belong to a cooking café, a fashion mania café, or a dance café or other type.

Conclusion

In the anti-CPE mobilization, French people used the 'already settled' mobilization frame of left-wing and tangible organizations (left-wing), while in the Candlelight movement, South Koreans refused to use the already existing frame and organizations to create their mass mobilization. As other scholars found

²⁸ The most famous independent Internet press is *Oh My News*. This is an exclusive internet news which was founded in 2000. This internet 'newspaper' run by free lance journalists who are paid directly by readers who judged the article is worth to pay. The general characters of the articles are rather 'left'.

earlier²⁹, the process of mobilization can be divided into two stages: consensus mobilization, then action mobilization. In both stages, the way and means (tools) of communication among individuals is critical. In fact, people select the means of communication according to their goal of communication. If people already know the agenda, they will not continually seek to learn others' opinion because they do know more or less the procedure (CPE's case). However, if people confront an '*unknown agenda*', they continually seek to know what others think (South Korea's case). That's why it is important to study the role of the Internet (social media) in the process of mobilization to explain how social media mobilize consensus and action. Social media could play an important role as a tool of communication, not as an essential element to create a successful mobilization, especially where the established mass media do not play their normative role as venues for political communication and dissemination of political information in a civil society. That is why South Koreans used social media in the process of consensus and action mobilization.

However, this does not mean that in 'old democratic societies', people believe in traditional media, and that the media fully play their normative role: In France, journalists are considered just like politicians they write/criticize social, economic, cultural, and political affairs according to their political lines. They also are main actors in the political field, just like politicians. Therefore, there is no reason people should believe more in journalists than in politicians. Then why in France, did people not rely on social media to create mass mobilization like South Koreans did? If we look at the mobilization process more closely, we see one element that Koreans did not have: the politicization of people's everyday life. In the CPE case, my interview with a high school student who participated in demonstrations clearly revealed the scheme: 1) students learned about the CPE law from media or their parents and felt concerned; 2) in school, the anti-CPE movement leaders and members of left-wing organizations organized debate meetings (*assemblée générale*) with the approval of the principal, where they gave a persuasive speech as they are accustomed to doing; 3) students decided to go into the streets with their friends, parents, or teachers, and in general they already knew who would participate.

That was not the case in South Korea. The initial actors or late venues had any 'visible' references to use when they decided to act and they had no idea who and how many people would participate. In such an uncertain condition, to know others' opinion could be an ultimate aid for people's decision. But here, not anyone else's opinion counts: others just like 'me' because 'me' and 'others' are in *equality*: there is no social, political, cultural and physical elements weigh the relationship between 'me' and 'others'. And 'me' and 'others' agree that politicians and established media are not worth to count on; they are all 'interested' people. That's why Koreans gave more importance to *what others out there thought and acted?* They wanted to know what was happening in other people's minds, so that is why they frequently connected by clicking a mouse. It was not because the Internet offers rapid and correct information about BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) or the international trade agreement process. During the Candlelight movement. South Koreans clicked the public forum site on the Internet rather than national newspaper or broadcasting sites.

These two different mobilization processes reveal how citizens conceive of their democracy and how they apply that conception in their political and everyday life. South Koreans conceive that democracy should be more direct and more egalitarian, while the French accept the established intermediary apparatus.

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Internet

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- <http://www.greenkorea.org/>
- <http://www.ngokorea.org>
- <http://www.stat.nic.or.kr/> (Korea Network Information Center)
- <http://www.nec.go.kr>
- <http://home.nec.go.kr:7070/sinfo/sinfo.htm>

Twitter and Public Reasoning around Social Contention: The Case of #15ott in Italy

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Abstract

This paper addresses the use of Twitter for public reasoning and opinion making around issues related to social contention. It specifically focuses on the Italian chapter of the 15 October 2011 polycentric protest for Global Change. By exploring Twitter streams, the study follows four specific lines of investigation: the positioning of the Italian #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream among other Twitter streams relevant to the protest, conversational dynamics over time, networking and news media dynamics, and processes of meaning construction. The findings show that Twitter usage related to social contention is not only functional to generate alternative information flows with organizational and logistic purposes. It also bolsters processes of public reasoning and opinion making activated not only by collective advocacy actors and media channels but also by individuals not necessarily involved in offline protest action.

Keywords

Twitter, social contention, meaning construction, Occupy Wall Street, Indignados.

Introduction

On October 15th 2011 protestors from all walks of life took to the streets of over eighty countries to protest against the global economic crisis and demand changes in the global economic system.

Transnational social justice activism is nothing new. Since the so-called 1999 ‘battle of Seattle’, polycentric, segmented, networked protest events for global justice have mushroomed all over the world in the form of “protest waves” (Koopmans, 1993). Modular repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 1998) have characterized contemporary transnational protest where organization, tactics, and performances have transferred from place to place and from local mobilization to local mobilization mainly via online and/or mobile communication (namely text messages, mailing lists, websites, and early social media).

However, today’s activism for global change seems new in two aspects: the current socio-political background marked by the global economic crisis, and the use of microblogging platforms of communication to spread information, co-ordinate protest activities, debate on protest issues, and counter, integrate or disseminate mass media coverage of protest events (Seeger and Bennett, 2011).

The Italian local involvement in the 15 October 2011 global protest is particularly interesting for two main reasons, one contingent and one contextual: the outcomes of the protest and the country’s booming of microblogging activity. First, Italy was the only country where the 15 October 2011 global protest re-

sulted in violent events, with street destructions perpetuated by several hundreds of activists and clashes between protesters and the police. Second, in a moment in which microblogging is the fastest growing Internet activity all over the world, 11% of the Italian population do microblog, with Twitter being by far the most popular microblogging service (globalwebindex.net). In fact, the 15 October 2011 global protest was widely covered on Twitter by Italian activists, journalists, commentators, and common citizens before, during, and after the protest itself.

By applying a case study approach, the present work aims to investigate the role of Twitter in the discussion around contemporary polycentric collective action. The study is structured on the analysis of the most prominent hashtag in the Italian demonstrations on October 15th: #15Ott. The Twitter hashtag is particularly relevant to the purpose of this study because, by gathering tweets posted by different individuals (e.g., activists, journalists, common citizens), it cuts across the protest space (Segerberg and Bennett, 2011). In other words, it allows one to focus on comments by any individual interested in the events. Given the outcomes of the protest, the use of the Italian hashtag #15Ott did not cease after the demonstration, with new tweets mushrooming in the days after the protest itself. Therefore, the study focuses on over 8000 tweets produced in the thirty days following the protest: from the mid-morning of the 16th of October until the morning of the 15th of November 2011. The following section provides a general background on the polycentric protests for Global Change and specifically introduces the 15 October protest for Global Change in Italy. Next, I review theoretical and empirical contributions on the use of Twitter for protest events and I specifically focus on the study of Twitter streams as channels for public reasoning and opinion formation around the meaning of social contention. The following section introduces data and methods used in the study. The remainder of the paper shows the study's main findings with reference to four primary lines of investigations: the positioning of the Italian #15Ott hashtagged Twitter stream among the corresponding international streams, the shaping of conversation dynamics over time, the development of networking versus news media mechanisms, and the enactment of processes of meaning construction.

The 15 October Polycentric Protest for Global Change and its Italian Chapter

The 15 October polycentric protest for Global Change was launched in late August 2011. Two transnational collective actors first promoted the call for action: the Indignados coalition and the Occupy Wall Street Movement, later to be renamed the Occupy Movement. The former, emerged in Spain in May 2011, had already spread in several European countries particularly affected by the economic crisis (namely, Greece and Italy). The latter was about to take 'to the square'¹. Those collective actors shared at least two main attributes: they drew inspiration from the Arab spring and they mobilized – in broad terms - against economic inequality. On the one hand, as Giugni (2012) suggests: “the upheavals in the Middle East have encouraged citizens in other parts of the world, including the U.S., to take to the streets to show their discontent.” On the other hand, as said, transnational polycentric activism for social justice was nothing new. The so-called Global Justice Movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s mobilized on economic equality through hundreds of polycentric protests (Della Porta, 2007). In fact, the new born movement for Global Change can now be seen as a direct descendent of the GJM, emerged in a moment in which the circumstances have become favorable for a new wave of transnational contention.

¹ The OWS movement officially started in September 17, 2011 with the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York City.

The mobilization of the 15 October polycentric protest for Global Change was first publicly launched online via independent and mainstream social media. n-1.cc, for instance, is a social network loosely used by activists mobilizing within the movement for Global Change (takethesquare.net). It was developed in July 2011 by Spanish hackers involved in the Indignados protests and soon became a platform of discussion open to those interested in taking action in the demonstrations. On Facebook, together with the multilingual event '15.O International Mobilization: #globaldemocracy' several monolingual events (e.g. the French 'Révolution Mondiale pour une Réelle Démocratie', the Spanish 'Revolución global: Democracia real YA', and the German 'Echte Demokratie Jetzt') and communities (e.g. the Italian '15 ottobre: un milione di indignati in corteo verso il parlamento') were created to mobilize demonstrations at national and city levels. Clips launching and promoting the call for action were posted on Youtube and Vimeo video sharing social networks. Twitter streams around the protest emerged in late August and grew exponentially a few days before October 15 to further develop during and after the protest. Several hashtags were used to build Twitter streams relevant to the demonstrations, from those formerly implemented to discuss issues relevant to the Occupy Movement (e.g., #occupywallstreet and #ows) to the new ones more closely concerned with the 15 October demonstrations (i.e., #15o and #15oct). In sum, social media became a leading platform to post and gather information on the transnational call for action and to organize local demonstrations.

According to activists' records, the October 15 polycentric protest for Global Change took place in over 1,000 cities around the world (15october.net). Participation levels varied from country to country and from place to place. In Italy, activists took to the street in over 20 cities with the biggest demonstration taking place in Rome. There, around 200,000 people participated in the protest (15october.net). The Rome demonstration was primarily organized and mobilized by the so-called 'Coordinamento 15 ottobre', a coalition endorsed by leftist political parties, social movement organizations (among which the leading Popolo Viola²), and trade unions. Coordinamento 15 ottobre planned a march in the heart of the city, to start from Piazza della Repubblica and summon in Piazza San Giovanni. On the afternoon, part of the activists involved in the rally turned violent while hooded protesters, later to be loosely identified as Black Block³, set the city on fire. Cars, shop windows, bank entrances and police vans became the main targets of destruction while clashes between protesters and police occurred in several locations, resulting in over 100 people being injured (Corriere della Sera, October 16). According to a communiqué released by the press office of Rome City Council on November 14, 2011, the damage from the rioting amounted to €900,000 (comunediroma.it). According to mass media and activists' records, the protest only turned violent in the city of Rome.

This study is primarily interested in the way in which social media bolstered public discussion on the events occurred during the Italian chapter of the protest. As said, Twitter hashtagged streams cut across the protest ecology, i.e., they may involve different players, from activists to journalists on to citizens merely interested in the events. Hence, by exploring Twitter activity one can raise considerations on the way Twitter is used for processes of public reasoning and opinion formation around instances of social contention with strong impact on the general public.

2 Popolo Viola (Purple people) is a social movement emerged in Italy in October 2009, with the main purpose to call for the resignation of the then Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Since 2009, Popolo viola has organized several polycentric protests all over Italy, with its leading chapter remaining in the city of Rome.

3 The label 'Black Block' has been traditionally used to identify clusters of anarchist affinity groups declaredly open to police confrontation, blockades and property destruction. They usually wear black clothing and masks (Fernandez 2008: 58-59).

Theoretical Background

Twitter and Social Contention

The intertwined relationship between new media and contemporary protest is a central concern for scholars from both the social movement and the media and communication traditions. After Iran's Green revolution, the debate has centered around the possible consequences of social media on politics. "In general, [...] "real" consequences continued to be measured in terms of prodemocratic institutional outcomes, and "new media" often boiled down to Twitter" (Segerberg and Bennet, 2011: 198). In fact, among social media in general, Twitter in particular has been associated to recent social movements, protest events, and examples of social contention.

Segerberg and Bennet highlight how social media are now entering the protest action ecology, i.e., they are becoming part of the protest environment in which they operate (2011: 200). As Christensen highlights, the long lasting divide between techno-dystopians and techno-utopians centers the debate exactly on the role of new media – now social media – in processes of social contention (2011: 156). If, on the one hand, the former warn against the re-emergence of contemporary forms of technological determinism, on the other hand, the latter draw attention to the successful role of social media in the recent uprisings in totalitarian regimes (e.g. Egypt, Lybia). In particular, Gladwell (2010), from the first camp, stresses on the role of Twitter, Facebook and the like, in the generation of ephemeral ties among activists and protesters. He questions the real impact of such weak ties in bolstering processes of social contention and public debate. Gladwell (2010)'s considerations very much recall scholarly work on early twenty-first century social movement coalitions, when it was argued that digitally networked activism was ephemeral (Tarrow, 1998: 176-194, Castells, 2001: 142). And yet, early twenty-first century social movement networks have successfully grown, developed, and transformed. In particular, what it was then called the Global Justice Movement seems to have evolved into the current polycentric Movement for Global Change, mobilized, among the others, by the Occupy Wall Street and the Indignados activist groups (Giugni, 2012).

Morozov (2009a) also highlights the little internal relevance of social media in countries like Moldova where the levels of Internet access and literacy are below the average.

However, while the skepticism brought forward by Gladwell (2010) and Morozov (2009a), among the others, was corroborated by the aftermath of the 2009 Iranian protests and the protest ecology of the Moldovan revolution, the following Arab spring could not but open new threads in the debate.

The claims characterizing optimistic views around the early "Twitter revolutions" (i.e., Moldova and Iran uprisings), the Arab spring, and more recent polycentric protests, have focused on two issues: the successful use of Twitter to make local causes known to transnational audiences, and its importance for mobilization, organization, and information purposes for activists at the local level. First, the protesters' ability to make their cause known to larger audiences means disclosing information to citizens and journalists alike beyond national borders (Segerberg and Bennet, 2011: 198). Indeed, reliability and representativeness of Twitter streams are always issues to be taken under consideration. However, in a vacuum of information from traditional media (e.g., in cases of social unrest in totalitarian regimes), Twitter streams have become one of the very few available sources of information for local and transnational audiences. In his early analysis of the Arab uprisings Cottle suggests: "New social media, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, along with online bloggers

and mobile telephony, played a central role in communicating, coordinating and channeling the rising tide of opposition and variously managed to bypass state controlled national media as they propelled images and ideas of resistance and mass defiance across the Middle East and North Africa” (2011b: 293).

The second issue to be considered concerns the use of Twitter as a platform of interaction to mobilize, organize and inform activists and non-activists on contentious events. In relation to this, Bennet and Segerberg (2011: 781) suggest that Twitter streams are channels for individuals to personalize the protest. In other words, Twitter has become one of the alternative ways for individual actors to participate and contribute to the protest communication network. In fact, Twitter hashtags mark Twitter streams topically so that anybody on Twitter can follow conversations centered on specific topics. Such topics are indicated by a hashtag followed by a keyword. As boyd et al. (2010) suggest, this practice recalls the use of tags to categorize online content. Hashtags may be used, for instance, to create buzzes around specific events or issues. Social movement leaders and supporters may use them to report on events or issues. But also others not directly involved in the events may use them to contribute to the general discussion on the subject at stake. In fact, while social media per se are to be considered as one and only one of the factors possibly easing the emergence of protest waves, they certainly play a role in shaping alternative platforms for “public reasoning and opinion formation” (Cottle, 2011a: 27). Let us then focus on the use of Twitter for informal political debates around topics relevant to social contention.

Twitter and Public Reasoning Around Social Contention

Recent empirical studies on the use of Twitter in relation to social contention have started tackling the problem of analyzing Twitter streams. Bajpai and Jaiswal (2011) assembled a sample of 2,452 tweets relevant to the 2010 Thailand Protests. Similarly, Segerberg and Bennet (2011) analyzed a sample extracted from over 100,000 tweets with reference to two hashtags used in the protests against the 2009 United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen. As part of the Guardian’s “Reading the Riots” project, a research team from the London School of Economics has recently published the early results of the analysis of 2.6 million tweets relevant to the August 2011 riots in London and other cities in the U.K (Procter and Vis, 2011). These ground-breaking studies all show evidence of the challenges to be faced in the attempt to analyze Twitter archives specifically relevant to protest events in terms of organizational structures and processes of information sharing among activists. However, if we look at Twitter streams as channels of communication for wider processes of opinion formation within a general public, i.e., made of activists, non-activists, individuals only generally interested in protest events, how can we investigate individual tweets and tweet interactions?

Twitter streams generate networking mechanisms that cut across the users’ own offline social networks. As Segerberg and Bennet (2011: 201) state: “Twitter streams can (although do not always) attract diverse players, from individuals to organizations, and include contributors and followers from afar and in the midst of the action.” However, the question of how such networking mechanisms work in terms of network cohesion and reciprocity is still open. Kwack and colleagues (2010) generated an archive of 106 million tweets to study network structures developed on the Twitter platform. Their analysis shows that Twitter seems more likely to become a news media than a social network as such. In other words, on the one hand, networking mechanisms show relevant homophily and little reciprocity, i.e., Twitter players tend to communicate with other players with similar opinions and overall dialogical interactions are anyway very rare. On the other hand, the classification of trending topics shows that the majority of topics “are headline or persistent news in nature.” (Kwak et al., 2010: 10). Hence, these findings suggest that Twitter streams are

likely to lack strong networking patterns but can become channels for opinion making and public reasoning within online active audiences.

Indeed, Twitter players may take on different roles in the generation and development of specific Twitter streams. They may introduce different links and amplify certain threads via @ replies (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009) and/or RT retweets (boyd et al., 2010). For instance, Kwak et al. (2010: 10)'s study shows that "once retweeted, a tweet gets retweeted almost instantly on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th hops away from the source, signifying fast diffusion of information after the 1st retweet". In fact, Twitter streams may look very different on the basis of their hashtag management and such differences can be studied in terms of gatekeeping processes. In the case of protest events, for instance, protest organizers may centralize hashtag management around issues related to protest organization and logistic instructions. Conversely, different players may more or less equally hold on Twitter streams, and this is usually the case of post-protest streams.

Given the considerations on the use of Twitter streams in relation to social contention discussed in the previous section, it is interesting to look at Twitter from a related but different perspective. In other words, can Twitter become a platform of interaction for discussions around social contention open to wider audiences? Can Twitter participate in or even improve processes of opinion making and reasoning around protest events of high impact for the general public? How do different players participate in such informal political debate?

Data and Methods

By drawing upon previous analyses of Twitter streams (see, among the others, Bajpai and Jaiswal, 2011; Segerberg and Bennett, 2011) this work applies a mixed-method approach to tweeted messages, specifically focusing on four aspects of Twitter usage: the positioning of the Italian #15Ott hashtagged Twitter stream (i.e., was the #15Ott stream used in the same way as other protest-related streams?); tweeting dynamics over time (i.e., how did information flows fluctuate?); networking structures and news media processes (i.e., who tweeted to whom, gatekeeping dynamics), and processes of meaning construction around social contention on Twitter (e.g., how was protest violence discussed over Twitter streams?)

Segerberg and Bennet (2011: 199) underline two drawbacks in the current scholarly debate on the study of Twitter use for mobilizing and organizing purposes during protests: the tendency to look at Twitter as a "stand-alone" platform, isolated from the remaining media ecology, and the propensity to extract Twitter from the broader political context. Bajpai and Jaiswal (2011: 1) add: "despite the abundance of dialogue, there is currently a marked absence of theoretically informed frameworks which can be utilized to qualitatively evaluate the various claims attributed to the Twitter platform in the context of protest events". Hence, in line with these considerations, this study will look at Twitter as part of the media ecology of a democratic country. Yet, the paper's focus shifts the attention from the use of Twitter for mobilizing and organizing purposes in protest events to the use of Twitter streams for the construction of informal political debate around social contention.

The primary data collection task for this study involved assembling tweets relevant to the 15 October protest for Global Change in Italy. Concerning the first line of investigation (i.e., the positioning of the Italian #15ott hashtag among other international hashtags before, during, and after the protest), a spreadsheet was created to gather quantitative information on the development of three hashtagged streams relevant to the protest (Hootsuite.com). The time-period covered by this part of the study is 15 September – 15 No-

vember 2011. Concerning the following three lines of investigations specifically focused on the use of the #15ott Twitter stream after the protest (i.e., changing dynamics over time, networking versus news media mechanisms, and processes of meaning construction), 8,041 #15ott hashtagged tweets were logged (Twapperkeeper.com). The time-period covered by this second part of the study is 16 October – 15 November 2011, namely the first month following the protest.

Analysis and Findings

Twitter Streams Relevant to the 15 October Protest for Global Change: #15ott, #15oct, and #15o

As said, social media soon became the primary channels to gather information on the 15 October polycentric protest for Global Change. In particular, on Twitter two hashtags emerged as most prominent in preparation for, during, and after the demonstrations: the multilanguage #15o and #15oct hashtags. By mid-September Twitter streams with reference to these two hashtags counted between 100 and 400 tweets a day. By the beginning of October they reached around 2000 tweets a day. A specifically Italian stream related to the protest started on October 7 with reference to the new Italian hashtag #15ott. #15ott then became the major point of reference for Italian citizens interested in the demonstration.

By investigating the development of Twitter streams related to protest events, one can raise preliminary considerations on the specific use of those streams by Twitter users. In other words, by looking at the development of Twitters streams over time one can infer when and in relation to what purpose Twitter interactions were more or less relevant. In fact, while streams with reference to the two international hashtags #15o and #15oct started long before the polycentric protest, the Italian #15ott only counted a relevant number of tweets (174) on the day prior to the protest, i.e., October 14. Figure 1 shows the development of the streams related to the three mentioned hashtags (i.e., #15o, #15oct, and #15ott) over a two-month period, from September 15 to November 15.

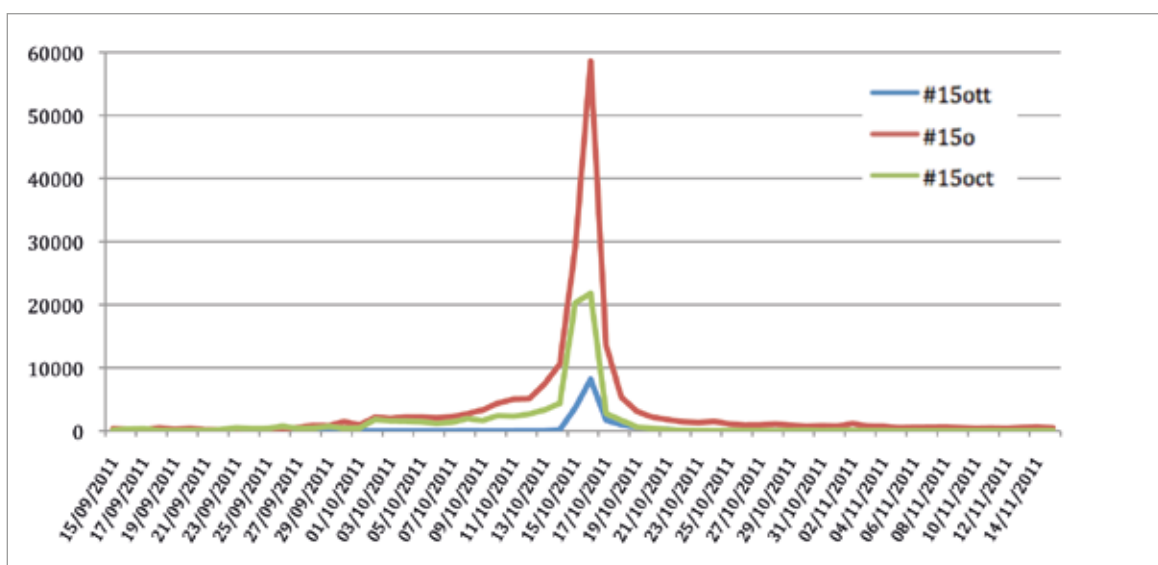


Figure 1: Absolute number of tweets with reference to the hashtags #15o, #15oct, and #15ott posted every day over a two-month period (September 15 - November 15) (Hootsuite.com)

Figure 1 shows the absolute number of tweets posted per day with reference to the three hashtags respectively, showing that the international #15o hashtagged stream was the most popular one before, during, and after the protest. All three hashtagged streams reached a pick of tweets on the day after the protest, i.e., October 16. In fact, on that day, #15o counted almost 60,000 tweets, #15oct reached almost 22,000 tweets and #15ott counted almost 10,000 tweets. Overall, the three Twitter streams followed the same trend over the two-month period shown in Figure 1 but it is interesting to focus on the percentage of tweets posted per day over that same period.

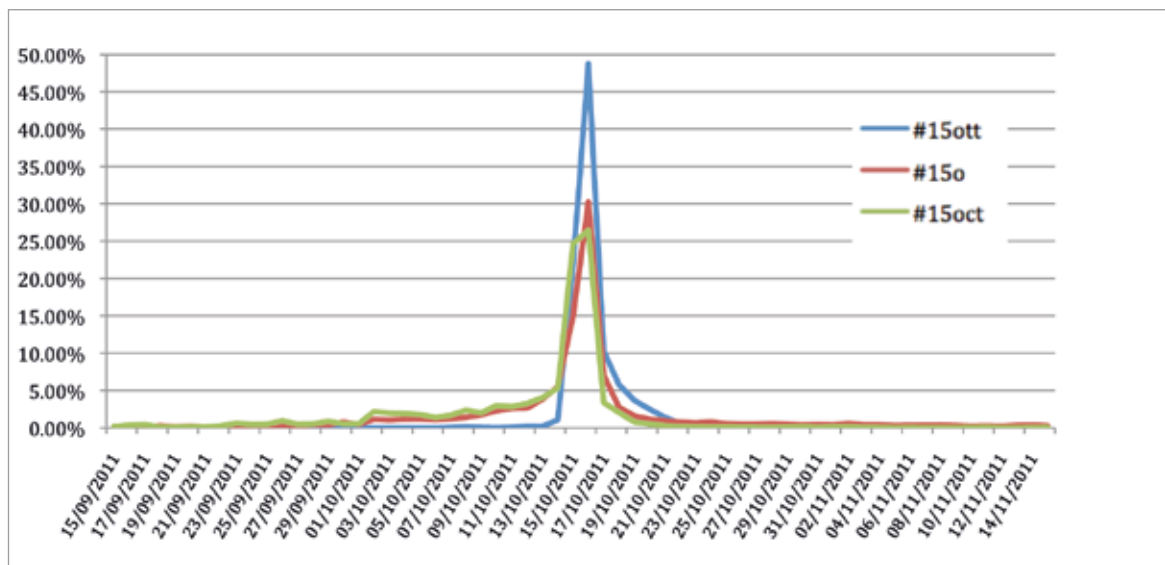


Figure 2: Percentage of tweets with reference to the hashtags #15o, #15oct, and #15ott posted every day over a two-month period (September 15 - November 15) (Hootsuite.com)

Figure 2 clearly shows the underlying difference between the Italian #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream and the Twitter streams marked with the international hashtags #15o and #15oct. In fact, almost 60% of the Twitter stream related to the Italian chapter of the protest occurred in the first two days following the events, as compared to around 37% of the tweets in the #15oct stream and around 30% of the tweets in the #15o stream. This means that the Italian Twitter stream related to the protest was primarily used to discuss about the outcomes of the events rather than for organizing and mobilizing purposes prior to the protest. This is a trend shared by the three streams shown in Figure 2 but in the Italian case this trend is definitely stronger than in the other two. This seems to suggest that the #15ott hashtagged stream only became active when it turned into a channel of interaction for public reasoning and opinion formation around the events. In other words, #15ott really went live when the protest became known to a wider public. And this primarily happened when photos and shootings of the violent events were exposed on both new and mass media channels.

The following part of the study specifically draws attention to what happened in the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream in the days following the protest. In fact, the analysis focuses on the 8,041 tweets posted with reference to the #15ott hashtag from the morning of October 16 to that of November 15.

#15ott Twitter Stream: Changing Dynamics Over Time

Figure 3 shows the portion of the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream covered by the following analysis.

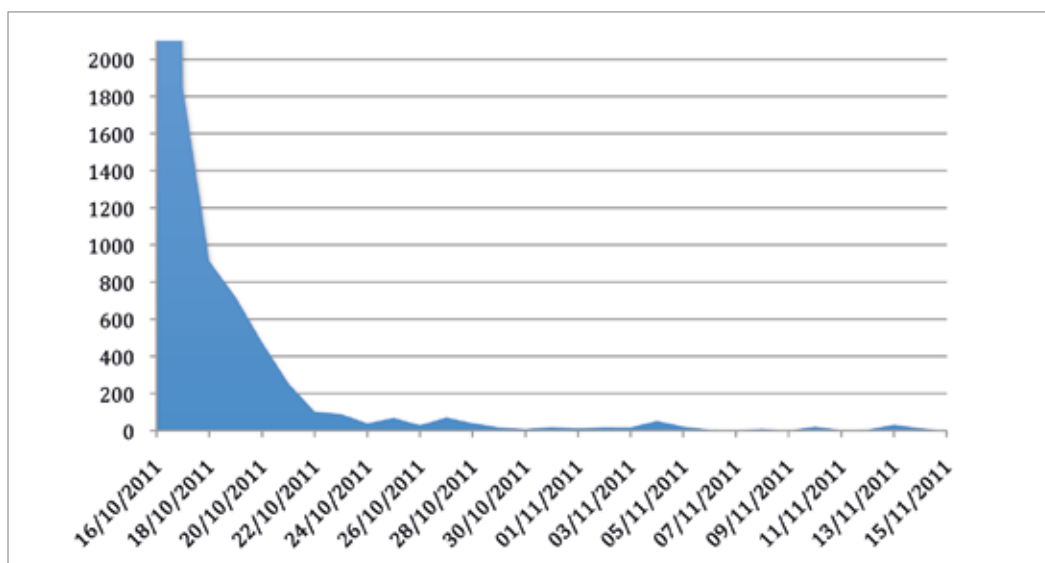


Figure 3: Absolute number of tweets with reference to the hashtag #15ott posted every day from the mid-morning of October 16 to that of November 15.

By the mid-morning of October 16 all Italian TV channels had widely diffused images of the events, mainly street destruction perpetuated by hooded protesters, fires in several sites of the city of Rome, burning cars, protesters throwing “sanpietrini” (cobblestones) and fire extinguishers at police officers, police officers using tear gas canisters against protesters and finally strong clashes between protesters and police. The major Italian daily newspapers had produced their first coverage of the events through editorials, reportages and first-person narrations. In other words, in the morning of October 16, the Italian public opinion had been widely exposed to the events. In fact, starting from that morning until November 15 a total of 2495 twitterers took part in the revitalized #15ott Twitter stream to discuss about the events. In line with other studies interested in conversational dynamics on social media, the analysis shows that the conversation was particularly active in the first three days following the protest, until October 18 when the number of tweets posted per day was still around 1,000. Between October 18 and October 21 the figure progressively decreased from around 1,000 to around 200. After October 21, the absolute number of tweets per day constantly decreased and by the end of October no more than 50 tweets were posted per day. This certainly shows two attributes of Twitter streams relevant to public reasoning and opinion making around protest events of strong impact for the general public. First, it provides evidence on the booming real-time usage of Twitter streams to discuss and comment on events relevant to the public opinion. Second, it shows that Twitter streams of this sort are not durable conversational and interactional tools.

Let us now focus on other changing dynamics over time, namely in the use of links to redirect to external sources of information and in the shift towards new hashtags. In the first ten days after the protest the numbers of tweets containing links rose from 55% (1,132 of the 2,060 posted from the mid-morning of October 16 until the night of the same day) to over 88% (fully 45 of the 51 tweets posted on October 24). In other words, twitterers increasingly pointed each other to different sources of online information in a moment in which such sources of information were constantly increasing. In line with the results provided by Segerberg and Bennett (2011: 210), the analysis shows that the percentage of tweets containing links increased as the stream diminished in volume.

The use of additional hashtags other than #15ott also increased over time. By October 24, the average was reached of over two additional hashtags per tweet. This indicates that the #15ott stream ramified towards other Twitter streams, marked with old and new hashtags. The main dynamic here is that the number of tweets containing multiple hashtags rises with the longitudinal development of the stream. In other words, while the original stream shrinks and loses ground over time, public reasoning around the events shifts towards more specific, narrowly focused Twitter streams.

#15ott Twitter Stream: Players, Networks and News Media Processes

Overall, the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream was fairly participatory since the top ten twitterers only account for 16% of the tweets. In fact, 80% of the tweets were made by 44% of the twitterers. However, a consistent number of twitterers (59%) only tweeted once in the stream. Overall, one could then say that the stream had a distributed, crowdsourced management pattern.

But who are the players involved in the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream? Interestingly enough, out of the ten top twitterers only two are collective actors: Zero81 and Global project. The former is a university collective from Naples (zer081.org) and the latter a multimedia platform developed by Italian media activists (globalproject.info). The remaining top players in the stream are individuals whose Twitter profiles do not indicate any direct affiliation to organizations or advocacy actors as such. However, by searching the publicly available Twapperkeeper archives one can retrieve information on specific twitterers' participation in different Twitter streams. In fact, all top individual twitterers involved in the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream also take part in several other streams more or less related to the transnational movement for Global Change. The most common hashtagged streams are those marked by the transnational #ows and #occupywallstreet but also #occupy, #occupytheworld, #occupyboston, #occupyphoenix, #occupyoakland. However, other three sets of streams are commonly participated by the #15ott top twitterers: streams marked by #egypt, #tahir, and #libya hashtags, hence discussions centered around the Arab spring; streams marked by the #londonriots hashtag with reference to the August 2011 London riots, and streams hashtagged with the title of different Italian political or close-to-political TV programs, namely, #serviziopubblico, #annozero, and #vieniviaconme. This seems to raise a set of considerations on the profile of top twitterers in Twitter streams relevant to public reasoning on social contention of high impact for the general public. First, under such circumstances the individuals who take part most actively are likely to be already active participants in other streams relevant to informal political debates. Second, as Segerberg and Bennet (2011: 199) suggest, Twitter is to be considered within the media ecology and not as a stand-alone interactive platform. In fact, politically active twitterers are also likely to exploit traditional mass media channels to collect information on and discuss about social contention and political issues in general.

Concerning in-stream networking mechanisms, the top ten conversations - understood as exchanges of at least one @reply or mention in each direction between any two twitterers - involve 16 players. They are mostly individual twitterers, a part from infofreeflow and occupybologna, the first being a collective blog (infofreeflow.noblogs.org) and the latter the Bologna chapter of the OWS movement (occupyitaly.org). The shape of such top interactions prevents one from describing real networking mechanisms cutting across the stream. In fact, only two of the involved players participate in more than one conversation. In line with Kwack et al. (2010)'s results, this finding suggests that Twitter streams related to social contention and characterized by crowdsourced management patterns, are more likely to enact news media mechanisms rather than real networking processes among the twitterers.

In fact, one can focus on RT and linking patterns within the stream to investigate specific news agenda mechanisms. 3,527 tweets in the analyzed portion of the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream are retweets, hence almost 44% of the sample is made of tweets constantly retweeted by different players. During the first ten days after the protest, the percentage of RT even reached an average of 61%. Given the crowd-sourced management pattern characterizing the stream it is difficult to define this dynamic as a gatekeeping process. Perhaps, the only case in which the stream was being manipulated occurred on October 20, when two players constantly retweeted a tweet posted by zero81, generating over 700 retweets.

Concerning linking practices, within the analyzed portion of the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream, overall 65% of tweets contain hyperlinks to other sources of information. Again, such a diffuse dynamic prevent from talking of gatekeeping mechanisms. Rather, the finding seems to suggest that most of the players involved in the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream participated in the stream by providing alternative sources of information on the protest. In fact, RT and linking practices are amplifying mechanisms enacting news media processes rather than conversational interactions among Twitter users.

The following section will specifically focus on the processes of meaning construction underlying the #15ott hashtagged Twitter stream. By looking at the content of the most relevant hashtags, linked external sources, and words within the stream, it will attempt to describe how the #15ott stream became functional to structure a topically informed political debate around the Italian chapter of the 15 October protest for Global Change.

#15ott Twitter Stream: Processes of Meaning Construction

As said, the use of additional hashtags in the #15ott Twitter stream increased over time. Overall, the sample contains 16,305 instances of additional hashtags. But let us now specifically focus on the 10 top hashtags, which constitutes 23% of such instances, namely #indignati, #15o, #napoli, #roma, #15oct, #balckbloc, #occupyrome, #notav, #indignados, and #occupybologna.

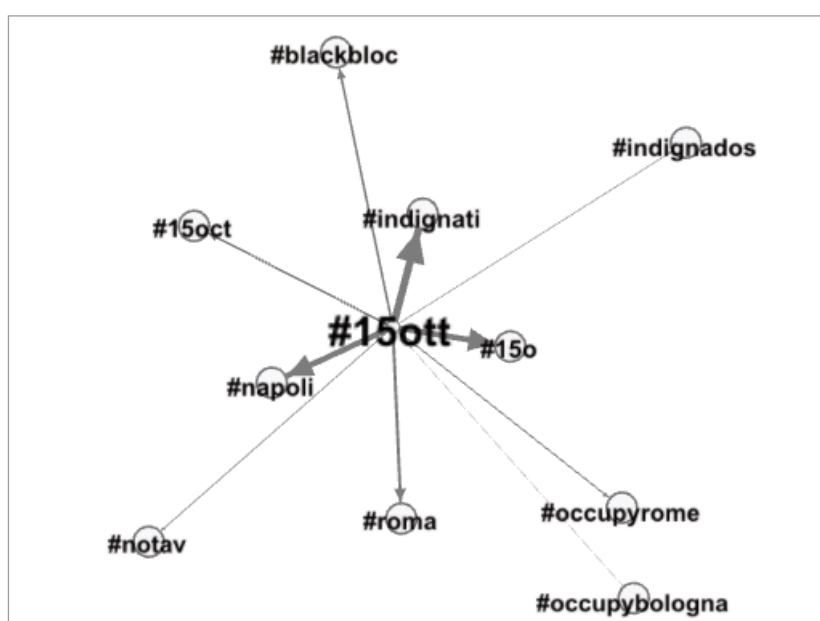


Figure 4: #15ott egonet network with the 10 most frequent additional hashtags

Figure 4 shows such top hashtags laid out as nodes of the #15ott egonetwork. The nearer the hashtag and the thicker its edge to #15ott, the more related its stream to the #15ott stream. The figure shows that one can identify three layers of the conversation developed on this Twitter stream in relation to the Italian chapter of the 15 October protest. One layer develops along the positioning of the protest as part of a transnational reality. As said, the international hashtags #15o and #15oct, but also the originally Spanish #indignados, transpose the conversation on transnational Twitter streams where interactions are more likely to be diffused and loosely related. Conversely, the second layer redirects the conversation towards specifically contingent events. In other words, hashtags like #roma, #napoli, and #blackbloc bolster the emergence of streams narrowly focused on factual events occurred on October 15 and the following days. #roma, for instance, tags tweets concerned with the Rome protest and its outcomes. #napoli marks tweets dealing with police searches in Naples among activists involved in the Rome riots. #blackbloc specifically centers the conversation on the identity of the hooded protesters who set Rome on fire in the day of the protest.

The third layer develops around the Italian collective actors more or less directly involved in the movement for Global Change, and therefore in the 15 October protests. In fact, #occupyrome and #occupybologna tag streams centered on the Rome and Bologna chapters of the Occupy Movement, respectively. Similarly, #indignati tags those tweets concerned with the Italian involvement in the Indignados mobilization. The use of #notav in the #15ott stream is particularly interesting because it directly relates the long lasting Italian mobilization against the construction of the Turin-Lion TAV (high-speed rail system)⁴ to the newborn movement for Global Change. This seems to suggest that in current public reasoning on social contention the most different actors tend to be framed as part of a common multi-issue and multi-level mobilization.

Let us now draw attention to the processes of meaning construction enacted by the extensive posting of hyperlinks to external sources of information. The sample contains 5,244 occurrences of hyperlinks with the 10 top URLs providing 42% of such occurrences. However, one of the top links is an URL retweeted 729 times on the same day by two only users, hence it was excluded from the analysis. The remaining top external sources range from posts on personal blogs, to articles on online alternative media (i.e., peacereporter.it, looponline.info), on to columns published on online local newspapers (i.e., iltempo.it), twittered comic strips, posts by high-profile bloggers (i.e., Frankie.tv) and posts by low-profile bloggers. Two considerations need to be raised here: first, these top external sources of information are extremely varied in terms of genre, text, and reliability levels. Second, interestingly enough, none of them is related to any national mainstream media.

Figure 5 maps the leading topics covered by these external sources of information.

⁴ No Tav is an Italian social movement active since 2002. Its main goal is to oppose the construction of the Turin-Lion high-speed rail system. The reasons behind this opposition are related to the environmental and economic impact that such rail system would have on the territory (notavtorino.org).

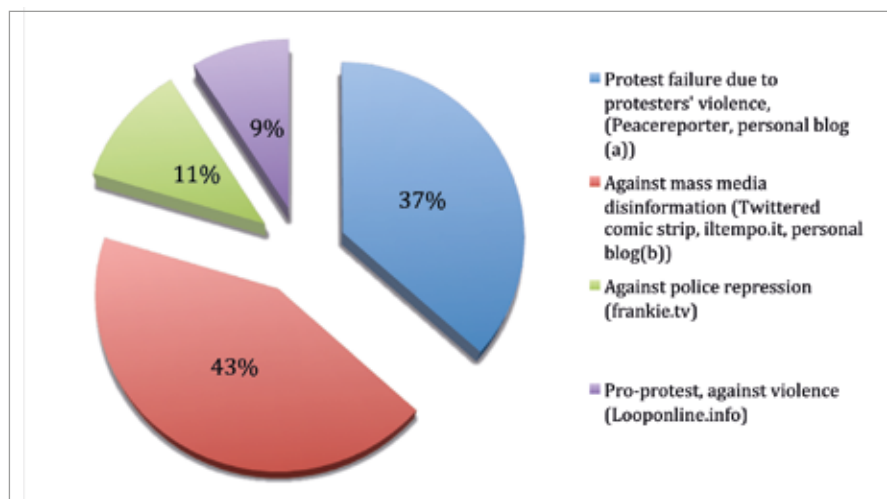


Figure 5: Leading topics in the top most linked external sources

Four are the main topics differently dealt with by the mentioned external sources of information: the disinformation spread by the mass media in relation to the Rome protest on October 15, the failure of the protest primarily due to the violence used by a conspicuous amount of participants, the repressive tactics of protest policing adopted by the police in the streets of Rome, and the importance of the protest despite the use of violence by part of the protesters. These conversational dynamics seem to be confirmed by the analysis of the top words used in the sampled tweet.



Figure 6: Tweets' word cloud (tagcrowd.com)

Figure 6 shows a word cloud of the 35 most frequent words used across the sample. The bigger the word in the cloud, the more conspicuous its frequency in the sample. The cloud was created by excluding the most common words in the Italian vocabulary, along with hashtags and Twitter usernames. The cloud shows that the texts posted by #15ott twitterers was very much focused on the violent events occurred in Rome on the October 15 protest, with a special interest in the so-called Black Block who set the city on fire. The leading words *violenza* and *polizia*, (violence, and police) together with *distruzione*, *scontri*, *all'inferno*, *rabbia*, *sanpietrino* (to destroy, clashes, to hell, rage, cobblestone) provide evidence that in the days following the protest twitterers were primarily interested in discussing both protest violent tactics and police's strategies of repression. Words like *giornata*, *manifestazione*, *corteo*, *manifestanti*, *piazza*, *piazza San Giovanni*, *Italia* and *Italy* (day, demonstration, rally, demonstrators, square, San Giovanni square, Italy) also ground the discussion on the very events of October 15. Conversely, words like *contronarrazione*, *cronaca*, *media*, *verità*, *video* and *vignetta* (counter-narration, journalistic account, media, truth, shooting and comic strip) shift the conversation on the coverage of the events by mainstream media. To conclude, words like *maroni*, *vendola*,

and politica (Maroni⁵, Vendola⁶, and politics), reframe the stream in the institutional political context.

In sum, hashtags, hyperlinks, and textual outputs in the #15ott Twitter stream all suggest that twitterers interested in discussing the Italian chapter of the 15 October protest for Global Change, enacted specific processes of meaning constructions around a series of relevant topics. Overall, data show that the stream fluctuated from more abstract issues, such as the positioning of the Italian mobilisation within the transnational movement and the identification of the Italian local chapters of the protest, to more contingent issues like the violent events occurred in Rome and their outcomes and the biased coverage of the events by the mainstream media. Finally, part of the stream included elements of the institutional political context by recalling specific politicians involved in the commentary of the Rome events.

Discussion and Conclusion

By exploring Twitter streams and their dynamics, this study sheds light on processes of public reasoning and opinion formation around social contention. Hence, the analysis here presented is primarily exploratory. It specifically focuses on the Italian chapter of the 15 October 2011 polycentric protest for Global Change for two reasons: its impact on the Italian public opinion and the increasing level of Twitter activity registered in the country. The four lines of investigation developed in the analysis are functional to explore how public reasoning around social contention develops on Twitter streams after social protest of high impact for the general public.

By exploring the longitudinal positioning of the Italian #15ott Twitter stream among the corresponding international #15o and #15oct hashtagged streams, the first line of investigation showed how the impact of the Rome riots of October 15 was mirrored by the booming Twitter activity on the day of the protest and the following three days. Such trend was not equaled in the two international streams taken for comparison.

The following three lines of investigation specifically focused on the #15ott stream. First, it was possible to ascertain that the top players in the stream were neither collective advocacy actors nor institutional organizations or news media channels. Most of the top players in the stream were individual twitterers already involved in streams centered on other informal political debates. By looking at changing dynamics over time it was then possible to highlight two specific patterns: within the #15ott hashtagged stream both the percentage of tweets containing links and that of tweets containing additional hashtags increased over time, as the stream diminished in volume. Hence, on the one hand as the stream developed longitudinally, twitterers increasingly posted additional sources of information as the availability of those sources was still constantly increasing. On the other hand, over time, the #15ott stream ramified towards other Twitter streams. In other words while the original stream was losing ground, public reasoning around the events started shifting towards specific sub-topics.

Second, the analysis of @replies and RT retweets practices within the #15ott stream provided evidence of the crowdsourced management of the stream and showed that such practices worked more as amplifying mechanisms enacting news agenda processes rather than conversational interactions among Twitter users.

5 Roberto Maroni was the then Italian Minister of the Interior.

6 Nichi Vendola is the leader of Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà, an Italian left-wing political party.

Finally, the analysis of the underlying processes of meaning construction enacted within the #15ott stream focused on three specific types of content: hashtags, linked external sources, and tweets' textual content. This part of the analysis showed how, by closely looking at twitter streams and their constitutive elements, it is possible to map the development of meaning construction around different topics relevant to the stream's primary concern (in this case the Italian chapter of the 15 October polycentric protest for Global Change). The findings showed that the stream embraced different issues, from abstract to contingent topics of discussion and that it outsourced to the most varied external sources of information alternative to the mainstream media.

In sum, the study shows that public reasoning around social contention in Twitter stream does involve individual players and develops around the construction of specific lines of meaning construction. Despite being constantly related to the mass media agenda setting, individuals' involvement occurs via the exchange of information on online alternative channels. What is still to be ascertained is how Twitter streams can affect the levels of offline participation in corresponding processes of public reasoning, opinion formation and, eventually, traditional and less traditional forms of political participation.

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Protest Politics Through Music in the Basque Country. The Spread of the Lip Dub as a New Form of Collective Action

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Abstract

In what has been called the second phase of the development of social movements in Basque Country arises a powerful youth resistance movement. This movement has as distinctive feature the important role of music (especially punk subculture) and the meaning of style in his joint. The play and symbolic dispute that carries out this movement is related to the countercultural tradition and emphasizes the need for an analytical perspective as the one proposed by Eyerman and Jamison, in which the focus is put on the relationship between social movements and culture, as re-configurators of new cognitive and symbolic praxis. The interaction and coordination of these movements with the national liberation movement is at times conflicting, and is likewise reflected through music: the progressive role of basque language or the incorporation of musical instruments and elements of ethnic tradition. The institutionalization of this relationship gives to the music a major role in the mobilization of national liberation movement. When this political and cultural movement seems to show signs of exhaustion, and others are specific to the third phase (15M), actually it seems to be an update of some new forms of social mobilization. A good example of this would be the use of *lip dub* as an element of expression and movement, combining the artistic component, musical performance present in the previous phase, with new technologies and their impact on contemporary forms of mobilization. We finally stress the fact, in the Basque case, of the increasing of this kind of more visual and theatrical activism, and less direct confrontation, in which is re-used the tradition of music as a mobilizer element and popular participation as critical elements.

Repertoires of Collective Action: contexts and tactical innovation

The repertoires of collective action² (cited hereafter as CA), through which social movements convey in public their claims and attempt to achieve their goals, develop over time. Sidney Tarrow (1997) conceives collective action repertoires as learned cultural creations that emerge from the struggle. According to this author, the conflict arises partially by convention; there are some patterns of protest and ways of claiming that make sense as the actions are carried out, which both activists and authorities, as well as the general

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² We consider collective action (CA) the collective acts of protest or claim that are conducted by organizations and groups within civil society (Aguilar, 2001). If the CA is common and maintained over time, then it becomes a social movement (Tarrow, 1997).

public, are able to identify and to interpret. According to Tarrow, these actions are culturally transmitted, institutionalizing collective action routines that he calls the *repertoire of collective action*. That would be so, among many others, the case of demonstrations, strikes, or barricades; the modularity of the repertoire means that the form of the collective action acquires the capacity to be used by a wide range of social movements with different goals and in a wide variety of situations.

Through this article, we focus on the creation of innovative repertoires of CA which, just as Tarrow notes, may become later generalized and culturally institutionalized, or on the contrary might become diluted over time after an emergency phase. *Lip dub*³ videos, which are currently in a phase of major expansion and are used by several social movements, are the innovative forms of CA we tackle in this work. The generation of innovative tactics or forms of CA is essential to conflict dynamics, and to the interaction between social movements and authorities. From the perspective of the political process theories, the generation of new forms of CA is crucial in the dynamics of social movements, as McAdam explains. He demonstrates that the introduction of new forms of protest by the Afro-American insurgency – such as the collective sit-in protests against racial segregation – corresponds to the peaks of social movement activity. While facing with white authorities and racist groups, the African American pro-civil rights movement elaborated innovative forms of protest and kept alive their activity; that is to say, they were *innovating their tactics* of action (McAdam, 1983).

The political process theoretical perspectives gradually evolved through a more relational approach about the interaction between social movements and authorities. In the book *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) propose a model where, to explain the dynamic nature of the mobilization in a contentious political context, the innovative CA of the agents involved is a crucial element. According to these three authors, within an interactive process of contention, the repertoires of action evolve by means of improvisation and struggle, being this new form of CA a result of both creative changes as extensions of already known struggle routines.

We consider *lipdub* as a good example of an innovative contemporary form of CA. Furthermore, we believe that if in every single case of CA innovation the context in which it emerges is decisive, in the very case of *lip dub* this is even truer. The spread of information and communication technologies (cited hereafter as ICT) throughout the last decades, and the consequent shift brought about by the social and information networks, are essential for the development of actions such as *lip dub*. This leads us to reflect about the relationship between societal context and the characteristics of the CA, in the sense that we consider that the incidence of tactics of CA with respect to power relations on which attempts to influence is an element that must be taken into account. It should not be forgotten that, if vindication, protest and mobilization is what we are dealing with, the connection between the collective action repertoires that are generated and the sources of social control which they intend to face, is a vital point.

An interesting historical example of the relationship between CA repertoires generated and sources of social control, that may help us to understand the kind of situations we are analyzing, can be found in the

3 Since this is an emerging phenomenon, we turn to the Wikipedia definition of this concept: “A *lip dub* is a type of video that combines lip synching and audio dubbing to make a music video. It is made by filming individuals or a group of people lip synching while listening to a song or any recorded audio then dubbing over it in post editing with the original audio of the song. There is often some form of mobile audio device used such as an MP3 player. Often they look like simple music videos, although many involve a lot of preparation and production. *Lip dubs* can be done in a single unedited shot that often travels through different rooms and situations within a building. They have become popular with the advent of mass participatory video content sites like YouTube” (extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lip_dub date accessed: 01/12/2012)

work of Karl Marx⁴. The German author in *Capital* attempts to, among other things, identify the basis of power relations associated with the advent of bourgeois society of the time, in which the way the work is socially organized is a key factor. As this author points out, work is a social activity, and the production of goods depends on the maintenance of power relations instituted for this purpose. Thus, from one of the basic premises of Capitalism, the institution of private property, Marx observes how the ownership of the means to carry out the production of goods falls on a class, which is in full swing in his time: the bourgeois; while workers sell the only thing that they possess, which is their own vital workforce. Thus the control over the means of production defines the power relations, which is the source of social control (Marx, 2009).

While inequalities between social classes increased during the nineteenth century, the workers began to mobilize in different ways, generating innovative forms of CA. The labor repertoires of collective action of this period covered from marches to riots on the streets, or the act of breaking industrial machines (Flacks, 2004). However, Marx himself bet on strike as the way of struggle, or form of CA, that would eventually spread and become more efficient. Following this work, once identified the main source of social control -focused as indicated on the process of production and control of their means- such a thing as a strike would become the most appropriate form to maximize the collective action, since it directly affects this process. On the one hand because it succeeds in physically stopping the production process of goods, and on the other hand because it valorizes the only thing the workers possess, their own vital activity as part of the production process. If there are no workers to invest their time and their life force, no goods or commodities will be generated; which actually disables the power that the possession of the means of production gives to the industrial bourgeoisie. And the strike is the kind of CA form that highlights this aspect. Thus in the case reported is established the relationship between sources of social control and the nature of CA repertoires, what allows us to foresee which would be the most appropriate way of achieving certain goals in a specific context. It is also emphasized how the very context of the period allows the creation of specific innovative forms of CA, such as the strike.

Today in the 21st Century, in an age some authors have referred to as the ‘information age’ (Castells, 1997), we observe how, in the context of a flexible and changing Capitalism, new communication technologies acquire a crucial role. Guy Debord – developing the Marxist idea of commodity fetishism – would assert the primacy of the representative, which Baudrillard (1978) would take to the extreme as ‘simulacrum’: “The whole life of those in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation” (Debord, 2003: 37). Consumer Capitalism phagocytes all authentic human experiences, transforming them into a consumable product and resells them through advertising and media. It converts all parts of human life in a “show”, that is, a system of symbols and representations ruled by his own internal logic. “The spectacle suffers from such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image” (Debord, 2003: 50). The development of the ideas of Marx carried out by Debord emphasizes the ideological domination and alienation. The spectacle results in “the modern day nightmare, prisoner of itself, which finally expresses only his need for sleep” (Debord, 2003: 44). This will basically be the interpretation of the new means of social control that will perform the counterculture – criticized, for example, by Heath and Potter (2005) – and as a result, it will lead its actions towards the symbolic level, from the symbolic distortion of the situationists’ “détournement” to the symbolic work of the subcultures (Hebdige, 2004; Marcus, 1998).

Each context, each new form of domination, each new source of social control has new opportunities

4 The original idea of the example described has collected from the work of Richard Flacks (2004), to which we added some ideas.

for resistance within (Langman, 2005), and enables the generation of repertoires of CA in line to the new situations. Currently, besides the *lip dub* studied here, we see the advent of “cyber-repertoires” of action, or the use of telematized social networks during the several demonstrations occurred in 2011 (Arab countries, 15-M, Occupy Wall Street, Italy, Greece...); all of which fits into this logic of re-using of new technologies and establishing an interesting relationship between context, conflict and action.

Therefore, once underlined the importance of the structural and relational conditions with respect to the dynamics of social movements and their repertoires of action, it becomes essential for us, from now on, to refer to the whole stream of thought and analysis which has emerged in the social sciences in recent years, and on which we will focus from now on in this article. This is a more cultural perspective, in which the symbolic and identitary (Offe, 1988; Melucci, 1989), and even the emotional approach (Jasper, 1997) gets a central role. The role of music as a conveyor of these symbolic-cultural and emotional elements, a central point in the case of *lip dub*, and its relevance with respect to social mobilization, will be our focus of interest from now on.

Singing the politics

Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, in *Music and Social Movements, Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (1998), explore a perspective that links culture and politics. Like Melucci, but lower in their level of abstraction, their claim is that, by combining culture and politics, social movements serve to reconstitute both, providing a boarder political and historical context for cultural expression, and offering, in turn, the resources of culture – traditions, music, artistic expression – to the action repertoires of political struggle. Cultural traditions are mobilized and reformulated in social movements and this mobilization and reconstruction of tradition is central, they contend, to what social movements are, and to what they signify for social and cultural change.

They focus on the interaction of music and social movements, and conceive this relation as collective learning processes, as a cognitive approach to social movements, considering musical expression in social movements as a kind of cognitive praxis. Cognitive is used to mean both truth-bearing and knowledge-producing. Thus, to the categories of collective action discussed, they add the concept of *exemplary action*. As represented or articulated in the cognitive praxis of social movements, exemplary action can be thought as a specification of the symbolic action discussed by Melucci and others. The exemplary action of cognitive praxis is symbolic in several senses; but it is also more than merely symbolic:

...the exemplary action of music and art is lived as well as though: it is cognitive, but it also draws on more emotive aspects of human consciousness. As cultural expression, exemplary action is self-revealing and thus a symbolic representation of the individual and collective which are the movement. It is symbolic in that it symbolizes all the movement stands for; what is seen as virtuous and what is seen as evil. In the age of symbols, an age of electronic media and the transmission of virtual images, the exemplary action of a movement can serve an educative function for many more than the participants and their immediate public. This exemplary action can also be recorded, in film, words, and music, and thus given more than the fleeting presence which for Hannah Arendt characterized the exemplary action of the Greek polis, one of the sources of our conceptualization. (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 23)

From this view, for Eyerman and Jamison, art and music – culture – are forms of both knowledge and action, part of the frameworks of interpretation and representation produced within social movements and

through which they influence the broader social culture. As such, they are much more than functional devices for recruitment or resources to be mobilized. The ideals of the movement are thus objectified, embodied, and expressed in practices which can be seen, learned, and transmitted to others. In the age of global media this transmission can involve millions of people, and it can also take place extremely effectively through cultural expressions like music, song and more recently – we claim – others like *lip dub*. What Herbert Marcuse or Castells – or Debord in a more negative sense - referred to as a new sensibility, a cultural revolution, has indeed affected the values and customs of late modern societies.

In another way, the kinds of cultural processes that Eyerman and Jameson explore resemble – they say – to what Raymond Williams termed “structures of feeling”. Their point is that those structures of feeling are more than merely emotive – they contain a rational or logical core, a truth-bearing significance, as well. The construction of meaning through music and song is, they claim, a central aspect of collective identity formation. Songs are also channels of communication for activists – within movements, but also between different movements, and, indeed, between movement generations. Social movements help articulating meaning and identity, and generate strong emotional commitment, even if they are also instrumental and strategic. Within social movements actors reinterpret their relation to the world and to others in it. They experiment with identities, individual and collective, by restating them in conscious ways, as authentic and/or traditional, for instance.

There are definitely strategic aspects to this process of mediating culture and politics. But that is not the only or even the most essential point, especially not if one assumes the point of view of the actor involved. Social movement actors believe in what they do and their activities are connected to how they identify and distinguish themselves. Social movement activity in this sense is intimately connected with meaning and identity: it is exemplary action. Part of the emergent culture produced within social movements represent an alternative vision and way of life to that of the dominant society. As emergent cultures, in other words, social movements transform marginal subcultures into real alternatives by offering visions and models of alternative forms of meaning and identity which can be consciously chosen. (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 170)

In this sense, this conceptualization links to the ideas of Antonio Gramsci (1973): in particular, his concepts of hegemony, organic intellectuals, and historical blocs. Social movements are the contexts, not merely vehicles, of social change. It is within movement space that artists, singers, songwriters, as movement intellectuals, uncover a new dimension to their work as they discover a new identity for themselves and for their art. In and through their role as activist-artist or activist-performer such individuals help to constitute the cognitive praxis of social movements, creating the possibility of transforming the wider, dominant culture.

Exemplary action is a form of communicative action. It aims at communicating a vision of what the world could be like to others, as much as it provides a forum or form for reaching consensual agreement. This vision is expressed through the form and content of action and is an end or good in itself. At the same time, exemplary action is self-revelatory; through it an actor reveals her own intimate image of herself and how she would like others to see her. Such action is communicative in the sense that it must be performed in public; it requires an audience to appreciate what it exemplifies. All social movements, we would argue, contain an exemplary dimension to their activity. This is a distinguishing criterion of a social movement, separating it from interest or pressure groups, which are purely strategic in their actions. (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 172)

Basque Country: Rock the politics, move your country

In the Basque Country, it occurs a deep imbrication between music and social movements. At the same time, both of them imbricate with a Basque culture that, because of its subordinate character with respect to the dominant (Spanish), is structured as popular culture (Amezaga, 1995).

Euskal Kantagintza Berria. In the wake of the protest song

During the late 1960s is organized a large musical movement, known as *Euskal Kantagintza Berria*, composed by figures like Michel Labeguerie, Mikel Laboa, Benito Lertxundi, Lourdes Iriondo, Xabier Lete, Imanol, and have the group *Ez Dok Amairu* as an emblematic reference. This movement largely integrates the influences of international musical styles represented by figures such as George Brassens in France, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez in North America and Violeta Parra, Atahualpa Yupanqui and Victor Jara in Latin America (Amezaga, 1995). But in turn, it would be expression of a deeper movement present in the Basque society, a movement of recovery and cultural affirmation. Josu Amezaga distinguishes at least three expressions in this moving background: on the one hand, those who understood it as an ethnical cultural revival movement; secondly, those for whom it was primarily a national recovery in the political sense; and finally those who placed the music as an important component of a Basque aesthetic renovation project, where it is put Oteiza (1993). They all will appear at the time and mixed.

In the way Eyerman and Jamison described, the song becomes a mean of mobilization and exemplary action to launch new messages of hope, justice, peace and freedom, while reconstruction and dissemination context of a renewed basque culture, a new identity, denounce injustices, expressing the need to create a national conscience, to give hope and bring literature to the public. The spread of festivals reaches a critical importance as events of collective action and expression, where close links with social movements are made- many of these festivals were assertive -, becoming a pretext for people to gather.

The Basque Radical Rock. Our small revolution

The punk explosion spreads dramatically as well amongst several youth groups in the Basque Country at the end of the 70's, in a context of severe economic, social and political crisis. The break with the cultural world of their elders, *Ez dok amairu*, seems irreconcilable. The denial of the institutionalized crystallizes - especially in the economically most degraded areas - in a great and sudden explosion of punk bands that pop up like mushrooms, together with a redefinition of space or use of physical space specifically differentiated by and for young people ('the street', certain taverns, a wave of squatters called *gaztetxes*), and a whole bunch of small labels and channels of communication (like fanzines, magazines, free radios, music bands, concerts and their own style).

The magma of this youth explosion was labeled – although not without controversy - as 'Basque Radical Rock' (RRV in its acronym in Spanish), a label which all subsumed groups rejected, although it certainly reflected some common features. Jakue Pascual (2010) defends his characterization as a social movement, "Youth Resistance Movement (MRJ in its acronym in Spanish)"

characterized by punk, 'assemblyism' and their own anti-repression stands, made from a juvenile status controlled by the police, which is perceived itself in terms of belonging to a territorial, cultural and symbolic differentiated space. It is a movement that links to a whole aesthetic explosion and to a spatial and expressive redefinition that social

movements were developing in the Western countries, but at the same time it has its own specificity as a Basque case, intermingling the two prisms in several different ways. (Pascual, 2010: 16)

The MRJ coexists with the structuration of the political left-wing nationalism, which opts for the enhancement of alternatives to those introduced from various spheres of power, acquiring a configuration of socio-political movement. After a turbulent initial reaction, the pro-independence left wingers react in 1985 launching the campaign “Martxa eta borroka,” a series of music festivals featuring the major groups of the RRV.

At that moment, in the Basque Country is taking place, therefore, a double filter – due to the variable of the national question – of rejection to conventional politics: on the one hand, the radical nationalist groups’ rejection to the institutions emanating from institutions reform regime, with an anti-Spanish component; and on the other hand, the anti-political attitude of the youth movement built around punk. As Lahusen (1992) notes, both positions coexist and largely overlap, though not without problems and tensions. He describes it as a “frame alignment”, taking the concept developed by Benford et al. (1986). Repression is a key factor, pointed out by authors such as Benjamin Tejerina (2010) as a trigger for many social movements, that act in this case as an important catalyst for this alignment, addressing especially the youth sectors (Pascual, 2010; Amezaga, 1995).

This alignment provides a very fertile context for cultural creativity and the (re) construction of identities, in line with what Eyerman and Jamison state:

The option that a large number of young Basques make in this context, involves the development of their own identity as a collective that brings about a separate being. The “official us” is questioned and denied by a “particular us.” The us of the “baska” or the “crew” opposes “other” adult institutionalized and institutionalizing, nevertheless there are not only two levels of identification (by and from the radical youth), there is the presence of a level intermediate as well, which is linked to left-wing nationalism as a force of rupture, in part critical to the current system, but sometimes playing the role of mediator between the above mentioned identities. (Pascual, 2010: 116)

This reconstruction of identities and cultural production will affect the conception of Basque culture itself. Josu Amezaga (1995) supported the thesis that the fact that Basque culture has been historically lessened will have as a result its own configuration as popular culture, and this will help the connection and integration with other popular culture such as the youth culture. This interaction occurs mainly within the social movement, facilitated and intensified by both that alignment and mediation carried out by the nationalist left in the strategic mobilization in their struggles in the more strictly political field. This will allow the reconstruction and modernization of the concept of culture by the Basque nationalist groups, while largely propitiate the integration of second-generation Spanish immigrants in a common frame of reference. Among the groups of RRV, and participated in many festivals related to Basque cultural demands, the presence of Euskara is growing (Amezaga, 1995). The change from Spanish language to Euskera in Kortatu’s songs appears as a landmark. Jacqueline Urla, in an interesting paper entitled *The new ‘rhythm’ of Euskera: identity and mestizaje in the work of Negu Gorriak* (2001), accounts for this step -Kortatu to Negu Gorriak *euskaltzale* (pro-Basque language)- as a political commitment and the new group’s symbolic link with the American black movement. Similarly may be noted the inclusion, by many of the groups, of traditional elements and instruments (like trikitixa, alboka...) or even participation in homage of some of the referential protagonists of the Basque New Song as Mikel Laboa (Amezaga, 1995).

The relationship between MRJ and the nationalist left occurs not without tensions and criticism - in which the nationalist left was accused of 'taking advantage' of the youth movement - but the protagonists agree in indicating a benefit to both⁵. On the one hand, for the youth movement, because they get at their disposal a range of infrastructure connected with the nationalist left. For example:

- A media network, especially through the newspaper *Egin*, which will play a leading role in promoting the initial MRJ against marginalization by the mainstream media.
- The taverns linked to the nationalist left, whose important role as spaces of political reproduction (Perez Agote, 2008), will now also allow cultural reproduction, making the RRV bands its soundtrack .
- A political support, especially to festivals, and to *gaztetxe* (squat), *txoznas* (street taverns for the festivities to support some social movements), free radio stations and other infrastructures of the youth movement, not without some initial tensions at local level.

The MRJ had not been the same, or even particularly important in duration, without this relationship. But neither had been a nationalist left, beyond strategic mobilization in their political and symbolic struggles and, that builds its own collective identity within the cultural production that takes place in this alignment. Thus it crystallizes an aesthetic mode of subcultures, a soundtrack - that fill their young taverns - and a new cultural dimension in direct connection with the younger generation. Together, although they have not always get along well, construct a symbolic space ('the street'), mutual recognition (as individuals subjected to the same repression and oppression), communicative features (of relationships, the conflict of the fluidity between the MRJ, social movements and the political) and material infrastructure: *gaztetxes* (squats), taverns, *txoznas* fanzines, pirate radios, free radios... The outstanding ability to mobilize collective action, such as cognitive praxis, in its dimension of collective identity construction, while communication of an alternative worldview, will lead to an extension of the 1980's spirit in Basque Country at least 25 years.

Changing the rhythm

During the 1990s previous contextual framework seems to consolidate and hold, with a certain mutation: unlike the first generation of RRV groups, whose relationship to the nationalist left was always controversial, in this second generation there is a lineup - much larger ideological.

During the first decade of the century, however, begin to appear some signs of exhaustion. There are several factors that come together at the turn of the century. On the one hand, take place some artistic and creative blocking: in almost all the *gaztetxes* (squats), local or *txoznas* remains the same previous wave soundtrack. Basque counterculture circuits begin to appear, for the young, with an outmoded image, taken-for-granted, that refers to past experiences and situations; the experimentation with new sound aesthetic principles seems to happen more out of the movements than within.

In addition, links with the nationalist left begin to become problematic. The political and social wear resulting from the continuation of armed struggle and antiterrorist dynamics drag down the left-wing nationalism, but also the cultural expressions that are linked to it; while others disengage from movement, and

5 Extracted from Udako Euskal Unibertsitatea (Summer Course of the Summer Basque University): "Euskal punk eta (des)eraikuntza nazionala: ukaziotik harago" (Basque Punk And National (de)construction. Beyond Denial).

redirect their activity to a purely artistic plane. If the previous generation of bands had produced an alignment around the nationalist left, some of the next generations would mark distances, displaying a clearer separation between culture and politics -which in any case will be expressed in more general terms, mainly with commitment to Euskera.

It is also important the tendency that begins in the early 90's, pointed by Jakue Pascual (2010): the privatization processes of social behavior and the exposure to media, and the consolidation of the autonomic legal structures. Thus it happens the weakening of the alternative cultural production, particularly visible in urban areas, in front of prevailing and almost omnipotent mass culture industry, mainly pop -which increases its presence in commercial music stations or even in some of the former alternative circuits.

The year 2011 has left important developments in the Basque context. On the one hand, we can see a deep shift in the political cycle, with the end of ETA's armed activity. This historic decision is preceded by a deep and self-critical debate within the nationalist left (Batasuna, 2009), led among others by Arnaldo Otegi, culminating with a strong commitment by purely political and democratic means, and ideological, institutional and mass struggle. The new context allows a reconfiguration and consolidation of the political spectrum for the pro-independence left, which is released to an open dispute of the political, social and electoral hegemony. In the municipal elections of May 2011, the coalition Bildu, which brings together the pro-independence left, the alternative left and the nationalist socialdemocracy, reaches 315,000 votes -in what constitutes the return of separatist left-wing political candidates after 8 years of banning-, getting remarkable institutional power. In the Spanish parliamentary elections of November 2011, the coalition, now named Amaiur, adds another political party -Aralar, a split from nationalist left critical with the armed struggle- gets its best results -333,000 votes, 22%.

Meanwhile, in the context of an emerging global economic crisis, in Spain - and in other countries like Israel or Occupy Wall Street in the U.S- spread collective protest movements such as the 15M. Also known as "outraged", these forms of collective action are based on the occupation of public space, highlighting the camping. They show a remarkable "outrage" with the management of the economic crisis and especially a strong criticism and alienation from formal democracy ("They do not represent us" says a banner of 15M movement), against which they try assemblies as form of organization, and a rejection of categories and means of institutionalized politics ("apolitical", "neither left nor right").

In the Basque Country these two phenomena are in counterphase. While 15M emphasizes the criticism against representative democracy, in the Basque case several political sectors that until today had been critical with legal institutions and focused on counter-power strategies -what includes armed struggle - now shift its orientation. Nowadays the aim is the construction of political alternatives in clear dispute of the political and social hegemony, and the conquest of electoral institutions. Thus, the relationship between 15M and Basque social movements of the previous phase would be initially conflicting and with a mutual distrust; and eventually Basque nationalist sensitivity is out of 15M movement⁶. This new context and its possible evolution seems, therefore, that could influence the repertoires of collective action, the (re) configuration of social movements and even - especially in the Basque case, given its close overlap in recent decades - the phenomena of cultural change. But in 2011 something more happened in the Basque Country: the extraordinary spread of a new form of collective action, the *lip dub*.

⁶ We can find a reference about this in Wikipedia, http://eu.wikipedia.org/wiki/M-15_mugimendua 12/01/2012

Lip-dubbing

In this work we stress the point that changing social contexts carry out substantive changes in the forms of social protest. Thus, as stated by Castells (2004), the development in the last decades of microelectronic technologies and software communications have produced a deep shift in social networks. Nowadays networks can be reconfigured in real time, both locally and globally, and this fact directly affects the nature of interpersonal relationships.

But the readings about technology have found more negative views than the technological optimism of Castells' vector, and have largely fueled the ideological spectrum and cognitive development of critical social movements. We stress the pessimistic view about the media and mass culture of the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno and Horkheimer (1971), or what we mentioned before in Debord (2003); these authors insist in the effects of ideological and symbolic domination linked to the media. Walter Benjamin (2008), who doesn't have a technophobic view, opens the door to an ambivalent perspective: not everything is domination, there are other forms of interpretation (Martin-Barbero, 1987). Within the International Situationist, Debord advocated the "détournement", which means to take an object created by the Capitalism or the hegemonic political system, and distort its original meaning producing a critical effect, played on the ground which produces the domination. This symbolic game of distortion would be profusely used by the punk movement.

In this context of progressive centrality of images and symbols -a process closely linked originally to advertising consumerism campaigns (Ewen, 1988) and encouraged also by the extension of ICT-, some social movements, either by diffusion processes or by explicit intention of (re) appropriation, incorporate more communicative elements into their repertoires of collective action. The dialectics between criticism and Capitalism related by Boltanski and Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2002), would operate therefore in both directions: social movements that take into account the criticism incorporate also some of the communicative elements of technological change operated by Capitalism; especially the so-called new social movements that incorporate artistic criticism, more sensitive to the expressive and communicative dimensions.

In this context, nowadays we can find an increasing visibility of social protest actions and claims, proliferating those where the images have a central role, and where the symbols, as in the case of *lip dub*, are directly and explicitly shown. This emerging visibility of the AC becomes exportable to all over the world via computers and mobile phones, responding to what Eyerman and Jamison called *exemplary action*. In the analysis of specific cases of *lip dubs* conducted in the Basque Country we will develop this aspect.

In addition to greater visibility, instantaneous communication and information exchange that allow the new technological conditions have direct effects on the contemporary mobilization forms. A *lip dub* uploaded on the Internet can be seen that same day by people of all over the world, but the preparing process of the claiming event is mediated by this communicative aspiration. The 'alterglobal' mobilizations pointed out a critical point in the alternative use of new technologies (Langman, 2005). Thus, we can see how social networks get progressively more telematized, while social mobilization patterns change and arise CA innovations adapted to the new contexts⁷.

This strongly expressive and demonstrative character of *exemplary action*, may serve, therefore, also

⁷ Another case in point would be to the Flash Mobs, events in which a group of people gather in one place suddenly. Here too, ICTs are indispensable in the sense that empower individuals to act together in situations and ways in which the AC was not possible before (Rheingold, 2004).

as a schematic feature of the new context and social movements in the Basque Country, through the vision that they try to express in these concentrated 5-10 minutes of *lip dub*.

Analysis of lipdub protest and claims made in the Basque Country

There are some common features found in all analyzed *lip dub*, which due to its relationship with existing societal contexts, we consider important to highlight. To do this we differentiate between two sets of characteristics: the ones specific to the *lip dub* themselves, as an exercise of audiovisual and demonstrative action (what we would call general characteristics); and those specific features applied to protest and claiming *lip dub* made in the Basque Country. But let's start specifying what has been our selection.

Selection of *lip dub* protests made in Basque Country

→ Lip dub 1 - "Lip dub KUKUTZA"

- **Description:** *lip dub* made by the squatter movement supporters to protest against the threat of demolition of Kukuluta squat, located in the neighborhood of Rekalde (Bilbao). This *lip dub* has been selected because of the social impact of the squatted social center, now demolished, and because of the diverse and huge demonstrations and adhesions that caused weeks before his eviction and subsequent demolition.
- Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2VieT5ksyo>
- Consulted on: 13/01/2012
- Number of visits: 201,105

→ Lip dub 2 - "Lip dub OLENTZERO 2011"

- **Description:** *lip dub* made by the pro-amnesty movement supporters in defense of the rights of Basque political prisoners in the Old Town of Bilbao, and because of the call for national demonstration held in Bilbao on January 7th, 2012.
- Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYSBOqxsCYo>
- Consulted on: 13/01/2012
- Number of visits: 8,946

→ Lip dub 3 - "LipdubOndarru: Herrixe Udaletxea!"

- **Description:** *lip dub* related to the municipal elections of May 2011 and against the banning of leftwing pro-independence political parties. Other similar *lip dubs* take place in small villages like Mutriku or Etxarri. After 8 years of proscription, the leftwing nationalist candidates were again legal.
- Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFMZUomJy9A>
- Consulted on: 13/01/2012
- Number of visits: 61,777

→ Lip dub 4 - "Presoen aldeko Lipdub Lekitto"

- **Description:** *lip dub* protest carried out by the pro-amnesty movement in defense of the political prisoner and refugee rights in the village of Lekeitio, to express solidarity with this group.
- Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qEism8g1Ns>
- Consulted on: 13/01/2012
- Number of visits: 50,097

General characteristics of the lip dub

- **Visuality, images, color:** these features are absolutely central to the *lip dub*. As a clear pattern of demonstrative action (Eyerman, Jamison, 1998), in the *lip dub* we can see a continuing exhibition of explicit and direct images (Ewen, 1988), featured with a striking color through which high visuality of the event is stressed, as well as the representational power and dramatic action.
- **Snapshots:** ICTs enable instantaneous dissemination of information, once it is uploaded to the Internet (Castells, 2004). The *lip dub* follows this same logic, in the sense that once the video is prepared and hung in the web, instantly people from all over the world can observe it.
- **Direct Expressiveness:** a *lip dub* is a type of event in which the expressive function and emotional commitment are central (Eyerman, Jamison, 1998). Here the action itself is configured as an end-bearing demand, and a good in itself, as an artistic creation (Hebdige, 2004). Thus the visual explicitness of the message is directly and immediately sent to the spectator.
- **Positiveness and fun:** the joy and optimistic tone is constant in the *lip dub*. This positivity fits with the characteristics of other types of emotional feelings, like love, affection or solidarity, as Jasper (1997) noted as crucial elements through which claims can be encouraged and promoted, both to support less known struggles as to reaffirm social movements to which one already belongs. The shocking images and, of course, the music, are certainly elements that foster these emotional commitment (Eyerman and Jameson, 1998).
- **Dynamism of the images and the travelling:** the speed of the event, the continuous exposure to changing situations and the very visually traveling as a method of filming are common characteristics of the *lip dub*. We relate it to theoretical perspectives about social acceleration, focusing on increasing velocity that occurs in contemporary societies (Luhmann, 1992).
- **Emotional appeal:** the empowerment of emotions and feelings of the people involved in the event and those who see the *lip dub*, is a central element in these initiatives (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998). The aesthetic combination of music, symbols, colorful pictures, and even the fact that we can see the faces of the people involved in the *lip dub*, laughing and emotionally interacting, leads to stress these feelings and humanizes the activity.

Specific features of the lip dub protests made in the Basque Country

- **Representation and representativity:** there is an attempt of inclusion and representation of all the “catalog” of social movements, such as national liberation, feminist, the squat, the workers, the *euskaltzale* (pro-Basque language individuals in Basque), the young, environmentalist or internationalist. It also promoted the representativity and appearance of people belonging to different generations (children, old...). Therefore it is an attempt to open the range of participation and support to diverse movement claims and generations, thus showing videos in a great pluralistic, inclusive and integrative appearance. We can also see sports crews, *arrantzales* (fishermen in Basque), schools, sub-Saharan immigrants (as in the case of Ondarroa) and a wide range of social members. Should also be mentioned a significant absence, as in the case of Kukutza squat, with which the 15M sympathized, but nevertheless does not appear explicitly in the staging of social movements that occur in the *lip dub*.

- **Explicit symbolism and profusion of symbols:** this is very specific to the Basque case. In all observed *lip dub* are a lot of symbols, regardless of the cause, and a profusion of flags featuring symbols that represent different struggles and social and political demands.
- **Musical repertoire:** the use of songs in Euskera is a constant in all the examples of Basque protest *lip dub* analyzed. Euskaldun musical element is therefore a common cultural trait that seems to continue the close relationship between music and social movements of the recent decades, and is stressed in these events.
- **Tradition and modernity:** while *lip dub* themselves are a sign of adaptation to the latest technologies, in all the observed *lip dub* are references and nods to Basque traditional and ethnic elements -even clearer in the title of Olentzero *lip dub* which refers to the mythological figure. The combination of both modern and traditional elements is a constant, repeated in almost all cases with the appearance of *dantzaris* (Basque dancers) or Basque old tools.
- **Theatricality, costumes, dance:** this feature is strongly related to the dynamic and playful spirit that we have already described. The profusion of costumes, of performances with a high degree of theatricality, and the central importance of the dances are elements that point to a more optimistic and openness nature in contemporary forms of Basque social protest.
- **Appearance of different social movements, but with a spirit of unity:** each movement has its own voice in the *lip dub*, a moment in which the specific message and demands claimed, in a sort of token passing. But finally, in the final concentration of the video, we can see a unitary act in which everyone seems to row in the same direction, in favor of a deep social and political change. It stages a worldview, an alternative and global pro-change world view.

Conclusions

The context of recent decades in Western societies points to the growing importance of the communication field, intensified with the development of ICT. Even doing in many cases a critical interpretation of mass communication, social-communicative field has always been constituent part of social movements, beyond the repertoires of action, as cognitive praxis itself. The *exemplary action* synthesizes a collective action in which come together strategic, affective, cognitive, communicative and identity dimensions. The music and the mobilization of the tradition have shown an outstanding potential in this regard. The union of culture and politics, of music and politics, which takes place within social movements, is a great possibility of exemplary action, while the movement is constituted in the context of experimentation and artistic and cultural innovation.

The development of ICT has provided new resources and enhanced communicative and expressive dimensions of social movements. In this dialectic, by diffusion or explicit reappropriation, social movements seem to rework some resources as tactical innovations in their repertoires of collective action. The case of the *lip dub*, with some outstanding features that allow an exemplary action (visuality, immediacy, expressiveness, positiveness, dynamism, emotional commitment ...) is thus an emerging phenomena nowadays.

In the Basque Country, the social communicative dimension in social movements in the last 40 years has been conveyed in a very intense relationship between culture and politics, with a major role of music as cognitive praxis. A distinctive characteristic in the Basque context seems to have reinforced this relationship: the subordinate status of Basque culture, which has made the social movements an arena of expression, transmission and renewal of this culture. The 70's became a first step for mobilization and cultural renewal carried out by social and cultural movements. But in the 80's occurs a particular - and conflictive - frame alignment between the youth movement organized around the punk and the left-wing political pro-independence movement, which constitutes a fertile context of creation and cultural renewal and identity. Vertebrated by the music, it will become a powerful cognitive, communicative and emotional praxis, providing a common identity and aesthetics. In this context several social movements construct a particular worldview that will last long.

The 2011 seems to be in the Basque Country the year of the spread of a new form of collective action, the *lip dub* -to some extent stimulated by the remarkable impact of a Catalan pro-independence *lip dub* event carried out in Vic (Catalunya). And it emerges in a new political context, characterized by the definitive cessation of the armed struggle carried out by ETA, and a reconfiguration and consolidation of the leftist pro-independence political spectrum.

Thus, while in a global economic crisis context in Spain emerge social movements such as 15M, with a strong criticism and alienation from formal democracy ("They do not represent us"), in the Basque Country several political sectors -formerly oriented to counterpower strategies- shift nowadays towards the construction of alternative politics, in a direct dispute around political and social hegemony, and the electoral conquest of formal institutions.

In this context of change, from direct action and resistance to the conquest of adhesions, some types of collective action such as the *lip dub* seem to fit perfectly. They are an outstanding case of exemplary action and that is why, in time, they are an exceptional showcase to see what the social movements want to say about themselves, the image they intend to broadcast. That is what we have tried to do briefly in the final part of this work, analyzing some specific *lip dub* with remarkable impact and carried out by different social movements. And the message they try to transmit matches with the new Basque specific context: an emphasis on plurality, diversity, representativeness, popular participation. An agglutinating open, positive and friendly image, stressing the conscious and emotional commitment. Faced with the "indignation" and the rejection related to new movements such as 15M, the appeal here is done in a positive, happy, emotional, and constructive mood.. At the same time, the presence of great coral symbolism of the different movements, regardless of the particular movement that organizes the *lip dub*, and elements of Basque ethnic tradition and the use of the Euskara in the soundtrack -which takes songs developed for this purpose (as in the case of Kukutza), or re-uses the cultural production of the past decades- are remarkable common features in these events. This view of an alternative worldview -which hybridizes demands of diverse social movements, cultural elements such as music and expressive language, and ethnic elements- seems to refer to the validity of the cognitive praxis and common identity, developed in a peculiar alignment which comes from early 1980's or even from the end of the Franco regime. Thus, the *lip dub* seems to become a collective action, a exemplary action that means and extends what the band Negu Gorriak used to sing: *Kantatzen - eta dantzatzen - duen herri bat ez da inoiz hilko* (*The people that sing -and dance- will never die*).

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IDENTITY AND PERFORMATIVITY

A Study of Movement Identity on Protest Events: The case of The Protest Against the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako G8 Summit

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Abstract

This article is a case study that aims to investigate the participation in the protest against the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held in Japan. Many social movement studies focused on establishing the movement's goal and identity. Studies about summit protest also explained that participants sympathize with the movement's schema which the movement's organization presented (della Porta 2007, della Porta et al. 2006). This article particularly focuses on a specific group of participants who do not share "collective identity" with the movement's central values, and attempts to find a deep-rooted source for participation. This research made clear that such participants took part in the summit protest because they are bored and ravenous for special opportunities in their hometown. They regarded the summit protest as "urban and special" movements. In the process of constituting the protest, they worked with and learned from various sectors and residents in Sapporo. They gained a new point of view for their hometown and applied it. At last, some activists continued to political activity after the summit protest in their hometown.

Keywords

Collective Memory, Global Justice Movement, Movement Identity, Protest Event, and Summit Protest

Introduction

This paper aims to investigate the participation in the protest against the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held in Toyako (and Sapporo), Hokkaido, Northern Japan. The protests against international institutions and ministerial conferences have occurred around the world with enormous crowds. Over fifty thousand activists protested against the World Trade Organization (WTO) conference in Seattle in 1999 and G8 summit in Genoa in 2000. More recently, hundreds of thousands marched against "Conference of Parties (COP) 15" meetings in Copenhagen (Hamanishi 2010).

Previous research called this protest "Global Justice Movement" (della Porta et al. 2005, della Porta ed. 2007). Protesters insisted on alter-globalization and global justice for international institution such as WTO and IMF (International Monetary Fund), or international ministerial conferences such as G8 summit, COP, etc. Many studies mentioned that this movement has multi-issues such as environment, women, trade, anti-war, and so on (Best 2008). Hence various actors gather into places of movement from many lands. They are

part of the global social movement; yet it is an event on its own. It is held in a limited space within a certain period of time. It is carried out by activists' groups and networks, but also undertaken by a crowd of people.

In this paper, I examined the various participation of the summit protest¹ to explore another resource of mobilization which is different from previous research revealed.

To begin with, I point out that previous research intensively focused on participation that is based on collective identity and resource mobilization. In previous researches, resources and participation which are not directly related with movement's goals and shared values were not focused. Researchers did not discuss the factors which are not related to nature of the protest in social movements. However, they can be important resources for conducting and sustaining social movements. I analyzed the theoretical implication of showing various participations and revealed the factor which encourages people to take part in social movements. Next, I provide research methods. Semi-constructed interview for local residents in Hokkaido (including Sapporo and Toyako city) was administered as they played an important role to facilitate the summit protest. Previous studies of the summit protests did not focus on local people. Repertoires in 2008 anti-G8 activism in Sapporo (and Toyako), Japan was collaterally explained in this paper. Subsequently, I analyzed three-pattern participation of the summit protest; Sympathy with the movement's goal, interest in the movement's repertoires, and concern about providing own skill to do the summit protest. After establishing the categories, this research emphasizes the participation not associated with the movement's goal and identity. The participation of local residents is based on feelings and understandings for their hometown, Sapporo and Toyako, was shown.

In conclusion, this article makes clear that feelings and understanding of people for their hometown or place is an important factor that mobilizes people into social movements.

Previous research

Many social movement scholars focused on participation to protest which is based on "collective identity" (Melluci 1995). Many studies about social movements and collective actions argued that movement's goals and issues play an important role for participation of activists. Of course, we must surely admit the importance of a movement's goal, issue, and shared values. They are indispensable factors in any social movements. Some scholars suggest that people take part in social movements because of the designated social situation (Polleta and Jasper 2001, etc.), and other researchers argue that participation is raised by sympathizing with that "frame" other participants exhibited (Snow and Benford 2000). Basically many scholars argued that participation in social movements is on the grounds that people share the movement's goal and identity.

However, the author of this research does not share the previous conclusions entirely. Collective identity is not always the reason to mobilize people. There are varieties of factors that trigger participation in social movements. Participants in protests do not always know about the goals and shared values of the movement. Some scholars focused on a group of participants who do not share "collective identity" with the movement's central values. For example, Matsui showed the inappropriateness of the dominant ex-

¹ In this paper, I describe protests against international institution such as WTO and IMF (International Monetary Fund), or international ministerial conferences such as G8 summit as "summit protests".

planation of the Anpo struggle through his research, and his analysis revealed the sense of “amusement” enticing people to participate in the 1960 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Anpo) Struggle (Matsui 2003). Aoki also showed a different trigger of participation in the protest ‘Conflict over High Radioactive Waste’. She explained the durability of this movement by participant’s diversity. The movement against high radioactive was sustained because residents allowed people who did not share collective identity to participate in this movement (Aoki 2006).

The same thing might be said of Snow’s research of Nichiren Shinshu. He is representative scholar of frame analysis, while he mentioned about participants who did not share master frame of a social movement.

[I] didn’t want to go to meeting when first asked. But then the person who recruited me started telling me about the many pretty girls that would be there. So I said, “Well, it can’t be that bad if they have all those pretty girls in this religion.” So I agreed to go to meeting that night and take a look at those girls... But that isn’t why I joined Nichiren Shinshu. It was the happiness and friendliness of the members, and the fact that I kind of liked chanting, that made me decide to become a member and receive my Gohonzon (sacred scroll). (Snow 1986: 473)

Snow showed the reasons of participation as follows: “it can’t be that bad if they have all those pretty girls in this religion” and “So I agreed to go to meeting that night and take a look at that girls”; However, Snow did not defined them as the reason of a participation. Snow (and his informant) would rather emphasis the reason of participation as follows: “the happiness and friendliness of the members” and “the fact that I kind of liked chanting”. Snow did not regard a motivation which the man wants to look at “pretty girls” as the reason of taking part in the movement. Snow mentioned the opportunity of participation in movements which is not concerned with a movement’s goal. However, he did not define them as “the reason of participation”. His “frame” and “participation” are restricted to the factors communicating with a movement’s goal, principal, and identity. My study opposed this discussion and proposes that the factors which are not related with a movement’s goal are included to the reason of participation in the movement because they can be important resources to sustain and take place protests. I hope to make clear the new resources which encourage people to take part in movements.

Furthermore, it goes without saying that many scholars who studied rational choice theory argued that participants in social movements without their collective identity. Olson suggested that there are free riders in social movements (Olson 1968), and this served as a theoretical base for resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Discussions of McCarthy and Zald suggested that there are resources to take place and sustain social movements and do not refer to ideology and identity. However, scholars defined the elements related to a movement’s argument, purpose, and issue as the resources to mobilize people or to organize groups. The elements which disconnected with the nature of protests are excluded from “the resources” on their discussion,

Studies about global justice movements explained that participants sympathize with the movement’s schema which the movement’s organization presented (della Porta 2007, della Porta et al. 2006). Thus, the position of studies about summit protest has a tendency to explain that participation in a protest is based on creating a collective identity and communicating a master frame. These studies regarded a summit protest as an organized protest (Tarrow 2005); therefore they emphasized “a collective identity” and “a master frame” of a summit protest.

To create a collective identity, participants must engage in an activity of communication with the aim of building consistent frames to be shared. However, participants do not always share a collective identity because summit protests are just like an event. Summit protests are held in a limited space within a certain period of time. They include a huge crowd of people in limited place simultaneously; summit protests are not only struggles but also events. It includes various participants who do not always share a movement's goal. Some people share collective identity and insist their opinions by singing a song or walking in a street, but the other merely listens to the song or walking with them without knowing the problems of globalism.

Furthermore, studies about summit protests do not focus on local residents because local participants have little commitment to participate in a summit protest. Researches of della Porta (della Porta 2007, della Porta et al. 2006) excluded local residents because they had a different feature from other areas in order to take part in a summit protest. Della Porta explained that "geographically close to the event, Tuscans needed a lower commitment than Italians from other regions in order to participate in ESF (Europe Social Forum [noted by the writer])" (della Porta 2006: 24).

Most of us would accept that local residents needed only a lower commitment than participants from other areas. If researchers regard a summit protest as a global justice movement, it is appropriate strategy to exclude local participants from research. Probably people in local areas take lower cost and risk to participate a summit protest. However, partly this view is unsatisfactory. Added to this indication, my study shows another feature of local participants.

Inhabitants in local area easily take part in a protest, therefore they have to play a primary role to set up and organize a summit protest. In general, residents know understand geographical surroundings and have network with other citizens better than protesters from other area. Summit protests could not be established without local participants. In fact, some researches and documents argued that local participants played an important role to organize a summit protest. (Smith 2005; Sato 2009)

I focused on participants who do not sympathize with a movement's goal and master frame of a protest in this paper. This article is a case study that aims to investigate the participation in the protest against the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held in Hokkaido, Japan. But another question raised; "What is the contribution of this study to the theory of social movements?" I answer this question as follows; this study reveals various participations in a summit protests and attempts to find another source to mobilize people for protests. It becomes one of the answers to the question which the social movement studies shared: "Why social movements matter?" and "Why social movements sustain?" (Klandermans 1995). Social movements are not only "political" or "anti-establishment" actions, but also "amusement" (Matsui 2003) and "sanctum for activists" (Aoki 2006), and so on. By seeing with another viewpoint what is different from "collective identity" theorist, we can find new resources to mobilize participants in social movements. As a case of the summit protest, protesters who do not share a movement's goal can play an initial role to organize the movement. In addition to it, by seeing from another point of view what is different from "resource mobilization" theorist, we can find new resource to mobilize activists for social movements. In the case of summit protests, local participants do not always share purpose and identity, but they are essential to accomplish the protest. On other movements, the factors which are not related with the nature of protests are important resources to carry out a movement.

Furthermore, researches about summit protests avoided to focus on local residents because local participants have lower commitment than others for this reason. I agree with this argument, however, this study

focuses on local participants because they are engaged in important works to establish and manage G8 summit protest in Toyako, Hokkaido. In a summit protest, some local participants understand movement's goals, but other participants do not. They participate not in a summit "protest" but in an "event", where in they stay at a campsite, and dance in a street.

This presentation particularly focuses on a specific group of participants who do not share "collective identity" with the movement's central values, and attempts to find a deep-rooted source for participation and new resources for mobilization of social movements.

Research Methods

Interviews were conducted for 30 participants who were residents in Toyako and Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Interview questions concerned the repertoires they involved, the reasons they participated in the protest and their experiences of social movements and political activities. Each interview was fully transcribed. The analysis comprised coding the interview texts in relation to the research questions.

Among thirty participants, nine people are women. Six of them experienced a summit protest during their twenties, thirteen were their thirties, four people were in their forties, and five in their fifties. Two of them were over their sixties. Twenty-two of them were involved as organizers and eight as participants².

They were concerned with any of the repertoires in the summit protest namely which were the "activist camp", the "media activity", the "forum" or the "demonstration".

Summit protests are characterized by these repertoires. I'll explain them a little in this chapter.

Activist Camp: It is established for lodging activists from other area for the night. However, it is not merely a lodging house. Many activists prepare meals and live together. With this process, they could face a conflict over their lifestyle, but in the course of making consensus for their living, activists understand the values each other. At summit protest in Hokkaido, four camps were constituted by Japanese groups: "the Anti-G8 Summit Hokkaido (Ainu Mosir) Liaison", "the G8 Action Network" and "the Executive Committee of Sapporo Camp and Infocenter" established campsites.

Media Activity: It is a repertoire in through which activists report their activities. They constructed large-scale infrastructure (a media center), record and televise video shots. They report about other repertoires, for example interviews for participants in the camps, circumstances of demonstrations, and so on. At summit protest in Hokkaido, three media centers were constructed and many foreign and domestic activists used it. "G8 media network" prepared media centers.

Forum: In forum, participants discuss about global issues from the standpoints of poverty and development, environment, peace and human rights. At a protest in Hokkaido, four large forums held in Sapporo-city. "Hokkaido People's Forum on G8 Summit" and "G8 Action Network" were the lead groups.

² I classified them into organizers or participants based on certain criterion. If people as "secretaries-general" or "co-representative" of certain groups which set up repertoires of the summit protest, they are "organizers", I defined. The other participants are defined as "participants" in this paper.

Demonstration: In this paper, I define demonstration as an activity where people may walk and dance on the streets insisting their opinions or fighting for a cause. An anti-G8 protest in Hokkaido had one large demonstration named “7.5 peace walk” by “Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit”, “G8 Action Network”, and “2008 Japan G8 Summit NGO Forum”. “7.5 peace walk” was conducted by about 5,000 people. There were some demonstrations in Sapporo and Toyako, as well.

In interview conducted, eighteen protesters took part in an activist camp. four protesters were involved in a media activity and ten protesters participated in forums. Twenty-one activists took part in demonstration on the streets.

The 2008 G8 Summit conference was held between July 7th and 9th in Toyako-cho, Hokkaido, Japan. Many of the protests against G8 summit were held in Sapporo (that is prefectural capital in Hokkaido) and Toyako-Cho in Hokkaido, and some protests were organized in Tokyo (Japanese capital), Kyoto, Fukuoka, and so on. I focused on the protests in Sapporo and Toyako, in Hokkaido in this article.

Multiple Participation

In this chapter, I showed three-pattern participant groups. First, I introduced protesters who sympathized with the master-frame that the organization presented [in 3-1]. Second, I showed participants who expressed different reasons for participation: for collective identity and for shared frames [in 3-2-1 and 3-2-2]. I saw that activists who did not communicate with collective identity were interested in carrying out repertoires and sharing their skills for setting it up. These participations are based on unique repertoires of a summit protests.

Participants who consisted collective identity and sympathized with master-frame

Firstly, I introduce participants sympathize with master-frame that organization presented. This case is mentioned by resent research (della Porta et al. 2005). And this paper also showed this group. Informant A1 is typical activist in this group. She has joined some groups and networks what have treated environmental issues in Sapporo, Hokkaido. At the Summit Protest, She worked as a secretary-general in “Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit”, and prepared a forum in Sapporo, “Citizen’s Summit”. Informant A1 said:

A1: I participated in summit protest because I thought that this protest would be an opportunity that we made conversation with other activists groups and sectors. For example, they are NGOs, NPOs, and the Government agencies. In summit protest, we could get consensus about local or global issues.³

“Communication with other activist groups” and “consensus” were goals that “Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit” presented. It proposed that “a network of NPOs, NGOs, and various civil society organizations and individuals, who wish to work together and demonstrate our ability to shape the future of society both globally and here in Hokkaido” and “citizens express their opinions outside the G8 Summit”(Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit 2008) as a movement’s goal.

³ This interview conducted May 26th, 2010 in Sapporo.

A1 wishes to make conversation with government actors and sectors, and other citizen groups during the activities in Sapporo. The informant A1 participated that she shared the same frame that was a master frame of the summit protest. This case could be explained by previous research.

Participants who do not share collective identity

Diversity of participants in the activists group is noted. Some participants expressed reasons for their participation that is different from collective identity and shared frames. They are interested in consuming action repertoires and providing their skills and resources.

Activists are interested in repertoires-demonstration, camp, and media center

Some activists did not sympathize with movements' goals and the master frame of summit protest. They were interested and just attracted to the demonstration, appeal actions that had various style and amusing forms. Summit protest is characterized by the diversity of repertoires, ranging from traditional demonstration and forums to free performance like a carnival (Barr and Drury 2009).

The participant A2 who is quoted below, was involved activists' camp on the summit protest. She knew the frame of the summit protest, but did not support the movements' goal. She insisted that "anti-globalism" and "alter-globalization" are not approachable issues for local residents activists. Informant A2 said:

A2: When I watched the demonstrations of WSF (World Social Forum [noted by the writer]) and a protest in Seattle WTO, I was deeply affected. I was delighted and thought that is very enjoyable! Just as I was thinking of introducing such a foreign demonstration style, G8 summit arrived at Sapporo.⁴

Like A2, some activists regarded a summit protest as not a social movement or a protest, but a stage where they could perform their repertoires and set up facilities for activism (e.g. demonstration, activist camp, and media center). The activists in the summit protest often mentioned their frustration with actions taken place in Sapporo, Hokkaido. They took actions in Sapporo as "boring" and "old-fashioned". In Sapporo, a handful of activists organize many actions that's why most actions in Sapporo have same form by same activists. A form of protests in Sapporo tends to homogenized. They regarded the summit protest as an urban and non-ordinary movement.

In particular, many activists who joined "the Executive Committee of Sapporo camp and info center" and "G8 media network" have this reason of participation in the summit protest among the various groups who participated in same protest. Each of the groups, the activists' camp and media center, had its own specific goals.

Informant A3 was local activists and joined "G8 media network". She works full-time for the group. She played a primary role in constructing the media centers. She said:

A3: It is sad that we do not protest for G8. All activists in G8 countries make media centers when G8 summit conferences are held in each country. We believe that Japanese activists should establish a media center for the summit protest. Probably, this attempt would take a lot of criticisms. However, we think, we should do it.

4 This interview conducted August 18th, 2010 in Sapporo.

Informant A3 did not support the movement's master frame that other studies maintained: she did not say anything about "alter-globalization", "global justice", and which were concerned of summit protests. Of course, she and some activists did not disagree with "anti-globalization" and "anti-neoliberalism". However, they participate in summit protest with their motivation that is different from the "master frame" and "collective identity".

Although they did not sympathize with the movement's goal, they strongly wished for the success of the G8 summit protest. They continued to set up and organize their own repertoires while G8 summit conference and the summit protest were in held. A4 joined "the Executive Committee of Sapporo camp and info center" and gave her effort to construct the activist's camp. A4 lived regardless of any social movements and she took part in G8 summit protest just for curiosity in a camp. She said:

A4: Probably, many people spent a lot of resources to set up our camp. And they compromised their demand and wishes for an activist camp. We wanted to express and achieve our own ideals. However, we shared the purpose of this group (the Executive Committee of Sapporo camp and info center [noted by the writer]). In enjoying the summit protest, we restrain ourselves. In just almost purely enjoying the summit protest, we almost compromised each ideal.

In her confession, there is no schema recent research showed, for example "against neoliberal globalization" and "global justice". If there was anything, she argued, it was the movement's goal "to enjoy the camp". In the protest, to take part in repertoires involved feelings.

Activists are interested in providing their skill for activism-speaking foreign language, playing the music, and cooking

Another similar instance, some activists involved in the summit protest were motivated by a feature of summit protests. They had similar, but different reason of participation like A2 and A3. Their motivation for the summit protest was based on an ambiguous characteristic of summit protests.

A5 and A6 took part in big street demonstration, "7.5 Peace Walk" which included about 5000 participants. While demonstration was going on, they drove a ban and played recorded music among the crowd. The following is what they said the trigger that they participated in the protest:

A5: I love musicians who opposed the regime simply. Actually, I have never been engaged in social movements until I heard news of holding the summit protest in Sapporo.

A6: I was interested in politics under the Koizumi regime. Needless to say, I have loved music since I was a child. I noticed that music have heavy relations with politics in later life. But, I did not begin specific political activities then. I was a bystander. When the summit protest was held in Sapporo, my partner invited me to it. It was a certain opportunity that I changed from being "bystander" to being "participant".

They did not have strong motivation to participate in the summit protest. At least, their participation did not relate with the master frame and the goal of the movement. Why did they participate in the summit protest? Why did they not take part in other protests? It was because of the difference between their special skills from what the movement organization required. A5 and A6 acted as amateur musicians. They heard holding of the summit protest from other Japanese musicians and took part in it. They became aware of the opportunity of taking part in the protest with their music skill. They confessed that they did not know the goals of G8 summit protest. They avouch themselves as "flippant participants" and "ignorant activists".

Although they were just “flippant” and “ignorant” participation, they contributed much and worked hard for success of demonstration. Their works ranged in various areas, for example providing audio equipments, invitation guests for parties, and so on. A6 and A5 had prepared demonstration at a summit protest for about a year while busy in usual life. Without them, “7.5 Peace Walk” might not have been accomplished.

The other people also joined to the summit protest because their skill. They also did not know the goals and share collective identity of the summit protest like A6 and A5. A7 and his partner also took part in activists’ camp of the summit protest. They had never been involved in social movements. However, they were invited in join by other people because they could cook vegan food. A7 said:

Int: This activists’ camp had a purpose that is “dissent G8 summit”. Do you know what this purpose is? Have you ever done other social movements?

A7: No, I had not done any social movement until I take part in the summit protest. However, I learned a system of capitalism and market fundamentalism from other participants at the summit protest. My thoughts changed, sparked by this event.⁵

A7 and his partner also said that they did not know the movement’s goal. They worked with other participants together and studied shared values of the global justice movement in the process. In the course of their preparation, A7 and his partner became essential persons to organize an activist’s camp. Furthermore, he said that “I made friend with foreign activists easily and familiarly by having a cooking skill”. His participation in the summit protest was because mainly his cooking skill. His skill was the main factor of his participation and important contribution to the camp.

A8 was involved the summit protest without experience of engaging any social movements. He took part in “Citizen’s Summit” by “Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit”. This case is different from the cases as mentioned above. He did not prepare and organize any repertoires of the summit protests, but he was involved the forum actively. He said:

A8: I heard the news from other person in university. . . I heard that many foreign people would come to this conference, I wanted to practice English conversation and to talk with NGO members. I wanted to have unordinary experience. My colleague told that South-African and Puerto Rican people gathered in this conference. I could not meet such people during usual life.⁶

He participated in the summit protest without sharing the master frame and the movement’s goal. He was interested in “practicing English conversation” and “communicating with NGO members”. He tried neither talking about issues on global politics and problems of G8 summit nor proposing the course of action of civil society. He was involved in the summit protest by his aim to develop his English skill.

The people who had special skills were involved in the movement because other participants required their skill to constitute the summit protest. Such participation is more similar with taking part more in festivals and rock concerts than in social movements. However, they choose the summit protest and it was a good opportunity for them to begin other political activities.

5 This interview conducted May 26th, 2010 in Sapporo.

6 This interview conducted December 16th, 2010 in Tokyo.

Collective identity of Local Participants——different from “the goal of movement”

As discussed, there are some participation patterns in the summit protest. Their participation is divided into two categories. The one is that participants shared master frames organizations presented. The other one is which participants did not share master frames of the movement. In the latter category of participants, they regarded the summit protest as “an enjoyable stage of performing” or “an event of providing their skill”. However, why did such participation occur? For such participants, what was the summit protest? What did they seek in the anti-G8 activism? Perhaps more important, “In the summit protest, what factors attracted people who did not share the movement’s goal and collective identity?”

The participants who did not sympathize with the movement’s goals showed a common feature. They emphasized the tediousness of Sapporo city and their usual life. They were bored with their usual life in Sapporo (and Hokkaido). They regarded Sapporo as rural area where there was not any opportunities. Some activists had tedious feeling and frustration for Sapporo city. A8 took part in “Citizen’s Summit” with an aim to develop English skill. He said:

(Int: Have you ever done social movements, or belonged to NGO?)

A8: No, there were few student groups in Sapporo, and I was not joined in such groups and engaged in any social movements. I heard some student groups existed in Sapporo, but I had wanted to talk with foreign citizen groups. On the existed groups, I could not do activities I had wanted to do.⁷

For A8, the summit protest was a special opportunity that interacted with people who he had never met and conversed in usual life. The local residents said about their “boring” experiences in various respects. A5 carried out “7.5 Peace Walk” with his music skill. He said his frustration about social movements in Sapporo:

(Int: Have you ever done any social movement, or belonged to NGO?)

A5: No. We could not take part in such activities. In Sapporo, almost actions were old-fashioned because traditional activists organized them. However, at the same period, some protesters were engaged in interesting activities with novel costumes in Tokyo.⁸

A5 regarded protests in Tokyo as amusing activities with novel costumes. Compared with such protests in Tokyo, protests in Sapporo had “old-fashioned” and “traditional” styles, He said. For A5, the anti-G8 movement was an important opportunity that he could enjoy urban and novel social movements. In the process of setting up the summit protest, A5 went to Tokyo and made friend with some activists in other area, and he was deeply affected by them.

A2 also expressed a complaint of political activities in Sapporo. She had a frustration about there were no opportunities to practice repertoires she was interested in. She talked about social movements in Sapporo before the anti-G8 protest occurred.

A2: I agreed with traditional protester’s opinions. For example, I had a position against war, and admitted an impor-

⁷ This interview conducted May 26th, 2010 in Sapporo.

⁸ This interview conducted August 11th, 2010 in Sapporo.

tance of equal rights for both sexes. However, I made sense that many people unwelcome a style of traditional social movements. Thus I thought that it needs to change the style of demonstration in a street. ([Omitted by the writer]) I could not accept the way of demonstration, emphasized “peace” and “friendly” messages. I considered that all demonstrations as self-satisfied activity by protesters. I recommended playing the music we loved, putting on the costume we choose, and walking with a style we preferred.⁹

Such opinions are shared not only young protesters but also older protesters. A9 was over the sixties; he mainly experienced a student’s movement in 70s and anti-nuclear movement in 80s. However, He had reluctant to take part in some protests since 90s. The reason of it, demonstrations tended to traditional and it was not “enjoyable” in Sapporo (and Hokkaido). For him, the summit protest was “enjoyable” movement. A9 said:

A9: When I was young, all protesters wished to achieve the goal. It was revolution, because our ideal was socialism. Therefore, our action had very serious mind. We avoided being excited, our movements were careful and serious... Perhaps we wanted to enjoy social movements, but we thought that “protesters must be serious, and do not enjoy doing actions”. I thought it was failure of our activism...¹⁰

A9 also did not know about summit protests and issues of global justice movements then. However, he began and continued to constitute and organize the activists’ camp. One of the reasons of it, its repertoires was very fascinating for him. In his case, participation was not based on collective identity and master frames.

Some activists considered the issues of “alter-globalization” and “global justice” as remotely related with the resident’s life in Sapporo. Despite their consideration, some local residents took part in the summit protest. They joined to it with their experience in their hometown, Sapporo. The agenda of G8 summit conference were not related to local residents, and similarly, the goals and purposes of the summit protest had also nothing to do with the area where the protest was occurred. Nevertheless, residents were involved in the summit protest. Instead of concerns about issues and problems of the movement, they took part in it with their experience in hometown.

They had tediousness and boring for their hometown. However, they began to change their recognition, impression, and feeling for hometown as they constituted and participated in the summit protest.

A3 moved from Sapporo to Tokyo after took part in the summit protest. Actually she got “special” experiences in her life in Tokyo. On the other hand, she showed her love her hometown, Sapporo. She said:

A3: I always hope to go back to Sapporo... I had lived in Sapporo for about 30 years. My lifestyle fits into my hometown in every respect. Compared with Sapporo, a style of movements, the relationship with friends, and a scale of city are quite different from in Tokyo. Therefore, I always want to return to Sapporo, but I want to abandon a backward looking way of thinking.¹¹

9 This interview conducted August 18th, 2010 in Sapporo.

10 This interview conducted May 27th, 2010 in Bibai, Hokkaido.

11 This interview conducted April 7th, 2010 in Tokyo.

A3 was also bored in Sapporo partly. However, she got another viewpoint on her hometown as taken part in the summit protest. She negotiated with governmental officers, other local activists, and ordinary local people to constitute the media center. As negotiated with various actors, she gradually changed her views to Sapporo.

A2 ran in the election for the member of the National Diet from a political party “X” after the summit protest. She changed her view for her hometown like A10. She Said:

A2: I came to Sapporo five years ago, but in those days, I wanted to go Tokyo. But now I identify myself as a resident in Sapporo. I began to think as such since I had engaged in the summit protest. Furthermore, the experience of election gave me will to improve municipal government in Sapporo. ([Omitted by the writer]) I become recognized an importance of a neighborhood association...I am interested in community where residents make a living.¹²

After the summit protest, some activists took up issues what were more familiar with local residents. On the other hand, interestingly, repertoires they choose after the summit protest were more various. As mentioned above, A2 ran for election. It is one of repertoires did not choice before the summit protest. A7 and his partner began to run a restaurant in Sapporo after the movement. They said:

A7: If we were not involve in the summit protest, we would have run a quite other restaurant
(Int: If you were not took part in the protest, what restaurants would you conducted?)

A7: Maybe we would regard a restaurant as means to earn money... However, I thought it is important to do what is right, so I ran our restaurant with my ideals (They adopted to provide vegan meals [noted by writer]). I remember that all protesters who came to the activists’ camp had no money, but managed to live. I think that “they manage to live with no money, perhaps so do I.” Seeing and talking to them was an important experience for me.¹³

He and his partner learned by their experience which they constituted the anti-G8 activism. After this, they changed their carriers dramatically. They started to do movement with their own restaurant. Their movement was connected with environment, anti-nuclear, and community development. At present, A7 and his partner work with local residents and farmers in Sapporo actively.

At first, some local residents regarded the summit protest as an opportunity that releases them from tediousness. However, they changed their mind by their experience of the summit protest.

Why did they change their awareness? And why did they continue social movements in Sapporo after the summit protest? The answer is related to their process of organizing and setting up the protest. Their awareness of hometown became versatile and complex because the summit protest is held in a limited space within a certain period of time. In the protest, the fact that enormous activists gathered in Sapporo were expected by local activists. However, because local activists are very few in Sapporo, they could not set up the facilities which were able to accommodate a lot of activists from other areas. To constitute the facilities for the summit protest, local activists requested assistance for other local residents who was no relationship with them in usual life. Local participants needed a lot of money, goods, and workers to set up and organize the anti-G8 protest. The power of activists in Sapporo was insufficient to constitute the

12 This interview conducted August 18th, 2010 in Sapporo.

13 This interview conducted May 26th, 2010 in Sapporo.

summit protest, and they had no choice but rely on “bystanders of social movements” who were usually no relationship with them. A10 usually acted as presidents of a real estate company. At the summit protest, he asked companies in Hokkaido for aids. A10 said:

(Int. You said that you had a hope and despair to companies and the financial circles in Sapporo. Why do you think so?)

A10: I had a hope because some companies dearly agreed with our activity. Over 20 companies gave their approval to our project (He took part in setting up “Citizen’s Summit” By “Hokkaido People’s Forum on G8 Summit” [noted by the writer]). The number was small into the entire companies in Hokkaido. However, there was a fact that companies in Hokkaido agreed with our project. It was a hope, I thought. On the other hand, I despaired to some companies, because they agreed with “People in Hokkaido’s Conference (It is established by Hokkaido prefectural government [noted by the writer])”. Regardless of goals and shared values, they agreed with the any projects of government. I was disappointed in the lack of awareness of some companies in Hokkaido.¹⁴

By his experience as a participant in the summit protest, he felt a hope and despair for companies which usually he cooperated with. Acted as a different role from a usual life, he found various sides of partners in his business. A11 also learned by his experience of the summit protest.

A11: I was affected by activists in Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. They were good at connecting academic and social movement’s resources. For example, they used their research budget for constructing protester’s conferences. For example, they invited activists from foreign countries to their conference by means of budgets in the University. It was interesting for me.¹⁵

A11 was scholar and worked in the University in Sapporo. However, he was also an activist. Usually, He acted as two role, researcher and activist. But the two roles often were contrary to each other in him. At the summit protest, he worked with other participants from the other areas. He was inspired from them about connecting academic and political activities.

My research made clear that local residents took part in the summit protest because they were bored, and hope for special opportunities. In the process of constituting the protest, they worked with various sectors and other residents in Sapporo. As did different activity from usual life, they gained a new point of view for their hometown. At last, some local residents continued to political activity after the summit protest, in their hometown, Sapporo.

Conclusion

This article reveals that some participants have other movement identities from the theores previous research revealed. In detail as follows: the local participants took part in the summit protest because they regarded it as an urban and unusual activity that was held in their local and tedious hometowns. They participated in an anti-G8 action without understanding the movement’s goal and shared value, but they had curiosity and expectations for a novel social action.

14 This interview conducted August 12th, 2010 in Sapporo.

15 This interview conducted March 4th, 2010 in Sapporo.

Residents participated in the movement because they had been bored in their local hometowns, Sapporo. They expected that transnational activists would come to Sapporo, showing interesting activities with novel costumes. It is perceived as an extraordinary event on in every respect by residents. This factor is not concerned with the movement's goals and values, however surely motivate some participants.

More interestingly, they began a new process of self-alternatives, once they had participated in the protest action. Some local residents started new movements in their hometown after the summit protest. They also started appreciating the values of their local hometowns and began negating the judgement they had previously hold. In other words, they started to recognize that they themselves had have dragged in an ill-conceived understanding that localities all "inferior" or "value-less" as compared with urban settings. The reason of it is that they worked with various sectors and residents in the process of setting up the summit protest. They are given a versatile view for their hometown.

Previous studies mainly paid attention to the collective identity of a movement's participants and its relation to the movement's goals. The resource mobilization theory also focuses on the factors that are concerned with the movement's purposes. However, in the case of the protest event, it mobilized people without the factor communicated its goal. The awareness and feelings for hometown mobilized people to the summit protest. The discussion is similar from a concept of "Collective Memory" (Nomiya 2009), but provides new perspective for the social movement theory. In this case, participants' "memory" for hometown is disconnected with the goals, shared value, and issues of the summit protest.

Local participants regarded the summit protest as a special opportunity to release them from "boring" hometown. Perhaps they might take part in concert shows, instead of the summit protest. However, after the summit protest, local residents continued to involve in social movements in Sapporo. This article is not discussed the matter directly, but this should be considered as one of effects of the global social movement. It still needs much revision and research to argue it.

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Ocup(arte)!: Cultural Engagement in The University of Puerto Rico Student Movement, 2010

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Abstract

Recently, we have witnessed the use of creative tactics by social movement activists, particularly by student activists from Greece, France, Spain, London, California, Chile—and most recently, the activists occupying Wall Street. Clad in costumes and masks, these young activists stage “events,” which aim to garner the attention of the media, educate others of their grievances, and provoke others to participate in the movement. Existing literature on culture and social movements have failed to account for the use of performance and spectacle in activism. Given the proliferation of these tactics, it is necessary for scholars and activists to explore not only how choice of engagement—whether political or cultural—may impact engagement and participation; but it is also necessary to explore the outcomes of these different forms of participation. Does cultural engagement—such as performing activist art—lead to a deepened political engagement? Or rather, as some have suggested, do these creative protests lead to participation with little roots in political activism? This research on the student movement at The University of Puerto Rico of 2010 provides insight into the interlocking dynamics of culture and politics. Based on observation and in-depth interviews, this research explores the dynamics of the cultural and political engagement that took place during the 62-day occupation of the university. This research has far-reaching implications in exploring a new repertoire of protest, as well as furthers our knowledge on the cultural work that takes place within social movements.

Keywords

Art, Culture, Social Movements, Protest, Politics

Introduction

“In the 2005 strike, there was no art and it was a very boring strike.”

—Law Student of the University of Puerto Rico

On April 21, 2010, the students of The University of Puerto Rico began a 48-hour strike to protest financial austerity measures that would impact the accessibility of the public university system for many students on the island. These austerity measures included Certification 98, an imposed government budget cut of \$100 million from the university budget, the elimination of tuition waivers for some students, a proposed tuition increase, and a new student fee of \$800 annually. When the administration refused to negotiate with the students, the 48-hour strike turned into an indefinite strike and occupation of the university for 62 days. After the occupation of the Rio Piedras began, the remaining ten campuses would also become occupied,

resulting in a complete shutdown of the entire university system on the island, with the one exception of the Medical Sciences building. During the 62-day occupation, the students, organized in action-committees by academic discipline, set up camp sites at each of the seven entry gates surrounding the campus. Inside the occupation, students navigated the day to day lived experiences of the occupation. The significant presence of art and cultural work by the students, as well as their organizational tactics, differentiated it from previous strikes at the university, as many referred to these 62-days as “the creative movement.”

During the occupation of the university, a line of police officers surrounded the iconic iron gates of the University of Puerto Rico. Bright blue barricades separated the police from the numerous supporters who arrived daily to demonstrate solidarity with the students. One afternoon during the summer of 2010, the art collective known as the Unit of Clown Police arrived at the main gate of the university. Dressed in black helmets, shirts, pants, and military boots, some members carried brooms and others carried brightly colored plastic water guns, but all members wore a bright red clown nose. Slowly, the members of the Clown Police approach the police officers and place a bowl of dog food in front of each officer, one at a time. As the atmosphere becomes tenser, the Chief of the Unit of Clown Police raises the bullhorn and shouts “Eat! Eat! Eat!” For those observing the performance, the message is clear. In the days leading up to the performance, there had been numerous clashes between the official police force and student protestors and supporters. After these clashes-particularly, when the police force were accused of abusing their powers, many officers responded they were simply following orders. The Unit of Clown Police street performers were calling attention to the conformity and lack of interrogation of the actions of the police force by the government, insinuating they were acting in ways no different than dogs that simply follow the orders of their owners.

Globally, we have witnessed student protestors utilizing a variety of creative tactics and artistic performances for protest. These artistic displays and performances of protest generate considerable debate by activists regarding their effectiveness, provoking questions about the use of creative tactics in the political arena (Berezin 1997; Edelman 2002; Juris 2008; Perrin 2006; Polletta 1997; Reed 2005; Shephard 2011; Tucker 2010). Given the presence and diffusion of these creative tactics, it is necessary to question whether these dynamic and colorful tactics represent a transformation in repertoires of protest (Juris 2008; Shephard 2011)? In addition, given the increasing number of ways-such as political, culturally, and academically- in which individuals can engage within a social movement, how does the presence of choice impact participation? And lastly, what are the outcomes of these various types of engagement? Does cultural participation lead to a deepened engagement in the movement politically? Or does it lead to participation with little roots in political activism? These questions have yet to be fully explored in light of the presence of these creative tactics and artistic performances in modern-day protest.

This ethnographic research on the student movement at The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) provides an exceptional case in which to explore dynamics of cultural engagement in protest. This research is based on 25 hours of observation and 17 in-depth interviews with various individuals associated with the movement, as well as documentation from within the movement. Utilizing the narratives of my participants, I am able to explore the relationship between cultural and political engagement that occurred during the 62-day occupation of The University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras. More specifically, this paper explores the ways in which artistic and cultural engagement were present in the UPR student movement, as well as how student activists describe the impact of cultural engagement on the movement concerning recruitment and participation.

Review of literature

Repertoires of Action

Every social movement depends upon what Charles Tilly refers to as a “repertoire of collective action,” defined as “distinctive constellations of tactics and strategies developed over time and used by protest groups to act collectively in order to make claims on individuals and groups” (Taylor and Van Dyke 2004: 265; Tilly 1984). Generally, these strategies fall into four major categories: conventional strategies, such as lobbying or voting; confrontational strategies, such as marches and strikes; violent acts, such as bombing and rioting; and lastly, cultural forms of political expression, such as the use of music, art, and street performances. In the current literature, there is a that specifically analyzes the relationship of cultural forms of political expression, such as artistic performances, to what are generally perceived as traditional forms of protest, such as marches or demonstrations. There has been little analysis of how these cultural forms of protest can be mapped onto social movement outcomes, such as participation and recruitment.

Participation and Recruitment

One of the primary goals for social movements is recruiting individuals and groups to participate in the movement. Social movement actors find it necessary to transform “ordinary” actors from the broad population into individuals that participate in protest activity. Drawing upon the work of Schussman and Soule, recruitment is generally defined as “reported participation in a protest activity directed at either a local or national problem” (2005: 1088).

The empirical question of differential recruitment or stated more simply why some individuals participate in a movement and others do not- has continued to surface as a dominant concern in research on social movements (Snow et al. 1980). The existing literature has focused on three primary explanations for differential recruitment-namely, psychological dispositions, biographical availability, and social networks. Missing from the social movement literature on recruitment and participation is a discussion of how cultural dynamics, such as the use of art and creative tactics, may play a role in recruitment and participation.

Psychological Dispositions

Early explanations of recruitment focused on psychological dispositions at the individual-level. Much of this research states that an individual experiencing a certain amount of psychological distress might find it necessary to join a social movement in order to alleviate these pressures (Rochford and Burke 1982; Viterna 2006). These scholars outlined numerous psychological dispositions that might lead to joining a social movement, such as frustration (McAdam and Paulsen 1993); marginality and alienation (Hoffer 1951; Judah 1974; Kornhauser 1959; LeBon 1968; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Seeman 1959); deprivation and grievances (Davies 1971; Geschwender 1968; Glock 1964; Gurr 1970; Rothman 1974; Toch 1965); tension (Lofland and Stark 1965); and personal problems and troubles (Stark and Bainbridge 1980). One of the critiques of the literature on psychological dispositions is that the motivation for joining a social movement is located within the individual, which lacks an explanation for why certain groups or types of individuals may be more or less inclined to join social movements.

Biographical Availability

As the field of social movements shifted from psychological analyses of movements to a focus on the

organizational and macro-structural elements of social movements, research explaining recruitment shifted to explore more structural explanations (McAdam 1986). Biographical availability is one of the most cited explanations for whether or not an individual engages in protest (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Schussman and Soule 2005). McAdam's concept of "biographical availability" states that the absence of personal constraints impacts the level of perceived risk, thus, whether or not the individual is recruited into the movement (Schussman and Soule 2005). A majority of the literature focuses on five major structures that impact the level of risk from participation for the individual—namely, marital status, family, employment, income, and age. Many of these predictions made regarding biographical availability have proven wrong, as there are cases where being a parent increases a chance of becoming involved in protest activities (Nepstad and Smith 1999; Schussman and Soule 2005).

Social Networks

More recently, a large body of literature claims that the most important variable in predicting recruitment are social networks (Dixon and Roscigno 2003; Kitts 2000; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Schussman and Soule 2005). These scholars assert that the strongest predictor in whether or not an individual is recruited into a movement is having contact with someone in the movement (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Snow et al. 1980). Scholars have struggled to define exactly how social networks impact recruitment, as there is little discussion of what *actually happens* within social networks other than a simple invitation to participate (Hirsch 1990).

There are a small number of scholars that suggest what is most important about social networks is the cultural work that takes place within networks (Kitts 2000; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Roscigno and Dixon 2003). These spaces may activate feelings of solidarity and a sense of shared identity, which provides evidence that social networks are not only important because people are explicitly asked to participate in the movement—but rather due to embeddedness in the *culture* of the movement (Kitts 2000; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Roscigno and Dixon 2003).

Cultural Engagement

The importance of culture in social movements suggests there be additional unexplained factors—outside of psychological dispositions, biographical availability, and social networks—at work in recruitment and participation. There is evidence of the importance of cultural dynamics in a handbook for the Direct Action Network (DAN) during the Battle of Seattle protests of 1999, as activists write about the use of culture within the movement to recruit.

“Traditional demonstrations and protests, while essential, oftentimes alienate the general public, and are ignored by policy makers. Taking to the streets with giant puppet theater, dance, graffiti, art, music, poetry and the spontaneous eruption of joy breaks through the numbing isolation. . . We must strike to use all our skills in harmony to create an enduring symphony of resistance. The cacophony against capital will be deafening when nine days of large-scale theatre preparations culminate in the largest festival of resistance the world has ever seen. We will make revolution *irresistible* (my emphasis)” (Reed 2005: 255).

I will now turn to explore the ways in which art and culture have been discussed in social movement literature regarding recruitment and participation.

Art and Culture

Previous work on the use of art and social movements has demonstrated how this malleable form has the potential to evoke strong emotions, produce solidarity through participation, and communicate grievances (Adams 2002; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Halfmann and Young 2010; Moore and Roberts 2009; Reed 2005; Roy 2010; Taylor et al. 2004; Tucker 2010). Overall, art has many characteristics that make it an important mechanism for social movement activists. The existing literature, related to recruitment and participation, focuses on two broad areas regarding the use of art in social movements. One area is how artistic and cultural productions have the capability of disseminating information, delineating grievances, and provoking dialogue. Another area is related to pleasures of protest, such as producing emotions of fun and excitement.

Dissemination of Information, Grievances, and Dialogue

Artistic objects can be readily used to convey a message-whether this message is about a protest scheduled in the upcoming week or the grievances of the movement or presenting an image that provokes others to engage in a conversation about the movement (Adams 2002; Chaffee 1993; Isaac 2009; McCaughan 2007; Morrison and Isaac 2010; Reed 2005; Roscigno and Danaher 2004.) These authors suggest that dissemination of information through artistic products is a necessary component of recruitment and mobilization; however, certain art forms may vary in their ability to disseminate information. A mural may be more durable and long-lasting; however, different information may be conveyed in a mural-such as simple messages and visuals-in comparison to street performances, which may be more fleeting and random, but may be able to incorporate more complex narratives and are accessible to individuals who may be illiterate.

Another way that art can be used within movements is to provoke dialogue (Adams 2002; Reed 2005; Taylor et al. 2004). Mostly, these scholars discuss how already recruited members of the movement can use these spaces of artistic production to engage in consciousness-raising; however, in the work of Taylor et al. (2004), we find that artistic performances-in this case, drag performances-can enhance recruitment by provoking dialogue not only among existing activists, but also among potential constituents.

The dissemination of information, articulation of grievances, and provocation of dialogue through artistic objects suggests the impact these art forms may have on recruitment, particularly as these forms may be able to reach potential constituents, who would otherwise be left out of information social networks from the social movement. For example, individuals who consider themselves to be apolitical may not be privy to information about unfolding social movements; however, they may have access to artistic performances, particularly street performances, in which they become informed about the current grievances of specific movements. Artistic objects may be a more accessible, but also perceived as less politicized, means of recruiting from the general public.

Pleasures of Protest

Recently, a small number of scholars have started to explore how protest and activism can be fun and entertaining-known as the "pleasures of protest" (Goodwin et al. 2001; Reed 2005; Shepherd 2011; Tucker 2010). More specifically, scholars have started to connect a movement's culture with the activation of emotions-such as anger, sympathy, pleasure, and excitement, which are related to enhanced recruitment and participation (Goodwin et al. 2001).

“If emotions are intimately involved in the process by which people come to join social movements, they are even more obvious in the ongoing activities of the movements. The richer a movement’s culture—with more rituals, songs, folk-tales, heroes, denunciation of enemies, and so on—the greater those pleasures (Goodwin et al. 2001: 19).”

A dynamic movement culture that portrays a movement as exciting, fun, and pleasurable can provoke potential constituents to become involved in the movement. One such example is found in Reed’s (2005) work on the Battle of Seattle protests, which demonstrates how pleasures of protest—such as the enjoyment of carnivals and costume balls—leads to higher levels of participation. What is yet to be fully explored is the relationship between these forms of protest and what have been referred to as more “traditional” and “political” forms of protest. Do they operate to supplement one another? Or rather, do pleasurable forms of protest distract from political forms of protest?

Two recent works, by Shepherd (2011) and Tucker (2010) explore the historical relationships between art, culture, play, creativity, aesthetics and politics. Both scholars apply these concepts to a broad number of movements, ranging from the Situationists to the 1968 global revolutions to ACT UP to the Young Lords, and most recently, the global justice movement and community garden organizations. These new tools—playful and aesthetic tactics—are necessary in a political environment that has become frustrated with routinized cycles of protest and electoral politics; thus, activists need to rely upon tactically silly strategies that disrupt an environment where protest has become normalized and institutionalized. However, up for debate is the impact these tactics have on the political arena.

In his conclusion, Shepherd (2011) claims that = playful protest is little more than ways for activists to blow off steam and ease tensions. If these tactics are to be influential, it is necessary for these expressions to be well matched with clearly articulated goals. There are also limitations to these forms of protest, such as the culturally bound nature of these types of communications, which do not always communicate well across race and class lines (Shepherd 2011). Given the fact that playful protest is on the rise among student movements worldwide starting in 2009, as well as have played a significant role in the most recent Occupy movements, it is important to revisit these relationships, specifically how different forms of engagement available to activists are related to recruitment and participation. Given the wide range of protest activities, does choice lead to increased recruitment among potential constituents? Is it possible that cultural engagement may lead to a more politicized engagement within the movement? Or, in contrast, does cultural engagement achieve few measurable outcomes for a movement? Overall, the existing literature on art and culture in social movements has eluded an empirical exploration of the impact of artistic and cultural engagement on recruitment and participation. Therefore, it is necessary, given the complex relationships between culture and politics, to begin investigating the narratives of activists regarding cultural and political engagement.

Research questions

This ethnographic research on the student movement at The University of Puerto Rico explores the relationship between cultural and political engagement. While this paper cannot fully address this relationship, this paper will focus solely on the ways in which activists relate playful and creative tactics to recruitment and participation. Specifically, this paper addresses the following research questions: first, in what ways was artistic and cultural engagement present in the UPR student movement; second, how do student activists describe the impact of these varied choices of engagement on the movement?

Methods and data

This research employs ethnographic field work to explore the dynamics of cultural engagement and activism in The University of Puerto Rico student movement of 2010. My research is based on 25 hours of observation and 17 in-depth interviews, as well as documentation from within the movement. Utilizing the narratives of my participants, I explore the dynamics between cultural and political engagement that took place during the 62-day occupation of The University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras, with a specific focus on themes of recruitment and participation.

My observational data is based on observations of actual protest events that took place during the summer of 2010 within the student movement. Over the course of six weeks in the field, I observed 10 separate demonstrations and marches that took place in a variety of locations in San Juan. During these observations, I was able to document through field notes, audio recordings, and photographs the varied forms of participation present at these events. My observations also provided access to student activist within the movement, as well as an opportunity to collect movement documentation.

The 17 in-depth interviews took place during the summers of 2010 and 2011, with a variety of individuals—student activists, movement leaders, artists, journalists, and student council members. I employed purposive snowball sampling, as each new contact was able to suggest additional individuals for subsequent interviews. Not only is this date important for understanding the unfolding of events within the movement, but more specifically, students were asked to discuss the use of art and culture within the movement, the impact of art and culture on the movement, and their overall analysis of the relationship between culture and politics.

Findings

Overall, student activists focused on three major areas of art and culture that were present during the 62-day occupation of the university, which were the presence of artistic objects and performances, the cultures of the six campsites, and the cultural calendars of the campsites. I will now turn to explore each of these areas, while focusing specifically on how students described the impact of these artistic and cultural forms of engagement on recruitment and participation.

Artistic Productions

Throughout the 62-day occupation of The University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras campus, there was a strong presence of artistic production and consumption. A wide variety of art forms were present, such as: street performances, a radio soap opera, political cartoons, murals, poetry and literature readings, protest chants, videos, photographs, musical performances, and dance performances. Artistic performances at social movements are not new in Puerto Rico; however, student activists discussed how the art in the UPR student movement of 2010 differed significantly from the art of past movements. One of the primary characteristics that differentiated art in this particular student movement was the emphasis on performance, which one participant referred to as “moving art,” like street art and performance art, which is capable of moving from one location to another in the attempt to expose to the greatest number of people.

During the occupation, there were several artist collectives and groups that regularly engaged in performances, both inside and outside the gates of the university—namely, the Unit of Clown Police, Papel Machete, and Sembrando Conciencia. While these three do not exhaust the full list of performances that took place over the 62-day occupation, they provide insight into the various ways that street theatre was deployed within the movement, as well as when asked to describe the art students witnessed during the occupation, they generally mentioned one of these three street performances. One other form of art that was often mentioned by participants was the radio soap opera show on Radio Huelga (a student-run radio station created specifically to develop communications during the occupation), named Amor de Barricada. Lastly, one of the largest cultural events that took place during the occupation was the concert called Vivan Los Estudiantes, where various Puerto Rican musicians, like Calle 13, performed a concert in support of the student movement.

An Exciting and Dynamic Movement of Spectacle

In terms of recruitment and participation, students spoke of how the presence of art produced a dynamic and exciting movement, which ultimately enhanced mobilization. Activists stated that street theatre of spectacle and carnival made the movement more dynamic, which helped to generate increased mobilization and media coverage of the movement. For example, a performance artist and professor at the UPR said, “This is virtually unheard of in Puerto Rican society—the young women in Sembrando Conciencia, the nude painted bodies. It is something very different, very new. All of that is essentially important for making a real lasting legacy of the strike.” While there were innovative artistic forms present in the UPR student movement, the carnival-esque atmosphere of political events is well-known on the island. One of my participants, a professor at the UPR, says:

“Most political and public events, if you don’t have music or food or drink, then it is not a good event. It follows that we have a high turn-out rate for elections, much higher than the U.S., about 60 to 70%. It has to do with this carnival-esque atmosphere. It’s the caravans, speeches, the music—a lot of entertainment. It is getting them away from their homes and participating in the public—with massive support. In this case (of the UPR), the atmosphere is part of the reason people do go out and participate.”

This illuminates how the presence of artistic objects and performances in the student movement created a dynamic and exciting movement that enhanced recruitment and participation in the movement. The presence of art within the movement operated to not only recruit additional students to participate in the movement, but was also capable of recruiting from the wider population to mobilize support. Evidence was demonstrated in the broad support the students were able to garner at large events, such as Vivan Los Estudiantes, the musical concert held in support of the movement.

Campsite Cultures

Many students have referred to the 62-day occupation as the “creative movement,” not only based on the strong presence of art—but also the organizational form of the occupation. Many students spoke of needing to be able to respond to a constantly changing environment in creative and innovative ways. In other words, the students found themselves from Day One seeking to *create* an alternative.

One of the first ways the students organized was by academic colleges—Social Sciences, Law School, Humanities, Education School, Fine Arts, and Natural Sciences; which formed the six original action-committees. Since at the time, there were six action-committees and six main gates of the university, it

seemed logical to divide the campus grounds by the six gates with each academic college located closest to the gate to be responsible for that particular gate. However, as time passed, the camps began to develop distinct identities, ideologies, and camp cultures. One student described the ways in which these camps formed a microcosm of broader society,

“What we had in there was a commune. We were growing fruits and vegetables. But each camp had its own distinct activities. Everyone did something different. The Social Sciences were always trying to get involved with security. The Fine Arts were more like the night people, the owls, they’d be up all through the night doing everything and then you wouldn’t find any of them during the day. So, it was interesting. It was like a lot of little towns all connected to one another politically.”

Students described the primary distinctions between the camp cultures, which could be observed by the names of the camps, the type of clothing they wore, the barricades they built at the gate, and more broadly, their preference for action, tactics, and ideologies. One Law School student described the names of the camps,

“Every camp had a different identity. Every camp was designated to one of the faculties or action-committees... Each camp had a different name-Sparta was Social Sciences, Vietnam was Humanities, The Tribe was Education, Middle East was Fine Arts, Disney was Natural Sciences, and us, Beverly Hills, not necessarily appointed by us, but we took it as our own. We understand the nature of how different schools have different natures of action.”

These names reflected the ideologies and chosen strategies of each camp. For example, Social Sciences was named Sparta because they were seen as the “soldiers” of the movement, the Humanities camp was called Vietnam because it was located at the main gate, which reflected how the location was like a war zone, the Education School was referred to as the tribe due to their tight-knit organization and the presence of what some participants referred to as “the matriarch of the gate,” Fine Arts earned the name Middle East, primarily due to their location, but also their preference for avoiding political ideologies, the Natural Science camp was called Disney, given their preference for non-violence and their younger ages, and lastly, the Law School was referred to as Beverly Hills, due to the higher social class of many of the members, as well as their preferences for non-confrontational tactics.

Not only did the names of each camp reflect the members and ideologies of the camp, it was also reflected in one of the first tasks encountered by each camp-the building of a barricade at their respective gates to keep the administration or police forces from entering the campus. One of the most striking comparisons is between the built barricades of the Humanities and Social Sciences as compared to Beverly Hills. Given their preference for non-violence and non-confrontational tactics, the Law students initially voted against building a barricade at their gate. However, after discussions and consensual decision-making campus-wide, it was agreed that all gates must build a barricade. Faced with this decision, the Law students built a very small, unassuming barricade that would communicate their ideology. In comparison, the Humanities and Social Science students utilized as many found objects as possible, ranging from palm tree prawns to trash cans to desks, and basically threw as much as possible up against the gates to keep anyone from entering, reflecting their preference for more radical tactics.

Essentially, these differences are based on distinct ideologies that impact the preferences for actions and tactics. For example, one Humanities student spoke to me about how different Vietnam camp was from others.

“Vietnam was the main gate, always facing the threat of police. We were the first to propose radical measures, because we were the ones who were suffering the threat. But Disney and the Law School (Beverly Hills) were behind the university, there was no threat. Disney wanted everything to be beautiful ... Vietnam was the main gate with radical measures, the Law School was the privileged students and they thought badly of us. Sparta was more like Vietnam, but were the soldiers of radical measures. For example, in Humanities you can find students who say, “I think action is necessary, but I don’t want to do it personally.” So, Sparta was more willing to do those actions.”

Similarly, a Law Student speaks to these same differences.

“Different departments have different methods of action. Obviously, we are a professional school; we have an average age of older students. Our action is more, I’ll say we are more aware of the consequences and try to work around them. We challenge them by tipping under the toes of what we can and can’t do. We take that into consideration when we decide on our activities. ... And all that comes in terms of different discourses coming from different camps. Sparta had a discourse of being more, not aggressive or violent, but they challenge the structures more than we do. And the same with the Vietnam camp, they are more rebel and passionate.”

In these ways, the camps were able to distinguish themselves from other camps, as well as build a community identity, which ultimately may have produced a stronger collective identity, which might have led to sustained engagement over a long-term occupation. However, more importantly for the purpose of this paper is the ways in which this led to enhanced recruitment and participation.

One of the most interesting aspects of the organizational form is that students were able to choose the ways in which they were engaged in the movement. Evidence was found by the fact that despite the fact that the camps represented certain academic disciplines and colleges, there were occasions when individual students chose to be involved with a different camp or the fact that entire academic disciplines chose to camp outside of their traditionally associated academic college. For example, a few student activists recounted to me how they chose to move to the Humanities camp from the Education camp, citing reasons such as feeling more aligned with the ideologies of Humanities than with Education. Another example is the fact that the drama students, although they would have traditionally been associated with the Fine Arts department, chose to camp with the Humanities, due to their mentality that the situation of their departmental resources is more aligned with Humanities than with other Fine Arts students, such as the Architecture students. In this way, students were presented with multiple ways in which to engage in the movement, which ultimately led to increased recruitment and participation.

Cultural Calendars

The students were also faced with logistical concerns in the occupation, such as creating committees and schedules to fill the needs of security, cooking, cleaning, negotiating, communication; however, one of their primary tenets was that even though the school was occupied, education would not stop. Therefore, the students would build alternatives to traditional methods of formal education. One of the interesting ways this happened was through the development of cultural calendars. These calendars existed at the level of campsite, but also campus-wide. A wide variety of events could be found on these calendars ranging from movie viewings to lectures from faculty and union leaders to musical jam sessions to poetry readings to yoga to artistic workshops.

These events provided multiple opportunities for individuals to participate and engage in the movement,

thus enhancing the likelihood that a more diverse group of individuals would participate in the movement. In this way, an individual who knew more about a specific subject—such as art-making, anarchism, or films—could still be involved in the movement, despite their political affiliations. For instance, one student leader recounted to me how these cultural events unfolded organically, as a student would exclaim that they know information about anarchism or making music or dancing and would state they'd like to hold an event for other students to attend. As mentioned earlier, these events ranged from the more politically charged, such as anarchism, the Vieques protests, or the laws of the university to those less politically charged, such as movie screenings, music performances, workshops on how to make art (held by the members of the aforementioned group, *Papel Machete*), jam sessions, and even, exercise, such as yoga.

“They (cultural calendars) were a way of keeping people active. What we did in Beverly Hills, we created these bohemian events, spaces for folk singing and portraying literature and talking, like a get-together. We held these bohemian events every two weeks, where people from outside came in... We had those events to get people inside, to see what was happening and share the event.”

Not only were these cultural events a way of keeping those actively engaged in the movement by camping on the campus, but also of getting individuals from outside the campus inside to participate in the event, thus enhancing the level of recruitment and participation. In this way, students found numerous ways to engage within the movement; however, individuals from the general public were also encouraged to participate.

The inclusion of art and culture within the movement was not happenstance, but rather a strategic decision made by student leaders. For instance, one of the goals was to incorporate as many different voices as possible. In a manifesto distributed by the Humanities action-committee leading up to an initial 48-hour strike, students refer to the first occupation as “Ocup(arte).” They state, “Throughout the day, we will have performances, music, poetry, art, work-shops, and concerts. We will occupy against funding cuts, decrease of students rights and moratorium on tuition waivers.” In the movement documentation, activists demonstrate their strategic incorporation of artists and art-making practices in the struggle, as these different voices will bring new tactics to their repertoire. By incorporating several different forms of engagement, the movement was capable of generating a dynamic movement, which drew individuals in to participate given the sheer irresistibility of the movement, as well as provide numerous choices for how to participate in the movement.

Conclusions

Student activists recognized the importance of artistic and cultural engagement for producing a movement that won the support of both the students and the general public. Some stated this was just due to the uniqueness and innovativeness of the movement in contrast to other movements, as stated by a Law School student and student leader,

“Art was a very important, it was more than important, it was one of the things from the starting point that differentiated the strike from other strikes. It really made it unique. The amount of students that were (creative), wouldn't have necessarily been before the strike. Like, you never really made anything creative or anything considered artistic, but you were here so you took part in it and participated in it and that was good. Students were exposed to it and become a part of it that wouldn't necessarily be part of it before the strike.”

Similarly, other students asserted that the use of art and culture within the movement allowed for a diverse group of individuals to become involved and support the movement. One of the reasons for this was that art and creativity created a perception of the movement as less political, as described by a student activist from the Law School, “Art was a tool for being successful. You take away art and take away part of the creativity and you would not be as successful, you would seem very political and not university-like.” Another reason was that it provides various ways to participate in the movement, as described by one of the student leaders and Humanities student, “Definitely a lot of people got involved because of the strike itself, not because of the art, but instead art was the *way* they participated. It was the *way* they were part of it.”

While some described these forms of engagement as distinct from more traditional and political forms of engagement, some activists described art and culture as sites of resistance, as if making these two arenas distinct from one another is an error in itself. One of the student leaders and primary organizers of the student movement described the need to build consciousness and relationships between these various aspects of public life as he describes an artistic performance he witnessed,

“But that’s political too. What we gained in the first movement... all of the drama, art, culture; it was center to our politics. It was an important thing; we were discussing it again this week in my study group, the work of art and culture in politics. It has substance too. You know, it’s important to build a relationship between those aspects because a human being is not just the political aspect or just the cultural aspect or just the academic aspect, we are complex human beings. We are all of that... I think it’s important, it is part of the political process.”

Although many of the student activists felt as if the use of art and cultural engagement was extremely important to successful recruitment and participation; others asserted that there are considerable consequences to a reliance on this form of engagement for the movement as a whole.

One of the consequences of the use of art and cultural engagement within the movement is that individuals may become solely involved in the movement as an artist, but not become involved in the discussions that were perceived as more political. One education student recounted,

“People saw the art and got involved because they saw an opportunity to bring something to the table. There was definitely a lot of that because I saw a lot of people participating in the artistic performances, but not participating in the discussion meetings.”

Similarly, another student remarked that by recruiting individuals to support the movement through cultural means provides what was referred to as a false sense of support. This particular student, a journalist and supporter of the movement, but not a participant, described the large concert that was held in San Juan in support of the students. The concert called “Vivan Los Estudiantes,” featured numerous musicians from Puerto Rico who supported the students, such as popular musical group, Calle 13.

“I remember when Calle 13 came during the first strike, a lot of people came and students were saying, ‘Oh we have great support, look out here at all those people who came out here to hear these musicians like Calle 13.’ But that’s the thing, they came to see Calle 13 and probably most, well a lot of them, they don’t give a shit about the UPR. So, they, I’m not saying it is bad, but it doesn’t tell the truth...It works for the advantage of the students, but at the same time it works against them. Because they actually think they have that support... but in the end, they are basically alone.”

In this way, these students are exercising concern over the fact that cultural engagement may provide a false notion of how embedded these supporters are in the movement. It suggests that some individuals may only participate in the events that are seen as fun and exciting, while not being involved in the more political events—such as political meetings where decisions are made about how to proceed with the student movement.

Another tension that produces consequences for the movement is how cultural engagement may produce too much of a focus on the spectacle and party-like atmosphere, which strips away the seriousness of the movement. While discussing the nature of protest on the island of Puerto Rico, one of my informants remarked to, “It’s more about the spectacle. Protest here in Puerto Rico is more about carnival than politics. We’ve got everything but the funnel cake.” While some of my participants would suggest this is why elections on the island have higher rates of participation; others suggest that this deflates the seriousness of politics. The aforementioned journalist stated that these carnival-esque performances and focus on the spectacle take the seriousness out of the issues—and in contrast to other participants, suggested that the public may not understand that the students are serious. This student compared the student movement in Chile to the student movement in Puerto Rico,

“I don’t know, it’s entertaining and sometimes you need entertainment during the strikes, because it is very stressful and you need time to relax and learn at the same time... I was just reading about the news in Chile, they are doing a lot of performance and I think... that it takes the serious part from the movement and normal people that are not students see it as a joke. So you have to be careful. Every performance should have a purpose and even though it could be entertaining, people need to know that it is a serious topic. But if you don’t do that and you just do performances and activities to gain attention from the media or for no purpose at all; it could work against the movement. It should be entertaining, but it should always have a purpose and that purpose should be clear to all the attendees. And it should always stay clear that it is a serious matter.”

It should be noted that outside of the musical concert “Vivan Los Estudiantes,” I was unable to find any examples in my interviews with student activists of an artistic performance that lacked a clear political agenda.

Overall, student activists have conflicting opinions on the impact of art and culture in the student movement in Puerto Rico. However, my data demonstrates that the individuals who were strongly involved in the movement state that art and culture was an integral part of the movement, specifically impacting the recruitment and participation of a diverse population.

Implications

Early conclusions from my exploratory research illuminates that activists are increasingly finding varied ways for individuals to participate in activism. While some individuals may participate as political actors, by leading political organizations or coordinating protest; there are also individuals who participate as cultural actors, by creating art collectives and organizing cultural activities. However, in describing the dialogic relationship between politics and culture, it is important to recognize these terms are not easily distinguished nor should we expect that individuals participate in movements solely in one arena as opposed to other. Instead, this work explores how these varied forms of participation may operate to supplement one

another. This research also illuminates the ways in which these types of participation also provoke conflict or fragmentation within the movement. For example, some activists may worry that too much emphasis on creative and artistic tactics are merely symbolic and do not produce real change.

One of the benefits of cultural forms of engagement is that individuals are able to avoid typical partisanship alignments, as well as it suggests activism can be fun, instead of the doldrums of daily politics. In addition, cultural recruitment may find more support in repressive environments where political alignments have real world consequences. Apolitical and fragmented political groups demonstrate increased recruitment through cultural engagement, as demonstrated by the Fine Arts school which avoided any overt political ideologies within their camp. Lastly, cultural participation may in turn become sustained engagement, as some individuals may initially participate in a movement as an artistic performer; however, they may become politicized in the process and begin to act as a core political participation. For example, an individual may participate by helping paint murals for a movement; however, their experiences as an aesthetic activist may propel the individual to join an existing political organization, even at times, playing a strong role within the organization. This does not mean that the individual eliminates their cultural participation; however, they just become more politicized in the process.

This relationship also has considerable consequences for the movement. One issue with cultural participation is the ease in which individuals can disengage from the movement. If an individual only participates in the cultural events of the movement-such as concerts for solidarity, it may be easier to stop demonstrating support for the movement as opposed to individuals that are active members of political organizations. Similarly, the perception of the media and other political actors-such as the opposing forces-may be shaped by these cultural dynamics of the movement. It is possible that the movement may not be considered a serious political movement, if the image of the movement focuses on subcultural dynamics and artistic presentations. For example, the media may trivialize the movement by documenting and publishing articles about the fashion of movement participants without paying attention to other work of the participants. There also exist internal tensions within the movement in reference to both political and cultural participants. There are tensions among movement participants-particularly between those who participate solely as political actors versus those who participate as cultural actors-that may lead to fragmentation in the movement or potential dissolution.

Subsequent research should take up not only more fully exploring how protest can produce feelings of joy within protestors, but also what role these more symbolic and culturally rich artistic displays play in concepts of political engagement. This suggests that we need to rethink our conceptualizations and measurements of political engagement. In that forms of cultural engagement, such as producing a radio soap opera or performing street theatre, may be just as important to protest as voting or signing a petition.

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NEOLIBERALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

From the save movements to the live ones. An analytical approach to the evolution of social movements in Valencia in the last two decades

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Abstract

Case analysis with qualitative methodology based on participant observation and in-depth interviews to members of social movements of the metropolitan area of Valencia with the aim of contributing to throw light on the valid theoretical approximations to explain the transformations of the social movements of the last two decades from a communicative perspective.

Keywords

communicative resources; ICT; social movements; theories of collective action; Valencian Country.

Introduction

The birth in 1995 of “Save the Botanical Garden” marked the beginning –and quick expansion– of a new type of organization of the social movements in Valencia for more than one decade, which spread all over the Valencian Country (Cucó, 2008), the Balearic Islands and Catalonia (Grau, Iñiguez, and Subirats, 2008). They are platforms of organizations based on the defense of the territory and the cultural heritage and of critic and progressive orientation (Albert and Hernández, 2011), which have become agents that stress the patrimonial value through communicative actions (Rausell and Martínez, 2005).

Whilst the “Save” formula loses strength, in the Valencian Country a new one germinates from it that shares with those movements their organic form –and also a big part of their participants– but that clearly differs from it in its aims and vindications, which is symbolically reflected in the denomination they use: Benimaclet Viu¹ (Live Benimaclet), Russafa Conviu² (Russafa Coexists), Patraix Viu³ (Live Patraix), Maestrat⁴ Viu (Live Maestrat)... The first one that uses this formula is Xuquer Viu⁵ (Live Xuquer). Those are movements focused on creating alternative ways of coexisting, on the vindication of public space, the alternative economy, the environmental sustainability and the democratic participation.

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- 1 Organization focused on the neighbourhood of the same name that binds civic associations and individuals.
 - 2 Initiative from school –parents’s associations–, traders and residents associations of the Russafa neighbourhood who plan a week full of activities to promote the culture and local trade of the neighbourhood.
 - 3 Periodic publication of the residents association of the Patraix neighbourhood.
 - 4 Associative platform of the Valencian region of the same name. Their first action dates back from 2006.
 - 5 Focused on the defence but also on the alternative management of the Xúquer river.

During the development of those movements, on May 15, 2011 a new form of citizen mobilization arose, very influenced by previous mobilizations such as the 13-M, 2004 (Ugarte, 2004; Sampedro, 2006), and by social movements generated online (Negri, 2011; Oliveres et al., 2011). After the initial moments, the stabilization of the 15-M movement moved it out the main squares and into the streets of the neighbourhoods and small towns, where it has started to work in line and/or in collaboration with the neighbourhood movement, formed by groups among which stand out, due to their dynamism, those we have generically called the “Live” movements.

The different forms of mobilization that coexist in contemporary Valencia allow to point out possible correlations between the factors which motivate mobilization (political and economical) and the form it acquires and how it communicates itself: how critical citizens organize and express themselves. The temporary predominance or importance of an object of vindication entails the predominance of one form or another of collective mobilization depending on the uses of communication.

All this, very bearing in mind the technological evolution that affects social movements as well as power itself and, thus, affects the forms of oppression as well as the forms of transformation: the ones derived from the progress of the ITC, which affect the external and internal communications, make information flow better and be more extensive, make the organizations more flexible and speed up the processes.

In this paper we propose, with empirical evidences obtained from the analysis of 17 in-depth interviews to active members of the said groups, that although new technologies affect the organizational form and the resources of social movements— using part of the contributions of the Resource Mobilization theory of McCarthy, McAdam, Zald (1999) and Tarrow (2004), the adaptation of the people’s response to the kind of conflict, through communication, is what mainly transforms the movement, along the lines of the Collective Identity theories of Touraine (1985), Melucci (1994), Offe (1988), Laraña and Gusfield (Laraña and Gusfield, 1994; Laraña, 1999).

Theoretical perspective

The analysis of social movements in the Valencian Country makes it necessary to differentiate between how collective action is organized and how mobilization expresses itself publicly. The organization of social movements has undergone very important transformations, mainly in the 1990s, but, maybe, what has been perceived as a more relevant transformation has been the repertoire of actions these organizations have displayed. The involvement of the social base has been more intense and we can even assert that, in specific cases, the potential base has noticeably widened and that it caused larger mobilizations.

This set of changes affects the actors and their repertoire of action, but also changes their vindications. Actors, actions and vindications⁶ feedback each other and are dialectically transformed, a fact that makes it very hard to identify the causal elements of the transformations, which, on the other hand, constitutes the big explanatory challenge of the theories of collective action that we cannot solve here. However, the analysis we set out tries to search elements of connection between the three we think can help to understand the triple transformation.

⁶ In this paper, due to space limitations, we will focus on the actors and the actions and will include vindications on the latter.

As for the actors, it can be asserted that the existence of social organizations is required to be able to talk about social movements. But still, we cannot analyze the institutions generated by the social movements and the currents of social opinion in favour of the issues dealt with by those groups, in the sense proposed by Touraine (Magallon, 2006), as if it were the same thing. In the same way that a movement cannot be linked exclusively to one group or organization (Adell, 2000).

Theoretical approaches based on the Resource Mobilization have focused their attention on the capability of the political, cultural and technological conjuncture to provide groups with resources, and specifically their members, to transform reality in favor of their interests (Natalucci and Pérez, 2008). This approach is useful to understand how the technological evolution is able to provide with tools the collective action that transforms the forms of action by taking advantage of them. Both technological as well as human resources (taking into account the education and technical training or use technology of the participants in the mobilization) can be considered decisive elements when it comes to analyze the organization form of the groups of social movements and, above all, the one during periods of social upheaval like those recently occurred around May 15, 2011. But this approach is most useful, maybe, regarding the connection between the organizations and the general public, which, through the ICT, experiences a true communicative revolution.

For authors such as Eisinger, McAdam, Tilly or Tarrow (Arechavaleta, 2010: 188), this approach is insufficient to explain the collective action since it does not take into account the political context in which mobilization occurs. The Political Opportunity Structure theory considers the political context a key element to understand the emergence of the movements and their cycles of expansion and contraction. That suggests collective mobilization will depend on the capability to introduce changes through pressure, the influence or the access to political power. Moreover, it will resort to cultural factors to interpret the affiliations of the participants in these movements bringing a certain cultural perspective to the individualist rationalism of the prevailing theory until the events of May 1968.

From our perspective, it is noteworthy the importance of the socio-political context in which the mobilization occurs above all in a historical period like the one we are studying. It starts with the consolidation of the right-wing political hegemony and the implementation of ultraliberal programs which seriously affect different social sensibilities. Besides, we think it is essential, as we will show later, that the identifications which, although reluctantly (Rodríguez, 2010), this perspective incorporates to encourage joining and participating explain more properly the individual mobilization than the managerialist-rationalist vision of the Resource Mobilization perspective.

However, it is notable that the political change we are talking about did not exactly facilitate mobilization. On the contrary, the increase of social movements that started from 1995 in the Valencian Country points out, as a mobilization factor, the lack of capability of political influence of wide population groups in view of the increase of wrongs that affect them.

It is necessary to resort to the approach that comes from the New Social Movements and the Collective Identity theories, with Mellucci (1994) as a reference author, to find elements of analysis of the collective action expressed as social movements. This mobilization form is said to (1) have its origin in situations identified as unfair, (2) these injustices cannot be resolved through the “regular” channels of action and (3) the participants in social movements gather for action around alternative models and collective ideals. This perspective helps us to understand how the perception of the socio-political context is a fundamental

factor for mobilization. Moreover, it also allows us to fit the historical perspective in the analysis of the social movements since among the factors that form them we can find the cultural heritage of old social movements. Finally, this analysis allows us to overcome the contradiction, which we have described above, regarding the fact that the biggest mobilization occurs in the most adverse period from the point of view of the political opportunities.

According to this, the analysis of the evolution of social movements in recent years requires the study of the political and social structures of each moment, as they determine the situations of perceived injustice. It is also necessary to deal with the ideological elements which cause, in one sense or the other, the said perception of socio-political “injustice”. Besides, we shall have to work on the motivations that cause both of them to take the form of militancies or affiliations to currents of opinion (Touraine) that form, in practice, the experiences of social movements.

This brief tour by theoretical approaches about the collective action cannot forget that each one of them has its origin in the analysis of the practice of different places and historical moments, and also the conditionality of the theoretical and ideological traditions they come from. Apart from whether the tools of analysis offered by them are satisfactory even for the analysis of the movements of the territories of origin, in our opinion, the Valencian Country is a unique space that requires specific approaches within far-reaching theoretical frameworks.

Regarding actors

Actors, individual or collective, form a more or less articulated dense network. In this institutional/individual formalization of social movements there are all kinds of organizations, of very diverse ideological affiliation, functions and formalizations. In the Valencian Country, “during the 1990s, a surprising wave of associative creativity has taken place” (Ariño, 2004: 104) that has affected all kinds of associations. In our research we have focused on the political groups of transformation or the defence of social and cultural rights. These organizations need to be analyzed from an approach which allows us to consider their historical evolution, the personal reasons for affiliation and joining of their participants, the internal networks established by them and the connection with other formulas of political participation like parties, the relational elements with the potential social base in general and with the social base in particular, and also their action strategies and the technological resources used by them. From middle 1990s onward, a transformation in the institutional actors takes place, as well as in the rest of the Spanish State, as a result of the associations, alliances and combinations that took place among previous periods groups, following the stage of associationist individualism, partly thanks to the introduction of the ICT resources (Alberich, 2007: 80).

The role of leadership, which we can also call vanguard, represents a big part of the discussions theorists directly linked to the social movements have taken part in (Iglesias and Errejón, 2005). Identifying the leaders in the different forms of social movements that occur in the Valencian Country can unveil one of their constants, in comparison with variable elements such as the mobilization capability and the kind of actions displayed. These two last variables are the foundation of the communicative factor, which needs to be known to understand the apparent transformations of the social movements. Let us therefore consider the set of relationships organizations and participants in social movements have with each other and also the ones they have with the general public, that are the basis of the public opinion strategies and the action strategies.

Our work focuses, thus, on elucidating the role of formal groups, active sectors, social base and potential base (Alberich, 2007: 73), within the new forms of collective action. If we know the composition of the different groups that form the social movements and especially their leaders career, we will be able to establish to what extent the movements are actually new strategic practices before new political conjunctures. But not only that, we will need to know the existing networks between those groups, the communication channels and the strategies to influence the public opinion from which the typology of action derives from, the techniques of display and of political influence.

Like in the case of actors, it is necessary to understand the practices in a historical framework that help us to relate them to the socio-political context as well as to the own evolutions of social actors of the movements. Actors and practices overlap in a way sometimes it is very hard to distinguish the actor from the practice. In fact, practice itself determines the actor, and the former is, in turn, determined by the latter and by the vindication. The vindication will depend on the perception of the actors and of the socio-political context and, in turn, will also be hit by the practice itself.

Regarding practices

The analysis of the practices requires the study of a set of variables in order to establish comparison criteria. A priori we think those have to be: the actors, the vindication, the communication and the socio-political context.

The most noteworthy kinds of practices in this regard are three. In the first place, the periodic episodes of collective mobilization, of ritual practices of spatial occupation (Adell, 2000) which are the result of a collective consciousness concerning matters of political and cultural vindication that gather every year in demonstrations, acts and cultural actions, like concerts. Those gatherings demonstrate some social power of individuals and groups who think political and institutional action spaces are not enough. This kind of mobilization consists of a contingent of highly aware population that mainly uses media and conventional resources to increase the collective consciousness and secondly try to influence on the decisions of the political power. A big part of the participants come from organizations, but another part mobilizes only on these occasions. In any case, it is a long-range movement, of vital affiliations that become alternative behaviours above all culturally, with Catalan, their own language, condensing a series of cultural signifiers and a certain class consciousness. It is a response to the perception of a historically unresolved structural problem that promotes the sensibilization before unfair situations in other levels and that has its correspondence in political parties that until the regional elections of 2011 had little parliamentary representation⁷ and a certain power at municipal level.

The persistence and the extent of their acts under scenarios of media silence (Ginés, 2011) attaches importance to those mobilizations and reinforces the idea of the Valencian Country as a unique scenario within the Spanish State context (Ginés, 2010), in which long-range social movements have a significant importance inversely proportional to the media coverage of their vindications.

⁷ The political formations *Coalició Compromís* and *EUPV* are those that partly reflect this historical injustice feeling regarding the identity of Valencians. Both political groups got their own parliamentary group in the 2011 elections exceeding the 5% election barrier imposed by the two largest State level parties.

In the second place, from 1995 onward, arises the Save movements formula, with Save the Botanical Garden as the second most studied movement (Sorribes, 2001; Albert and Hernández, 2011; Adell, 2000; Torres, 2004; Santamarina, 2008; Miralles, 2001; Rausell, 2006, 2010; Cucó, 2008; González, 2005; Rausell and Martínez, 2005; Ginés, 2010) and linked to the most aggressive phase of neoliberal developmentalism put into practice by the conservative (Díaz Orueta, 2010) government that takes power that same year. The movement has already been observed from different approaches so that we, although in a relatively superficial and descriptive way, have a fairly complete X-ray of their social composition, its organizational formula, their discursive and action repertoire, and the networks as well as the communicative strategies they use to make their messages visible. Nevertheless, more profound studies are needed that link these “new social movements” with the old ones and with other formulas of institutional political action and also the aspects relating to its members motivations for action. And, above all, studies are needed that explain this form of action regarding the resource mobilization, the political opportunities structure and the new social movements. Still, much practice is needed to very well understand what turned the Valencian Country into such a unique scenario to develop this formula of collective action with such a remarkable success.

The Save movements had an indisputable prominence until, approximately, 2006 when a massive demonstration was held on the streets of Valencia with people from all over the Valencian Country under the motto ‘Commitment to the Territory’. That demonstration was prior to the regional elections that increased the right wing political hegemony in the government and thus an endorsement to their policies. It was a disillusionment to sympathizers and activists of the Save movements who, together with some dramatic local defeats, contracted their activity. But, far from deactivating itself, part of the members (collective and individual) of the Save movements started to change their action strategy.

But we cannot forget that formula was not new since the Valencian Country is the scenario of the first environmentalist vindications of the Spanish State (González, 2005; Mateu and Domínguez, 2011) when, the 1970s, two vindications (in favour of the meadow of El Saler and the bank of the Turia river which crosses from West to East the city of Valencia) were put into practice with similar formulas to those of the Save movements.

The main characteristics of the Save movements are that their promoters are (1) a set of organized groups and individuals among which well-prepared professionals stand out (Sorribes, 2001), (2) that their goals are very specific and are linked to the defence of the cultural or natural heritage (Albert and Hernández, 2011), and (3) that their fighting forms focus on promoting a favourable public opinion through media (González, 2005). In fact, the media coverage of their mobilizations, which they already had in the 1970s, is partly the reason for their success.

Due to their duration they are mid-range social movements with short-term peaks of vindication like the above referenced demonstration and also peaks of mobilization like the collection of signatures for the *Per l’Horta ILP*⁸ (Gómez, 2008).

In the third place, it should be considered for the analysis another form of collective action that occurs in isolated moments, which is massive, unpredictable and has high transformative potential. This is the case of the mobilizations named after the date they occurred and better known for that than for the denomi-

⁸ People’s Legislative Initiative in 2001 to pass a law to protect the Valencian fields, which collected 120.000 signatures authenticated by the Census Bureau and that the Bureau of Les Corts, ruled by the PP, deemed inadmissible.

nations regarding their political content: 13-M (May 13, 2004) and 15-M (May 15, 2011), which is very symptomatic. In this case we can accept mobilization can be explained in its beginning with concepts like the political opportunities structure, precisely because they coincide with the election periods they achieve to have impact on. However, this theory does not explain the large popular response. The massive proportions of protests are directly proportional to their media coverage, whilst the traditional groups leadership is more questioned and is more difficult to find. It is noteworthy that the context of these mobilizations is a strong pressure perceived by the population and exerted by the power.

With the New Social Movements theory we can explain how the existence of an adverse political context promotes joining social movements and how these joinings occur based on alternative approaches to the social reality. In this sense, the wrongs perceived by many culturally aware citizens would lead to action independently of the political opportunity structure, very adverse in the origins of the Save movements. The question of participation of the formal and active members may answer to this approach. The changes in the participation formulas and the contents of the vindications cannot be attributed to only to the internal changes in the organizations. In this sense, it is true that their endogenous capacity increased thanks to the mobilization of powerful human resources from which they nurture themselves and with the booming of the ITC that provide them with organizational flexibility and capability to influence the media and, therefore, the population. But the importance of this variable is still not enough to explain the change in the vindications. For its part, the political opportunities structure was not, nor is, the right one for the mobilization volatility we have talked about.

Regarding context

It is necessary to resort to the socio-political and communicative context to find any of the key elements. It is marked by the progressive development of alternative media and complementary to the mass media -mobile phones, Internet (electronic newspapers, webs, weblogs, email, social networks, like Facebook or Twitter)-, which have been an important development of the discursive democracy and of new possibilities of social mobilization (Xambó, 2010). Although mass media, especially television, still has a big influence power, the action of the new electronic media, the 2.0 communication and citizen action through networks offers possibilities of social conversation and discussion never seen before and modulates the action of the traditional hegemonic media. If from the 1970s we can assert the mass media co-produce politics (Agostini, 1984), never as today, social movements had such fast and effective media in spreading their messages, but depending on the moment their public receives it beyond the activists. We can state the efficiency of the new media in practically all the successful mobilizations of the last decade, both at global level and in national and local spaces (Castells, 2010). Therefore, in democratic societies the importance of spreading the information and the communication processes derived from it may lead, even in specific moments, to force changes in political decisions.

The methodology: empirical, historical and comparative

Such a complex reality like the one we deal with in this research requires, naturally, two methodological operations. For the first one, we reduce or select regarding the object, as for the second one, we adopt and combine several methods depending on the aspects of social reality we face.

Thus, aware of the impossibility of completely covering the object, we reduce the field of analysis (social movements in the Valencian Country) to external and internal communication dynamics, leaving outside of our work important areas of phenomena such as social and economical structure, electoral processes, institutional policies, and deeping in the socio-political and cultural context. The fact that few researches have been made about social movements in the Valencian Country represents such an opening of the field of analysis, as well as an almost total absence of reference works that very much justify reducing them in order to make the research approachable.

As for the methods to be used, the empirical perspective, related to facts and phenomena under study through observation procedures (ethnography) and of analysis of language (in-depth interviews), becomes the axis of reference of the research. With the ethnographic method, we analyze those aspects of the object in which the direct participation and the assessment of the researchers themselves within the social movements –meetings, work reunions, discussions, coordination sessions, talks, press conferences and also mobs, demonstrations, sit-ins and other means to exert pressure and of denunciation– has allowed them to have a deep and a continuous knowledge of the objectives, projects, forms of participation, communication strategies and leaderships of the social movements. We have tried to rebuild the ‘logic of the specific sense’, typical of the situational logic of social practice (Ortí, 1995). Through the qualitative method, we address those aspects and levels of reality in which we try to establish identities and differences through the analysis of language, singularities regarding the interpretation of reality and social communication and ideological constructions (Ibáñez, 1986: 60-61).

On the other hand, through the historical method we follow the evolution of Valencian society and the emergency process of the modern social movements. An analysis focused on the evolution of the uses of communication and the consequences derived from it, cannot avoid the time dimension that allows us to reconstruct the genesis of the present and, resorting to the comparative method, describe and try to explain the change.

The research design we take as a starting point is successively synchronic and diachronic. From the synchronic approach, we analyze the relationships between the socio-political context, the action of social movements, the media and the communication publics, distinguishing between the different uses of the channels and the peculiarities of the products. From a diachronic approach we investigate the relationships between social change and the transformation of social movements, their communicative products and their publics.

The scope of action of the in-depth interview is that of speech in the sense of a personalized update of the language code. But far from the formalist and structuralist linguistics, we approach speech from the social dimension and regard the speaker from the logical dialogical and intertextual condition of the human being, from its condition of social animal. We assume speech has extra-discursive referents and that, among these, are the social practices partially constitutive of discourse (Bourdieu, 1985).

If we proceed on the basis of the model of the functions of language by Roman Jakobson (1981), the open interview leads us to what he calls the ‘expressive’ function. The interviewee speaks from his biography, understood as the set of representations associated with experienced events. Talks about information he has experienced and that arises in the conversation with a singular orientation, distortion and interpretation. Then, the generated subjectivity of the informative product is the main characteristic and limitation. This is how the emotive or expressive function focused on the addressee becomes the key reference point of the interview, since it aims to achieve a direct expression of the addresser’s attitude before his message (Alonso, 1998),

central point that provides with 'identity' the cognitive and objectifying dimension of the referential function of language. Therefore, the open interview is located between what is done and what is said, an intermediate area we could call 'the saying of doing'. It is a relevant research strategy to analyze the personalized pragmatic dimension, of the 'événementiel' and diachronic dimension of the object under study (Berger, 1991).

Within the different modalities of interview used in social sciences and according to the degree of opening and directivity, our interviews could fit in the open interview modality focused on a thematic area. Regarding the referential function, our aim was to get exploratory and descriptive information about the action of social movements, the perception of the media on their thematic diffusion of the movements and obstacles to excellence in informative and communicative practices both internal and external. Regarding the expressive function, we traced the systems of rules and of assumed values, images and beliefs, codes and crystallized stereotypes, explicit or underlying ideologies, routes and vital and professional careers, judgement on the actions of others and on social movements; in short, the representations and interpretations of the discussed phenomena.

The axis of conversations we have had approach the alternative journalistic experiences, the tensions with journalists from predominant media, the dynamics of internal communication and in the closest environment, the collection of anecdotes and personal trajectories, the situation and use of Catalan in social and citizens struggles, furthermore, the possibilities of Catalan-language media, the relationships between social movements, journalists and politicians, and the market of communication.

The set of the 17 interviewees, whose interviews this research is based on, were members of the platforms Save the Botanical Garden, Xúquer Viu (Live Xuquer), Per l'Horta and 15-M Valencia. We also interviewed members of communication groups, in alternative communication media as well as in specific activism experiences in audiovisual communication. Those are: L'Accent, L'Avanç, Ràdio Klara, Ja En Tenim Prou and Indymedia. Lastly, workers of conventional public and private media were interviewed (RTVE, RTVV, Levante-EMV, El Mundo) and of the minority media very identified with some of the discussed long-range and middle-range movements such as El Temps, Infotelevisió and L'Informatiu. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between November 2010 and November 2011.

Actors and internal communication

The composition of formal groups and active sectors of the social movements shows an evident continuity of members we can identify as their leaders. We think all the experiences we have studied are to a great extent the result of the confluence of people from previous organizations with which they are still linked. Even in the case of 15-M, the interviewee talked about several simultaneous affiliations prior to his participation in the genesis of the communication committee of the 15-M Valencia: "I had joined ATTAC, I had joined Real Democracy right before this started (...)". That does not mean there cannot be incorporations of 'natural' participants who gather actively in organizations for their specific awareness of the vindicated issue. As the Save the Botanical Garden interviewee says:

Well, there were (...) two or three resident's associations, Acció Ecologista Agró, Ràdio Klara also participated, a group of ten planners and architects and people, well then, that were already members of landscape protection groups, which in that time was just starting, (...) and some professionals (...) from architecture, town planning, landscape gardening.

This is, in our opinion, one of the keys of the Save movements formula: regroup the efforts of previous vary general-interest organizations hard to communicate nowadays around specific vindications, acceptable and of a certain social consensus. These vindications have a value in themselves, but they are mainly useful to increase the social base that surrounds them to send implicit messages about the specific vindication.

The interviewee of Ja En Tenim Prou sums it up quite well:

It was not up to us to change dramatically the election results. We are not running in the elections, we only wanted to publicly express the opinion of a part of society very critical of the neo-Falangist barbarity of the People's Party. And we wanted to act because we have been defending for a long time an active role of society that do not merely place a paper in the ballot box every four years. All this connects with modern movements, with the essential spirit of the 15-M and I think it was a success having contributed to it.

This is acknowledged by all the organizations, and they do not hide it. Save the Botanical Garden vindicates regaining the city, Xúquer Viu, a new water culture and Per l'Horta, beyond a building moratorium, vindicates a new model of consumption and responsible to the environment. This is also one of the characteristics of collective action in the 1990s (Adell, 2000; Alberich, 2007).

The profile of formal and active groups of these organizations fits into a range of typologies but there were mainly liberal professionals, students and, in many cases, those affected, like in the above mentioned experience referred by the Per l'Horta interviewee. He described the case of evictions in La Punta and how those affected partnered with politically aware people which led them to feedback each other's speeches. This aspect is brilliantly reflected on the documentary 'A Tornallom' (Peris and Castro, 2005) in which residents and members of ideologized groups that go to support them to live together and feedback each other from their experiences between tension and solidarity.

Besides those affected and the members of 'historical' organizations (Adell, 2000), there are also members of local groups of political parties, as the Save Catarroja interviewee acknowledges when she says, a bit disappointed that

There were people who lived in the fields and were directly affected by this project. And there were people with political interests, to be clear, even though they say it is not so. There were people from Esquerra Unida, there were people from PSOE and from el BLOC.

The interviewee of the Ja En Tenim Prou project is cautious when he speaks about the participation of the parties in the project and says that "also the opposition political parties against PP strongly supported our work, but without any kind of mortgage on our behalf". These 'mortgages' arise as one of the risks of collaborating with the political parties but also show how certain parties have assumed the importance of the movement.

All the interviewed groups recognise limitations in view of the unstoppable technological progress, but it stands out that the ITC resources are intensively used to the extent of their possibilities. Besides, also out stand cases like Per l'Horta, which focus a big part of their present activity on repositioning themselves as a group that works around the web, a kind of resource centre about the l'Horta region.

It is very important but it is complicated. To keep a very updated web page is hard for an organization since it needs a person constantly in charge of it. I can speak on the behalf of the second phase of the Per l'Horta web page, which had an intention but the reality is it is what it is. Basically now the web is, ultimately, the original bibliographic source where any individual, company or media can turn up to as a mine of information. And that it is why it is so essential. If you don't have a web you don't exist.

What we do consider a distinguishing mark is the presence among their promoter groups of highly skilled people regarding essential aspects for specific vindication, such as lawyers, economists, etc. Moreover, the widening of their social base through specifying the vindications allowed them to have the disinterested work of professionals from outside the formal groups or activists to solve different problems. The case of Save the Botanical Garden sums up quite well this idea:

We have a website (...) but well, since we had one person from the Coordinating Committee, (...), he was a professor at the Computer Science Faculty, he then had students who wanted to gain work experience or something similar, and they designed a web, the one that is operational now.

It seems clear that those movements are the result of strategies of the old social movements to the extent we can say that they are the result of genetic recombination of old political organizations. The central reference for all the cases is in Ca Revolta (cultural left wing association formed by old members of the Communist Movement and the Revolutionary Communist league); in the social centre Terra (left wing independentist); or the libertarian movement (squatters) would corroborate this hypothesis even more. We can say that the Save movements, therefore, form a social movement that is the result of the recombination of classic social movements, like those of resident, workers and nationalists.

However, being a result of them does not mean that with the change of strategy of the origin groups those have not been transformed. A transformation was needed on the behalf of historical groups to accept this new action strategy in view of which not all of them reacted the same way. In the case of the communicative collective project L'Avanç, the interviewee refers to that circumstance when talking about some pro-independence groups which they sought:

Many times, the generational issue is the reason why with some people, due to age proximity, due to their newer ideas, the partnership solidifies. With some other people who come from the pro-independence, we could even say nineteenth-century, movements, well no, there was no way of understanding each other. There was an abyssal between them; there was no way of getting anywhere.

Regarding communicative aspects, we are very interested in knowing to what extent the new formula of social movements comes from the use of new techniques on internal communication, among which we understand they are aimed at formal groups, active groups and the social base. In this regard, the Xúquer Viu interviewee asserted that "On our mailing list we have more than a thousand email addresses. We have, I don't know, from politicians to social organizations, movements... everyone is there and they usually hear about when we do any, any kind of activity". Using new technologies to build a communications network seems to enable more interaction and plasticity used to widen the social base. But that cannot make us forget that the more powerful Save movements still use very traditional techniques such as periodic meetings (weekly in the case of the Botanical Garden) which are attended by formal groups and part of the active groups members. The periodicity of face-to-face meetings, in fact, can be seen as a sign of health since the more decadent Save movements lost meetings in favour of online work, which at the end is useless, like in the case of Save Catarroja.

At internal level, in middle-range movements and we understand that also in long-range ones, creating networks based on new communicative models sustained in new technologies do not seem to have been decisive in the social movements generated from the 1990s onward. While in many cases they are seen as an intern communicative opportunity (e.g. email use), these technologies are rather seen as an obligation with regard to the outside, to the potential base, and in a way as a shelter from the the impossibility of progressing by other means regarding their vindications (Per l'Horta).

However, this is not the case with short-range movements. They see ICT resources as key elements to form the movement. As the communication committee member of the 15-M Valencia declared: "I created the event here in Valencia, and there were two girls on Twitter!, they were there all night, Twitter, Twitter, Twitter and in the end the Spanish revolution became a trending topic". In fact, in this case it is hard to identify the formal group and differentiate between the action groups and the social base. The state of collective mobilization typical of these kind of demonstration, and its volatility (excitement followed by dissolution) there is no time for more than a merely emerging distribution of tasks. Like we said in the introduction, when the movement stops being massive and comes back to the neighbourhoods where it transforms into a new form of movement we will deal with later.

This reflection leads us to consider communication as a very important element to understand the relationship between promoters (formal group and active group) and the public opinion or social and potential base. Communication is the key to understand the transformations in actor of the mobilization, since it can activate public opinion, it can increase the social base and active groups become very extensive. In the case of experiences like 15-M, 2011 or 13-M, 2004 ICT played a key role in activation of public opinion (Sampedro, 2005; Oliveres et al., 2011; Negri, 2011).

External communication: the kind of action

What are the strategies to activate the social base and to generate public opinion? In the information society we find ourselves in, the repertoires of action of social movements are regarded by them as communicative actions. In fact, communication acquire such an importance that in the recombination of groups another form of "movement" arises such as the communicative one exclusively focused on communication and not on specific vindication. It is the case of the newspaper *L'Avanç*, a founding member of which asserts:

Everything comes from a conversation with a person who belongs to a social movement of Valencia, in a moment in which the Save movements and the residents movements started to work. We said that we would need here a Valencian media resources to accommodate all the informations generated by society and that do not appear in the traditional media.

His interview tells us the project emerges directly from members of other groups and as a response to the perceived need of presence in the media. This is how the Save movements focus on the media work and putting their efforts and strategies into it. They produce information and elaborate materials for consumption of their potential base. To the extent they acknowledge the risk of their actions transformed on a spectacle, risk on the other hand they are willing to run and they aspire to control.

Their strategy is to impact on the media and not so much the indirect incidence of it on the public administrations to which their vindications are intended. All of this highlights the recognition of the importance

media have in modern society and shows that the opportunity structure of their strategy is not politics, very adverse as we have said, but media.

The Valencian Country press was responsible for some of the landmarks in Spanish environmentalism when in 1974:

What started as a vindication for public life, ended up becoming the first Valencian environmental movement –and we would also say Spanish– and favoured that, for the first time in the press, there was big media coverage about an environmental issue, which facilitated reflection about the need to conserve our natural environment. (Mateu and Domínguez, 2011: 177)

This fact allows us to finally convincingly relate actors and actions in very distant time periods from the political perspective (dictatorship versus formal democracy) that call into question the analysis of social mobilization from the perspective of the political opportunities structure. Thus, the willingness of influential media opposed to the governments of the moment combined with the modulation of actions according to the media criteria and with the potential base, are the ideal scenario to mobilization.

Vindications

The modulation of the actions (being quite visible, use of the image, of simple language...) is not enough to get some relevant social response. Both form and content shall be modulated to fit it in a potential base the wider the better. Media as well as social movements will benefit from it and that allows certain connivances and identifications. And also enmities. In Valencia's case it stands out how the sympathy earned in the left wing media by the Save movements became mutual aversion between them and conservative newspapers, and a media battle was fought in every action the Save movements succeeded in highlighting. So tells us the Save the Botanical Garden interviewee: "I take my hat off to the rest of the press, Levante and País, (...) usually with some success, with Las Provincias it was the opposite". It has also happened that the unanimity of private media contrast with the silence on the public media part. Somehow this shows how the media battle is considered to be decisive and able to put pressure on the government. It is the case of Per l'Horta when the interviewee says:

(...) in fact the Valencian Government got quite nervous when they started to see that we appeared a lot in the press, that there was an increasing sympathy and it seemed we were not only succeeding in collecting the number of signatures needed but we were going to widely exceed it. But there is an exception to all this, if I remember correctly. Canal 9 never even deigned to cover that news.

The vindications of the Save movements, but also the 13-M and the 15-M ones have a characteristic in common. They are the result of the public opinion, of mass values of today's society. The social movements summarize those values in specific mobilizations and try to complement them with the general values of social transformation they defence. That is why communication has stopped being unidirectional (from the movement outward) and now it is multidirectional. This is one of the new prevailing values among them. In fact, the action strategies empower citizens, not distinguishing between them and seeking everyone's affiliation. All the interviewed groups said they are open to everyone and that everyone can contribute.

Its maximum expression is the 15-M in which the main square and the ICT were not only designed as amplifiers but also as a way of gathering the voice of the people.

From the Save movements to the Live ones

Communication occupies different positions in each form of the collective action we have dealt with, internal as well as external. Historical movements have an associated classical communicative form, based on conventional media. Their communication is unidirectional; their leadership is clearly defined through their official spokesmen that are the reference of the media and of the public in general. The public does not fully identify with the interests those movements defend and their mobilizations are long-range and ritual (May 1, April 25, March 8...). Those mobilizations are predictable in their form (strikes, demonstrations, gatherings) and taking the streets via the institutional channels and other regulations. Among these organizations unidirectional visions last and cooperative work consists on publicly defending their initials. External and internal communications are very different since private information is managed (not suitable for neophytes and for members of other organisations) and an external one designed for the media and produced by professionals.

Social middle-range movements start to open communication to participation and with it they receive the introduction of the set of post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1991) with which those citizens identify themselves. They hold middle-range mobilizations, focused on the defence of the cultural or natural heritage; they are formed by alliances between the historical organizations, new ones and individuals. They are socially formed by those affected, by members of historical groups and by professionals who are willing to serve altruistically. That is why those are very powerful movements, because to the defence of personal interests of those affected they add the work of strongly ideologized and trained individuals. Their social base is more extensive as well as its potential base. To influence it they use all the techniques and communicative resources they have. Thus, in many cases, the actions are spontaneous; seek surprise, magnitude, singularity and originality to appear on the media. The pressure they exert on the power is through media. External and internal communications tend to converge because these groups are more transparent. But internally the strategy is reserved regarding the appearance on the media.

Short-range movements are, in themselves, communication. They are the result of media conjunctures that need news because there are facts that do not have a rational explanation and that are hard to report. Their magnitude responds to media coverage of events that in other circumstances would go unnoticed. But, why not go unnoticed? Because the press needs news, which we would fit in external communication, and due to the existence of the ITC resources that allow to feedback news in a continuous loop. Media stimulate the action and that stimulus is increased by internal resonance in the social base of the movement that transmits it to the potential base. External and internal communication feedback each other in a way that at the end are dissolved because what before was regarded as external now is also internal and everything is fully transparent. Discussions are public and there are no secrets. Everyone can really participate and, undoubtedly, that encourages participating in them. The contents, the aims of mobilization are general, ambiguous and multidimensional. The actor is the 'negrian' multitude. In this multitude fit the members of the Save movements, who are welcome, and not so much the members of the historical organizations, who are there but hide (since they are not seen in a good light) their initials.

The three forms of collective mobilization can be differed, as we said, by actors, practices and vindications. But also by how they use communication. This explains many of the changes in the other three since it serves as a connecting link, it structures them. Communication unites or separates actors define strategies and actions and can also subordinate the vindications.

If we accept it is essential to analyze the structure of media opportunities, we should approach what happens when it is not the right one. If, apparently, the actors back out at the same speed as they expand, we have to ask ourselves about the consequences mobilization has on its participants. Our experience shows us that the Save movements (middle-range) as well as the 13-M or the 15-M (short-range) converge on working in neighbourhoods, in a mixture between the general vindication and work itself. Thus, many of the participants in the Save movements have engaged in new projects in neighbourhoods or small towns based on a more silent work, but more productive and satisfying regarding spatial and temporal proximity. The same happens with the 15-M participants who are still mobilized in the neighbourhoods. Those forms of mobilization that in the introduction we called Viu movements are developing in our neighbourhoods with alternative practices, avoiding the traditional media system and based on the internal communication that ends up being projected outward and becomes external, occasionally mobilizing, horizontal and egalitarian.

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Civic society, democratization and globalization in Latin America

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In the last three decades, Latin America has undergone crucial transformations due to two fundamental causes: the general democratization of most of the countries of the continent (excluding Cuba) and the exposure to globalization. These two phenomena have had contradictory effects upon the societies of the countries that constitute this region. The eighties saw the displacement of the military from practically all Latin governments and the return of the military to their barracks in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, among others. In Mexico, democratization began with the electoral reform of 1977 that legalized leftist parties, among others the communist party, as a response to the important mobilizations of workers and peasants that occurred during the seventies and the guerilla warfare led by maoist, communist and other non-ideological currents.

Coincidentally, these countries were undergoing one of their most serious economic crisis, that lasted long enough to become known as the “lost decade” and that resulted in the fact that most of the countries (more successfully in the biggest ones), to a greater or lesser extent abandoned the economic model that they had been pursuing until then, based on the intervention of the State in the economy, an emphasis on the internal market, the protection of local industry, a social policy mainly designed to protect the workers of the modern economic sectors and the central administration, in a model that can be considered a segmented-fordism, whereby the workers and middle classes were warranted the resources necessary to acquire the products that the protected industry was manufacturing. The economic model known as Import substitution industrialization (ISI) was implemented through a national-popular alliance, also called “populist”, which gave social organizations a central role (fundamentally labor) in exchange for their social and political backing of the State and its economic policies, the government would give concessions to the workers in terms of salaries, benefits and social policies.

In some countries the military ended the socio-political pact since mid- 70’s, basically for political reasons (Chile-1973, Uruguay-1973 y Argentina-1976) and modified the economic model. In others, the new model was implemented as a response to the economic crisis of the 80’s. In both cases, the new model consisted in the opening of the economy to both productive and financial capitals, the orientation towards exports instead of to the internal market, the retreat of the State from the economy, the reduction of government employees and the reduction of the scope and extension of social policies. The transformation of the economic model, its reorientation toward the external market led to a dependence of most of the Latin American economies on their capacity to compete in the external market and attract foreign capital. This led, in its turn to an “under-grading” of the contractual and working conditions in most countries, through deregulation and flexibilization of the labor markets. In the countries where the trade unions were still strong, this demanded that they be sapped and that governments that were prone to their pressure, be isolated from them. This usually meant the centralization of social policies in the hands of the State, in general though a transition from a corporatist social policy controlled or negotiated with the unions and other social organizations to a centralized, focalized assistance oriented social policy. Paradoxically, this also demand-

ed a process of decentralization, from a collective bargaining at the branch level to a locally set negotiation. This led to the decentralization of education and health programs to the local (State or municipal level), that led in most cases to the aggravation of territorial and classist disparities; which are for exempls now at te center of the agenda of the Chilean youth.

All of this has had three crucial consequences on social life in Latin America:

1. The central social actor of the ISI period, fundamentally the labor movement (although this included other socio-political actors such as the peasants and poor urban inhabitants) lost its centrality, together with its main support and “partner”, the State. We will discuss the important exceptions to this “rule”: the case of the *peronistas* in Argentina and that of the CUT in Brazil. It must be mentioned that while this actor was central in the industrial society of the developed countries for more profound reasons, as Touraine has affirmed, they expressed a social and cultural goal, that of the orientation of industrial society, in the Latin American context it was mainly a political actor, central because of its alliance with the developmentist State.
2. The decline of the main actor(s) of the Latin American XXth century has given way to new movements, more social and cultural. The new movements that emerged in the new democratic and globalized Latin America context have both oriented their demands towards the deepening of democracy and against the excesses of neo-liberalism. In this context, the most interesting of these movements have “instrumentalized” their actions against neo-liberalism in order to denounce the limits of liberal democracy and citizenship in order to demand its deepening through different means and the affirmation of a more active citizenry that does not ask for concessions from the State (typical of the social struggle in the national-popular period) but all sorts of rights: human (security, state of law), social (work, education, health), cultural (affirmation of, gender, ethnic, religious identity) and subjective (abortion, gay marriage, divorce) rights.

Power, decline and recovery of the Latin American labor movement

As affirmed, the labor movement has been central in the Latin American context. Until the 80’s, it has been the paradigmatic actor than defined the capacity of action of the society in general and the worker’s interests in particular. In some countries such as Argentina and Brazil the base of the resistance under the military regimes. Its capacity of action was due to the fact that it was able to clearly define its identity: workers meet each other daily in the factory and have the same basic interests. On the other hand, if one compares labor to other actors, workers can actually endanger the economy of their enterprise and some of them, situated in the most strategic sectors of the economy (petroleum, electricity, transportation, central public administration), the economy of their country. Nonetheless, the 80’s and 90’s were marked by tendencies that played against the unions. For one part, this actor suffered from the opening of most of the economies of Latin-America, from the retreat of the State and the deregulation of the economy; the combination of these three elements had as its result the deregulation of the labor market and the flexibilization of the labor conditions in the enterprises; that entailed the weakening of the labor unions. In addition, the crisis and the new economic model signified the increase of the informal economy, the tertiary sector of the economy and the reduction of the State employees, all of which significantly reduced the weight of the unionized workers in the economy. The formal industrial branches and the State functionaries had been the heart of the traditional

unionism. This evolution contradicted the fact that in most of the countries in the Continent, the process of democratization permitted that the unions act freely for the first time in decades. (Bronstein, 1997). This situation was aggravated by the incapacity of the labor movement to compensate the influence lost amid the formal workers with a greater presence among the sectors that increased in these last decades: informal workers, commerce, services (Bronstein, 1995). Thus, the rate of unionization, of strikes and strikers diminished greatly in most of the Latin American continent, to the exception of Brazil and Argentina.

In contrast to the labor movement in the developed countries, where it was the central actor of the industrial society, as it agreed upon the main cultural orientations of this society, together with the entrepreneurs, but contested the distribution of the wealth created and the concentration of industrial knowledge in the hands of the employers, though the division of work and organization of the labor process (Touraine, 1973). In Latin America, the labor movement was less a cultural than a political and socio-political one. Labor was one of the main supports of the industrializing ISI coalition), together with the national entrepreneurs, the middle classes and the State. The pact promoted industrialization and the improvement of the working, employment and social protection for formal workers, while it assisted the population still not included in the process of modernization (Lindenboim, 2004:23). The agreement could be called segmented Fordism, in the sense that workers saw their conditions improved not only as a manner of getting “paid” for their inclusion in the pact, but as a way of enhancing the internal market for the manufactures being produced by the industry. It was segmented because only part of the population of Latin America was concerned: the formal workers in the modern sector of the economy. The peasants and marginal workers of the cities were excluded.

The military coups of the sixties and seventies ended this pact. The only exception is Brazil, as the military managed to exclude labor from the industrializing coalition in order to stop wealth distribution of the previous governments, while it deepened the import substitution process to include intermediary and capital goods. Both the Chilean and the Argentinean military shifted to promoting a liberal economic model without wealth distribution, where exports of commodities would prime and where industry would have a secondary role. The crisis of 1982 was the end of import substitution in the countries that had continued implementing it, such as Mexico. In the latter, the discovery of huge oil resources had allowed for the continuation of the import substitution model without deepening and without the exclusion of the popular sectors in order to stop distribution, as oil exports and the debt based on the expectations of these exports made it possible for the Mexican government to continue redistribution. (Marques-Pereira and Théret, 2001; Bizberg, 2011; Bizberg and Theret, 2011)

In this manner, by the mid-eighties most of the countries of the continent were promoting an economic model based on exports and foreign investment, where labor was excluded from a coalition formed by entrepreneurs, foreign capital and the State. This coalition proceeded to ample privatizations, retreat of the State from the economy, a shift from a contributory and pay as you go social security system to an individual, capitalization system; from a universal and generalized health system to a private and segmented one; in general, from an expanding, albeit segmented, Providence State, to a more universal, minimal and mainly assistance oriented system.

There have clearly been exceptions to this general tendency of a decline of labor and other traditional social movements. In Argentina and Brazil, the trade union movement has succeeded in maintaining or recovering its force. In Brazil, this has happened especially during the presidency of Lula between 2002 and 2010, while in Argentina it is with the Kirchner-Fernandez presidencies in the years 2000. The fact that democratization

in both of these countries was the result of an ample mobilization of civic society (basically trade unions) against the military in the 70's, these two countries were fertile ground for other forms of social action that developed in the last twenty years. Moreover in both Argentina and Brazil, here was no de-mobilization of society following democratization and the social mobilization under the dictatorship, like in Chile, when the parties decided to contest electoral the plebiscite of Pinochet in 1987 (Oxhorn, 1994), and Mexico after the union and peasant organization movements of the first half of the seventies, that were successfully channeled through elections by the PRI regime with the political reform of 1977 (Bizberg, 2010, Aziz, 2003). The fact that in both of these countries the movements that resisted the dictatorship, retained its importance, partly explains why civic society continued being very active in these two countries, and why in these two countries, although labor was also weakened due to the neo-liberal measures, preserved its capacity of action.

In fact, in Argentina, labor was the principal opposition to the first democratic government, that of radical Alfonsín and to the government of De la Rúa that led to the 2001 economic and political crisis. The peronistas negotiated with and resisted the *justicialista* and very liberal Menem government and have become a crucial partner in the Kirchner and Fernández governments (Palomino y Trajtenberg, 2006). The fact that after the 2001 crisis, unionism was one of the best organized actors, made it indispensable for the Kirchner government to ally with it. This government appointed a pro labor lawyer at the Ministry of Labor, who promoted collective negotiations at the branch level, encouraged the formalization of the labor market, raised real salaries (both minimal and median) and eventually re-nationalized the pension funds (in 2008) in order to attract union support, but also as a way to strengthen the internal market. This reinforced the *peronist* CGT, which reunited after having during the Menem presidencies due to disagreements over the position to be taken with respect to its liberal measures; while part of the CGT considered that it should negotiate with the government, another considered that it should oppose the measures (Palomino, 2000).

In Brazil, during the government of Cardoso, the labor movement was able to resist the more radical neo-liberal measure's, like the pension reform, and was a partner of the employers and the State in the tripartite organizations: the "câmaras sectoriais". These organizations were implemented in some of the most important branches of the economy, and served to negotiate salaries, prices and taxes in order to stimulate growth of these sectors (De Souza Keller, 1994). During the Lula presidencies (2002-2010), there appeared a number of (temporary or permanent) tripartite counsels, such as the Socio-Economic Counsel and the forums installed to discuss the pension and the labor law reform, designed to discuss certain measures or laws that were to affect the interests of workers (Riethof, 2004)

There are other traditional movements and organizations that have persisted. One example is the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*, that demands an agrarian reform in a country, that has never had one, and the unionization of the rural workers. This movement was founded in 1985 and increased its force in the renewed agrarian conflicts of the new democracy. The pressures upon the democratic governments resulted in the fact that the Brazilian society grasped the unjust distribution of land that existed in their country and the living conditions of many rural workers, which in some regions included slavery. This organization managed to set the agrarian reform in the political agenda and push the presidency of Cardoso to distribute land to 570,000 families and in the Lula government to around 100,000 families per year. On the other hand, rural workers have been actively organizing in unions, most of them in the CUT, ideologically close to the governing PT.¹

¹ <http://www.mst.org.br/mst/home.php>

Nonetheless, there has been a clear shift from the demands of labor and other socio-political actors regarding the distribution of wealth and political power of the fifties and sixties, the end of the military regimes of the seventies and eighties; which were led by the labor union and other popular organizations, to claims against neoliberalism of a great number of new social actors in the 90's and 2000, shifted from. Although one can interpret these movements as reactions to the situation created by the retreat of the State, the increased inequality and social insecurity produced by the neo-liberal economic model (Silva, 2010), they share some important characteristics that go well beyond. They surely profited from the occasion to react against the social effects of neo-liberalism, as did the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, the Indian movement in Ecuador and Bolivia, the *piqueteros* and other spontaneous movements in Argentina, the CUT and the *Sem Terra* in Brazil, their most interesting characteristic and most crucial significance of their action is their claims to the respect of human rights, of rights to define their collective identity in ethnic, religious, linguistic terms, the rights of citizens to work, health, education, security, as well as to decide upon the way individuals make use of their body, their sexuality, their subjective dignity.

New types of movements and social actions.

Facing the decline of the most significant historical actor social actor in Latin America, we have witnessed the emergence of new social actors. One of these are the organizations of civic society or ONGs, that appeared quite massive in most Latin American countries as a result of the retreat of the State and the decrease of its investment in social politics. The increasing fragility of the population submitted to neo-liberalism, during the seventies and eighties, the ONG's and in general civic society organizations appeared in order to take care of the needs of the population, a "negative" characteristic of society rather than a positive characteristic of society, like interests, alternative projects and identities. This was basically the case of what was called the "third sector" or the ONG movement, whereby with other beneficence organizations they tried to substitute what the governments were not doing. In many cases, when more leftist or centrist governments took power and renewed with the social policies, they made use of these organizations as a way of making their policies more efficient. They thus promoted some of the leaders of these organizations to the head of their social policies institutions or channeled their activities through them. In many cases this led to the wilting of these organizations and to their instrumentalization by the government, and by the loss of their autonomy and their initiative. The emergence of these organizations and their instrumentalization was a characteristic of both Chile and Mexico. In both, the liberal economic model was very orthodox and in both the new democratic governments, as both a manner of gaining efficiency and legitimacy, reached out to the ONGs.

There are other actions, oriented towards a more positive goal, that of demanding rights. Within these movements we can surely count the human rights movements and organizations, that emerged during the dictatorship and that were crucial in some countries to exert pressure for the return of democracy; some of them have survived the transition but have transformed themselves. There are, on the other hand, the Indian movements, that demanded the recognition of their identity, the right to be different. There are other movements that one can assimilate to this general tendency towards the demand of rights rather than concessions from government such as the right to work, to social security, to health, a safe environment, divorce, abortion, gay marriage, among others.

Although the indigenous movement got international recognition with the Zapatista rebellion of 1994 in Mexico, the movement rejecting the assimilationist policies that the Latin American governments had been

implementing and demanding their right to exist and be recognized as an autonomous nation, started in Ecuador and Bolivia in the seventies. In most cases, this movement was aided in its organization by church representatives. In the amazon region of Ecuador, it began by reacting to the intervention of the oil companies in their region and in the action transformed themselves into a cultural movement, that united in a national the *Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana (Confeniae)*, which according to Albo, was the first indian organization to adopt the term nation (Albo, X., 2004). In Bolivia, the Katarista movement that grew strongly during the sixties and seventies, began as a peasant organization demanding land. This movement fused with other social movements in 1979 to fund the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Csutcb)*, that was crucial in order to assure the election of Evo Morales as the first Indian president of a majoritarian Indian country as Bolivia. (Ibid.)

Although these indigenous movements actively intervened against neo-liberal measures such as the signing of NAFTA between Mexico, the US and Canada, against the selling of gas to foreign companies and the price of water charged by private companies in Bolivia and the dollarization of the economy of Ecuador, the sense of these movements reached over these socio-economic actions in order to point towards the recognition of the right to be different without rejecting the larger national structure. The actions against neo-liberal measures were in a sense an opportunity to intervene in the political stage. This had different results: in the case of Mexico, the EZLN was a crucial catalyst of the democratic transition, although it did not directly intervene in the political scene and in fact marginalized itself from it; in the case of Ecuador led to its defeat, when it allied with the military that staged a coup against the elected government, albeit completely corrupt and inefficient, that of Bucaram. In the case of Bolivia, the participation in the so-called gas and water “wars” and the organization of a union of coca producers in the region of the Chaparé, that contested the agreements between the Bolivian and the U.S. governments to eradicate the production of the plantations of coca, set the stage for the election of its leader Evo Morales to the presidency of Bolivia in 2006. In all these cases the protest against the economic model went far beyond the economic protests. It used these in order to affirm its indigenous identity and demand rights for these populations: socio-economic, cultural, political, and in some cases territorial (Le Bot, 2009).

In other countries, such as in Argentina, these types of movements were strongly influenced by the human rights movement that emerged during the military government (Smulovitz 2007); crucial to explain the victory of the radical party with Alfonsín against the *peronistas*. On the other hand, many of the movements in this country emerged from the effects of neo-liberalism during the Menem administration and the economic, social and political crisis of 2001-2002. In contrast to the past, these movements did not point their demands to the government, for compensations, but rather in more general terms to rights. From the right to know what happened to the people and children that disappeared during the dictatorship, the children that were abducted, to the right to work, to have social services, etc.

The *piquetero* movements began with the protest against the closure of plants in the south of the country (Neuquén, Salta and Jujuy) by the Menem government, plants that in many cases were the only source of employment. Their repertory consisted of local revolts of small towns (puebladas) and road blockings. This movement accompanied the impressive increase of unemployment from 1994 to the crisis of 200; from 15% in 1992 to 30% in 2000 and 40% in the wake of the crisis. During the next years and especially during the De la Rúa government that led to the 2001 crisis, these movements extended to the rest of the country and especially to the Buenos Aires region, where the results of the neo-liberal economic model were more dramatic and concerned mainly private enterprises (Svampa and Pereyra, 2004). This situation led to the

occupation of hundreds of the closing enterprises and their administration in a cooperative manner by the workers themselves (Tilly, ??? y tesis). Although all these movements were reacting to the consequences of neo-liberalism (Silva, 2010), their significance does not exhaust itself in that, more profoundly what they were demanding was the right to work.

The significance these movements gave to their action appears more clearly when we realize that the social policies that were implemented to deal with them: the plan “Trabajar”, differs profoundly from the assistance programs applied in Mexico and Chile. This program consists of temporal employment in communal tasks such as the building or rehabilitation of roads, clinics, schools, etc., rather than a monetary allowance with no financial or labor contribution (Weitz-Schapiro, 2006).

Apart from these two significant movements, the 2001-2002 crisis led to a considerable repertory of other types of social actions: the “*cacerolazos*”, the “*escraches*”, as well as the spontaneous assemblies at street corners, called “*asambleas de barrio*”. In addition, the human rights organisations continued demanding the right to know the destiny of the thousands of disappeared during the dictatorship. Although these organizations were less numerous than the others mentioned, the sense of their action has gave them a considerable social and political impact (Smulovitz; 2007).

The case of social action in Brazil is also characteristic of the new movements. In this country, the fact that civic society action was crucial to assure democratization and that contrary to what happened in Chile and Mexico where society was demobilized during democratization, in this country the first years after the transition where characterized by a very open process of constitutional review. Civic society participated very actively in this process as the 1988 Constitution was not written by a congressional commission or exclusively by Congress, there was a procedure whereas any group could submit articles that would be then discussed in Congress, by collecting 100,000 signatures. For the first time in the history of Brazil and (most probably) in Latin America, the population was able to participate in an active manner in the elaboration of the Constitution and not only the political elites (Chaves Texeira, *et. al.*). This process enhanced the existing organizations and associations of civic society and helped form nets between them and to create new ones. This resulted in very intense discussions among organizations, associations, academics for almost three years (1986-1988), to outline articles that were then discussed by Congress. This process had such an impact that in almost all the localities of the country groups where created in order to elaborate the demands that would be submitted to Congress. (Ibid.). This process not only gave birth to a very progressive Constitution, difficult to comply with but that serves as a reference for the political actors.

On the other hand, the fact that the PT, a party created by the political will of the “new unionism”, the Christian groups called “*comunidades de base*” and different leftist (communist, Trotskyists, Maoists) groups, consolidated during the transition and stayed in opposition for more than twenty years prevented it to be “neutralized” as did Solidarity in Poland when it arrived to power just after the transition and in Argentina during the Menem government. The fact that the PT remained out of power led it to maintain its active connection to unions and other social actors and to innovate its public policies in the municipalities it achieved to win in order to distinguish itself from the governing party. This latter led to the implementation of the celebrated participatory budget that became a window of opportunity for civic action at the municipal level and that signified the decline of clientelism (a traditional instrument of Brazilian politics) in those localities where it was implemented. According to Arvitzer, before the implementation of participatory budget in Belo Horizonte, 60% of the people interviewed declared that they benefited from the personal

relations they maintained with political figures, with the implementation of this instrument this percentage was reduced to nothing. In Porto Alegre the percentage went from 41% to zero (Avitzer, 2002). One has to mention, nevertheless, that in some cases the clientelistic leaders adapted to the new system and became the leaders of the assemblies where the distribution of resources was decided, (Abers, 2000), but it is also to be said that by doing so they most probably changed their ways of action.

More recently, the drug and other illegal activities related violence and the repressive policy of the governments have given birth to more or less massive and spontaneous actions against violence and for the right to be able to live a normal life. In many occasions these actions have been sparked by a hideous crime, such as the one of ??? in Argentina, the son of a well known entrepreneur, Martí, in Mexico, and that of a Mexican poet, Javier Sicilia. There has been a transformation of these movements, at least in the case of Mexico, from one against insecurity, where the demand was oriented to the State to impose its force, to another that is critical of the repressive and militarist policies of the government, that is demanding the right to analyse and discuss alternative solutions and more recently, with the explosion of deaths in this non-declared “war” against drugs, around 50,000, the right to know the details of each of these deaths.

Concluding remarks

The new social movements emerging after democratization and in the context of globalization diverge in important manners from those that existed before. In the sixties, seventies and eighties, the dominant movement was labor and other socio-political actors that oriented their action towards getting concessions from the government or from private interests through exerting pressure on the government. These interests were in general well organized and centralized, and acted as much at the social as at the political level. Since the eighties we have seen a decay of these movements and the emergence of more atomized social actors that raise their demands in terms of rights rather than concessions and that generally stay at the social or cultural level of action rather than at the political. In terms of Arato they are actors that are “self-limiting” (Arato, 2000).

This is clearly the case of the indigenous movements that separated their action from that of the agrarian movement and are currently demanding in the first place the right to be different, the recognition of their cultural, ethnic, religious identity. From this basis will derive other economic, social and even political rights.

On the other hand, since the 80’s Latin America has seen the emergence of a great number of organizations (or rather associations) of civic society dedicated to tackle many of the problems and wants of different sectors of society caused by the retreat of the State. Many of these organizations were instrumentalized by the governments in behalf of their public policies programs as in Mexico and Chile, or they became more autonomous and led the fight for the recognition of rights. In effect, in some countries, most notably in Brazil and Argentina, civic society organizations dealing with privations and specific demands of different sectors of society, managed to transform their action into one claiming for rights. Argentina did so in the tradition of the human rights and labor. We have mentioned the way in which in Argentina an important array of associations and organizations dedicated to claim for rights have developed: work, health, social security, etc. These movements (including the *piqueteros* and factory occupations), as Perruzotti y Smulovitz say, suppose a crucial difference with the social action and the socialization of the Argentinian society

that characterized the country during the dominance of unions and *peronism*, (one can say the same for almost all the countries of Latin America), where politization was the rule, to focus on rights. The same can be said of Brazil, where the writing of the Constitution as well as of the implementation of the participatory budget has made individual and associations more and more conscious and active in demanding rights rather than concessions of the government and the imposition of the interests of specific social categories.

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