

# Interface

A journal for and about social movements

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**Interface volume 3 issue 1**  
**Repression and social movements**

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*Interface: a journal for and about social movements* is a peer-reviewed journal of practitioner research produced by movement participants and engaged academics. *Interface* is globally organised in a series of different regional collectives, and is produced as a multilingual journal.

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

Articles marked (P) have been subject to double-blind peer review by one academic researcher and one movement practitioner.

## **Cover art**

The cover photograph to this issue was taken at a showing of the 2002 film *The Battle of Orgreave*, directed by Mike Figgis. The film is a documentary of an event-based collaborative project by artist Jeremy Deller, which re-enacted a demonstration of the British Miners' strike on June 18 1984. Deller worked collaboratively with those involved in the original strike and members of battle re-enactment societies in the UK in order to reconstruct the original demonstration and confrontations with police.

Further details of the re-enactment are on the EventPlan Limited website, an organisation who worked with Jeremy Deller: <http://www.historicalfilmservices.mysite1952.co.uk/orgreave.htm>. Their overview notes that the recreation had a significant "positive effect on the local community" and that "a belated healing process had begun for many Orgreave 'veterans', who until the recreation had found the memory of June 1984 just too painful to discuss".

The original demonstration saw a violent clash between striking miners and police at a British Steel coking plant, in the English mining town of Orgreave in South Yorkshire. It occurred at the height of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's attempts to close numerous steel works and rout the labour power of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). The original protest involved between 5000 and 6000 picketers organised by the NUM, and saw the police deploy between 4000 and 8000 officers from 10 counties in order to stop the demonstration. In the resulting confrontation ninety-five picketers were charged with riot, unlawful assembly and other offences and many people were injured. The later trial regarding the incident collapsed and all charges were dropped. A number of lawsuits were brought against the police for unlawful arrest, and £425,000 compensation and £100,000 in legal costs was later paid in an out of court settlement.

This image is used by kind permission of Jeremy Deller and Mike Figgis.

## **Editorial: repression and social movements**

**Cristina Flesher Fominaya, Lesley Wood**

With the events of the “Arab Spring” revolutions fresh in our minds, an *Interface* issue dedicated to repression and social movements may seem very timely. But the fact is that any time is a good time to reflect on repression and social movements. The two realities go hand in hand and have always done so.

Any reader can cast their minds back and call up their own memories of social movement repression, whether experienced first-hand, handed down as oral history, witnessed on TV from the relative comfort of a living room sofa, or drawn from a passage in a history book. Suffragettes being force-fed in prison in the UK in the early 1900s, vicious dogs attacking civil rights protesters in the Southern United States, the execution of environmental and indigenous rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa in Nigeria, the systematic kidnapping, torture and assassination of political activists in Argentina’s Dirty War, the massacre of students in Tlatelolco and Tiananmen Square: the list, unfortunately, goes on and on.

While these examples are striking representations of repression, the repression of social movements does not always take such visible forms. Much repression of social movements is deliberately invisible – from surveillance and infiltration to the mysterious deaths of labour unionist and environmental whistleblower Karen Silkwood or peace activist and Green Party founder Petra Kelly. Sometimes the media make repression invisible by not reporting it. Of course some forms of repression are difficult to detect, because the mechanisms used are subtle and institutionalized. Examples of this are the ways that intellectuals working in the academy are denied tenure or suspended for their critical intellectual work, or for their movement engagement. A few decades ago, scholars standing up for civil rights for women and ethnic “minorities” often faced hostile administrations. Even in theoretically liberal countries, critical scholars questioning the uses and abuses of anti-terrorism legislation, like Dr. Rod Thornton at the University of Nottingham, can be suspended or arrested<sup>1</sup>. General blacklisting processes, surveillance, “unspoken” understandings that joining a trade union might cost you your job or promotion, and public proceedings such as the House Un-American Activities Committee (1938-1975), are other examples of institutional mechanisms that silence and discourage dissent and activism.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/may/04/nottingham-university-row-after-lecturer-suspended>

## **The contradictory effects of repression**

But repression doesn't always demobilize movements. Sometimes it inspires greater resistance, and wider participation in protest. The Egyptian uprising this year was after all, partly triggered by the police beating and murder of Khaled Said. Even in cases of more subtle repression - the banning of protest, or the rumoured or threatened arrest of a leader - mobilization often increases. It seems that sometimes repression inspires more mobilization; and sometimes it effectively quashes movements or pushes them underground. Sometimes repressive forces are successful in characterizing protestors as legitimate targets of repression, and other times they delegitimize the State and increase the legitimacy of the social movements. We don't fully understand the conditions under which facing repression collectively can strengthen bonds between activists and strengthen movements and when it leads to fragmentation and demobilization (see Davenport et. al. 2005, Starr et al., 2008), although some very interesting work has been done in this area. Pfaff's (1996) work on the 1989 East German protests argues that collective identity processes within small groups in Leipzig explain why these protestors were the first to be willing to openly oppose the East German regime in a highly repressive context. More work that makes connections between latent or submerged intra-movement processes such as collective identity formation and more visible or manifest acts of protest and repression needs to be done.

Although the contradictory effects of repression on social movements have yet to be fully understood, there is a real sense that repressive repertoires are being transformed. How has the contemporary context, shaped as it is by the "global war on terror", increasing integration and transformation of economic and political relations and technological innovations, transformed the forms of repression social movements face? Many have argued that a new model of repression is emerging (della Porta et al. 2006, Fernandez 2008, Vitale 2005, Gillham and Noakes 2007).

## **Global regimes of repression?**

The "global war on terror" has fueled anti-terrorism legislation that has been used to quash dissent and to criminalize activists within countries whose states claim a particular affinity with human rights. But such legislation began to be passed before 2001. In the UK in 1994 the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act targeted direct action activists, hunt saboteurs, squatters, ravers and others engaged in "anti-social behavior" by criminalizing those who congregated and listened to music "wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats". The law's provisions relating to aggravated trespass made non-violent protest a criminal offence.

More recently, anti-terrorist legislation has been extended and used to target protesters. One example of this was the anti-terror legislation and additional

police powers (introduced specifically for the event) which were used in Sydney during the 2007 APEC Summit when George Bush visited<sup>2</sup>. In the US, the PATRIOT Act, passed after 9/11 redefined 'domestic terrorism' as an act "dangerous to human life" that is a violation of the criminal laws of a state or the United States, if the act appears to be intended to: (i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. Such a definition could be interpreted loosely and used to justify the investigation and prosecution of a range of movements. Indeed, eight protesters at the Republican National Convention in 2008 were charged with conspiracy to riot in furtherance of terrorism.

This use of, or threat of terrorism charges has spread rapidly - with environmentalists in Australia, Red Shirt protesters in Thailand, human rights activists in El Salvador, anarchists in Chile, and animal rights activists in the US all facing such charges in the past few years. But not all governments rely on anti-terrorism legislation. In Russia, for example, anti-extremist legislation is used effectively not only against left-wing activists, but also liberal opposition and far-right groups.<sup>3</sup>

New technologies have also been used both to repress and to avoid repression. Political flash mobs, such as those in the Philippines 2001, Madrid 2004 or Egypt 2011, are important examples of how new information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be used to mobilize protests in repressive political contexts and especially in contexts where there is limited freedom of the press or access to alternative media (Flesher Fominaya 2011; Rheingold 2003; Rafael 2003). Although such new technologies initially offered an unregulated way for activists to communicate, state governments have rapidly caught up with each innovation - monitoring, blocking and interfering with email, Facebook and SMS or text messaging (Tilly and Wood 2008).

Militarized weapons are also increasingly being used against protesting civilian populations in liberal democratic states, in a departure from recent practice. Pepper spray canisters, tear gas, tanks, sound and water cannons and riot control units are newly visible in countries where they have been absent for decades. Public police are increasingly sharing strategies with the military, and being trained and outfitted by the private sector. These strategies are globalizing and it appears that a new model of professionalized, high tech and militarized policing has emerged in the last ten years, in countries where this was not previously the norm.

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<sup>2</sup> See Goodman (2010).

<sup>3</sup> "Inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in Russia in 2010" (see the section "Persecution of Political and Social Activists and Organizations"): <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2011/04/d21360/>

"Misuse of Anti-Extremism Legislation in March 2011": <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/news-releases/2011/04/d21313/>



This new model is seen as a shift away from the “negotiated management” model of protest policing that emerged in such countries in the 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, scholars and activists noted that repressive strategies were becoming more routinized and measured (della Porta and Reiter 1998, McCarthy 1998). While there was wide variation in different countries and regions, in many areas, police were becoming more professionalized, emphasizing formal training and shifting their strategies from an attempt to punish lawbreakers by any means necessary and limit protest, to a strategy of negotiated management that valued communication as a way to reduce the disruptiveness of protest.

As policing networks globalized, this model spread internationally, particularly among liberal parliamentary democracies. However, many activists became frustrated with increasingly routinized and scripted protests that seemed to blunt the power of street protest. The space for protest and dissent was shrinking and increasingly regulated. In this context, and with a rapidly transforming and globalizing polity and economy, by the late 1990s, the model of negotiated management began to show serious cracks.

By that time, increasing numbers of protesters refused to negotiate with the police, facilitating a series of movement victories, including the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999. With these victories, the police in Canada, the U.S. and W. Europe shifted their approach. Influenced by the private sector and military tactics, a dual strategy began to emerge. Cooperative groups experienced negotiated management, but those perceived as risky, unpredictable or threatening became the target of selective escalation (de Lint and Hall 2009, Rafail 2010, Gillham and Noakes 2007, Vitale 2005).

This strategy has many regional variations and is still rapidly evolving in spaces like the conferences of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, their international conferences in Latin America and Asia and CEPOL events including those organized by the European Police College. The spread of the resultant model is having and will have serious implications for the strength and success of popular mobilizations.

These shifts are of serious concern to both social movement scholars and activists. We need to better understand how this is influencing mobilization. Scholars and activists have long wrestled with the contradictory effects of repression on mobilization. In order to get beyond this confusion, we obviously need to look beyond simple linear relationships. We need to recognize that police street tactics, media strategies, surveillance by intelligence officers and others, as well as narratives like the War on Terror, legal controls, sentencing and immigration controls are all part of repressive strategy.

Then we need to look closely at the effects of these different pieces on the different processes of identity formation, emotion work, organization, alliance building and resource mobilization that underlie mobilization at individual and collective levels. At the individual level, how do arrests, violence, infiltration and subjection to mechanisms of control affect the recruitment, sustainability and biography of activists? How does repression affect movement and group

processes of identity formation, trust, evaluations of strategy, and movement generations?

The repercussions of the experience of repression can have longlasting and unexpected effects. The same act of repression can be experienced and processed in very different ways within the same movement. The case of the Arab Spring again comes to mind. When women in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen put their bodies on the line to support the push for democracy and freedom this year, their presence was seen as beneficial in at least two ways: first, as less likely to provoke police or military brutality (prevention of repression), second, as useful in providing medical assistance for the wounded (consequence of repression). For many of these women, openly protesting was their first explicitly political act and it had a radicalizing effect. But when they wanted to claim some of the "benefits" of the protest for themselves, and put forth specific demands for women's equality or progress, they were told to go home. <sup>4</sup>

These women were deployed strategically during the uprisings but then marginalized once the worst had passed, in a pattern that is all too recognizable for scholars of social movements and revolutions. The denial of women's recognition as political actors in their own right, by both repressive regimes and by sexist practices within social movements, has triggered feminist consciousness and mobilization in the past<sup>5</sup>. It is too soon to tell what the effects of this radicalization/marginalization process will be on these women or how it will affect the development of these movements for democracy. We know that surviving and sharing experiences of repression can contribute to feelings of internal solidarity, and often these experiences are incorporated into the myths and narratives movements tell about themselves. These myths are then handed down and form part of specific militant traditions, often in highly gendered ways. The effects of these repression narratives on internal status hierarchies, leadership, solidarity and other internal movement dynamics is another fruitful area of enquiry.

The incorporation of attention to emotions, culture and identity processes have also made important contributions to our understanding of the dynamics of movements in repressive contexts. We need to build further on the existing work in this area, that includes, for example, Cunningham and Noakes (2008) discussion of the effects of repression on activist emotions in U.S. movements, or Rachel Einwohner's (2006) work on repression, identity and collective identity in the Jewish resistance movement in the Warsaw ghetto.

In addition to breaking down what we mean by repression and mobilization, we need to move beyond the tendency to examine repression of contentious politics only in national blocks. It is clear that decisions around repressive strategy are taking place at the local, national and international levels. They are coordinated

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/wvon/2011/04/women-told-to-go-home-in-aftermath-of-uprisings/>

<sup>5</sup> For example, in Latin American democratization movements. See Ray and Korteweg (1999) for an overview.

and enacted by both public and private authorities, and both are rooted in particular histories, and are diffusing across boundaries at an increasingly rapid pace.

### **The importance of context**

The degree to which acts of repression and acts of protest are defined and understood as such is clearly context dependent, and the degree to which that context shapes strategies and meanings is still understudied. Listening to rock music in a democratic country today is not considered an act of protest, in an authoritative regime like Stroessner's Paraguay, for example, such an act was a clear political statement, and one likely to get one arrested (and beaten for good measure). So while we need to seek connections between regimes of repression and protest globally, and study diffusion processes of both repression and resistance, we also need to be careful to avoid universalist analysis that fails to take into account specific national political, institutional, legal, and cultural frameworks. Finding a balance between particularist and universalist approaches is a difficult but worthy task.

Comparative work is one way to address this issue. Mac Sheoin and Yeates (2009) make an important contribution in this regard, through an analysis of patterns and variations in State responses to policing anti-globalization protests. Their focus on a single global movement that mobilizes in a wide range of nation states allows a comprehensive overview of current policing of social movements. Their work highlights, among many other insights, how repressive tactics in some states are not only directed at summit hopping protesters, but target local dissidents long before the protest event ever takes place<sup>6</sup>.

Just as we need to guard against universalizing from single cases or from particular regions, it is important to avoid a monolithic understanding of "repression" and "social movements" and analyze the ways, for example, that repression is gendered and racialized in specific contexts (both in terms of how it is deployed and experienced), and how activists strategically mobilize particular representations in order to either reduce the likelihood of police brutality, such as presenting a "fluffy", non-violent, or deliberately "feminized" approach, or to heighten its visibility, as in the case of the Tute Bianche (below).

The effect of authoritarian contexts more generally on the dynamics of movements is a fascinating area of study that has yielded provocative and interesting work to date, such as Sophie Bedford's (2009) discussion of

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<sup>6</sup> Looking specifically at the policing and repression of the anti-globalization movement, *Interface 2/2* carries a comprehensive bibliography (MacSheoin 2010) that includes news media, academic work and material produced by security forces and charts policing by country, offering an important resource to scholars and activists working in this area.

repression and mobilization in Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan, or Adams' (2000, 2005, forthcoming) exploration of the politicization of shantytown women, who became active in resistance against the Pinochet regime through art workshops in Chile. Using longitudinal analysis, Romanos (2011) analyses the important role of emotion and the paradoxical effects of repression on the maintenance of clandestine anarchist activism during the Franco dictatorship in Spain over time.

The movements that exist today are partly the offspring of past interactions between movements and repressive authorities. As Vince Boudreau (2004, 2002) showed in his study of repression in three South Asian states, the form and nature of repression creates legacies in subsequent movements. Today's movements and their repression will have implications for the future. But as in the past, movements today are actively responding to repressive authorities and practices.

### **Movement responses to repression: cooperation, avoidance, confrontation**

While many activists try to cooperate with police and intelligence in order to be able to have the opportunity to protest publicly without interference, many others try to avoid the influence of police and intelligence on their organizing. We do this in different ways. We use "security culture" in the hopes of avoiding infiltration. We try to avoid isolation by building strong, diverse and well resourced movements. We develop teams of "activist lawyers", legal workers or legal observers to support social movements. Some individuals and groups operate as watchdogs of the state – protecting civil liberties and responding to changes to legislation – through legal and popular strategy. We support those who are prosecuted, raising money for legal defense, engaging in media campaigns, or taking care of the children of imprisoned activists.

Still another approach is that used by groups like the Tute Bianche (White Overalls) in Italy, who deliberately try to force an open confrontation in order to make visible the repressive apparatus of the State. Inspired by the Zapatista strategy of covering their faces to increase visibility through invisibility, the Tute Bianche combine strategic and performative elements by covering their entire bodies in thick white protective clothing and then deliberately breaching police red zones (or no go areas). Clearly, this type of collective action is shaped and conditioned by the level of political openness and media coverage that make these actions meaningful and strategically viable. What is possible and effective in one context is unthinkable in another.

## **In this issue**

Repressive authorities and social movements are engaged in a complex set of relationships that we don't fully understand. But the articles in this issue move us in the right direction. In this issue our contributors take up a broad range of issues related to repression and social movements around the world. Using the case of Germany to interrogate a widespread phenomenon, *Peter Ullrich and Gina Rosa Wollinger* chart the startling transformation in the use and legality of video surveillance of political protests and public gatherings more generally, and protesters reactions to these changes, before offering some theoretical possibilities for understanding them. *Liz Thompson and Ben Rosenzweig* show how public policy is "class war pursued by other means" in their article on the restructuring of international education economies in Australia. They show how regulation of international student visas and other legislation to protect Australia's "national integrity" served to disempower international students and undermine their capacity for resistance, in a wider context of xenophobia and economic nationalism, stirred up by politicians and legitimized by academic "experts".

*Kristian Williams* provides a way to understand current counterinsurgency and community policing practices with specific emphasis on their application in the US. Not only does he document the nexus between police and military institutions in the transfer of theory, strategy and technique, but also shows how NGOs and nonprofit agencies are used to control political opposition, and suggests the implications of counterinsurgency techniques for social movement practice. *Fernanda Maria Vieira and J. Flávio Ferreira* discuss the persecution and criminalization of indigenous Mapuche leaders who are struggling to protect their communities against expropriation of their lands, and link it to the historical roots of Mapuche repression in Chile. They show the linkages between colonial discourses on the "inferiority and backwardness" of indigenous peoples, the neo-liberal agendas of the State and economic elites, and the current repressive context within which Mapuches struggle to mobilize. *Roy Krøvel* untangles the difficult relationships between guerrillas and indigenous people in the authoritarian regimes of Mexico, Nicaragua and Guatemala and reflects on the implications of these relationships for the outcomes of civil conflicts.

In our event analysis section, *Musab Younis* analyzes the British tuition fee protest of November 9, 2010 that emerged in response to the Browne Review, which argues for the redefinition of higher education in the UK from a public good to a consumer product. Younis documents the police violence suffered by protesters and journalists and places it in a wider context of a growth in state forms of social control justified by the threat of terrorism. *Dino Jimbi* shares the media strategy used in the "Não partam a minha casa" (Don't break my house) Campaign against forced evictions in urban shantytowns in Angola to foster grassroots mobilization and gain institutional support in a highly repressive context. In his practice note, *Mac Scott* uses the repressive 2010 G20 protest experience to offer some lessons on how radical anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal community organizations can achieve lasting coalitions.

*Aileen O'Carroll, Alessio Lunghi and Laurence Cox* offer practical responses to the all too common activist experience of media smear tactics and bullying.

Also in this issue, *Eurig Scandrett* and *Suroopa Mukherjee* show how the movement of survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster have abstracted more generic oppositional projects from their local campaigning - ranging from environmental justice, through class struggle, to gender issues. *George Sranko* provides a new analytic framework for assessing and explaining the dynamics of policy change in a collaborative context, and *John Agbonifo* shows how attention to place can help us understand the long-running conflict in the Niger Delta. We also have reviews of a number of crucial new publications that wrestle with social movement theory and practice.

We hope you find this issue a stimulating read and as always we welcome your comments and feedback.

*This issue is dedicated to all those who have stood up for social justice and have suffered repression because of it.*

*Cristina and Lesley wish to thank Andrejs Berdnikovs, Laurence Cox, Elizabeth Humphrys, and Alf Nilsen for their comments and help in the writing of this editorial. We also want to thank all of the editors and many collaborators at Interface who made this issue possible.*

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## **A surveillance studies perspective on protest policing: the case of video surveillance of demonstrations in Germany**

**Peter Ullrich and Gina Rosa Wollinger**

### **Abstract**

*The videotaping of all kinds of political demonstrations seems to have become a standard policing procedure in many countries. This paper explores the video surveillance of public protest in Germany, where, in line with the international trend, developments on different levels have changed the situation immensely in recent years. This article firstly gives a short introduction to the subject and the history of video surveilling demonstrations. Secondly it describes the (changing) legal regulations in Germany. The third part considers technical developments, while the fourth part focuses on protestors' reactions. The relative absence of the social sciences from the field motivates the article's fifth part, which asks after the theoretical implications of the developments analysed from a surveillance studies perspective and explores questions for future research arising from this. Panopticism, surveillant assemblages and the "culture of control" are considered concerning their possibilities and limitations for understanding the problem of video surveillance of demonstrations.*



**Figure 1:** UAV „md4-200“ (microdrones Ltd.), used by police in Lower Saxony

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The videotaping of all kinds of public gatherings, and especially of political demonstrations, seems to have become a standard policing procedure in many countries. This paper explores the video surveillance of public protest in Germany, where, in line with the international trend, technical, legal and cultural developments have changed the situation immensely in recent years. It is no longer remarkable to see CCTV systems in public places, transportation and train stations, courts and schools. Their increased deployment has been enabled by technical achievements, price reductions and especially a social environment, which David Garland (Garland 2001) aptly called a "culture of control".

This development seems to be paralleled in the field of protest. While the phenomenon seems quite obvious to, and omnipresent for, protesters, it has until now attracted little scholarly attention. In the field of surveillance studies this may be due to the omnipresence of and immense interest in CCTV in public places. Yet, the questions arising are similar on a general level: Is there a change in behaviour, thinking or even the individual personality of those under surveillance? Under which exact conditions does individual behaviour change, and how? In the field of research into social movements and protest the relative disinterest in the issue of video surveillance may be due to the predominant orientation towards questions of movement success, while questions of movement identity and spaces of conjunctive experience, which may also be induced by being collectively exposed to massive surveillance, have lost ground (see Heßdörfer, Pabst, and Ullrich 2010). This issue has to be scrutinised more thoroughly in the context of a general tendency towards the repression of social movements to which recent counter summits and related demonstrations of the global justice movements can testify (Smith 2001).

Examining the German case seems fruitful. The slow increase of the phenomenon (which until 2006 took place significantly without any change in legal regulations), but also the recent reforms of laws that regulate the right of assembly, with their authoritarian and bureaucratic tendency, juridical disputes that have taken a somewhat different path, the technical arms build-up of the police with drones and hidden cameras, and the reactions of the persons concerned enable a detailed examination of the political grammar behind these developments. This also includes a detailed look at laws which eventually did not come into effect or were significantly changed after implementation, because they are still very important as political programmes and part of the discursive battles. All this enables a review of the theoretical approaches usually applied to surveillance phenomena. Readers will also easily realise the international significance and similarities with developments in other countries.

This article, firstly, gives a short introduction to the subject and the history of video surveilling demonstrations. Secondly, it describes the (changing) legal regulations in Germany. The third part of the article considers technical

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<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to Andrew Oppenheimer for his kind language support.

developments, while the fourth part focuses on protestors' reactions. The absence of the social sciences from the field motivates the article's fifth part, which asks after the theoretical implications of the developments analysed and the questions for future research arising from them, because until now, no empirical studies about videotaping protest have taken place. Our theoretical focus will be restricted to surveillance studies, to explore the extent to which they can enrich protest research.

### **1. Function creep? From occasional use to standard procedure**

In 1989 a paragraph in the federal law of assembly legalised video surveillance of demonstrations under certain conditions (see section 3). Yet, the history of video recording against protesters by the police in Germany (as well as in Great Britain and other countries) goes back to the fifties and sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kammerer 2010, Fay 1998: 326), although the cameras used were often not installed to serve exactly this political purpose. In Great Britain the cameras were mostly fixed to buildings for property protection and often lent from private firms. Due to high costs and bad technical quality, they proved quite inefficient and resulted in few useful pictures (Kammerer 2008: 36).

In Germany, video monitoring by the police was initially deployed for traffic control with stationary cameras or such fixed on cars. Later on, they were used for non-traffic situations as well, for instance during the May Day march in Hannover in 1961 and on several occasions in Frankfurt and Munich.<sup>2</sup> Officials since that time repeatedly have justified cameras via their function in controlling demonstrations, rallies or strikes (Kammerer 2008: 36). Nevertheless, at that time, recording was a complicated and costly activity in comparison with today. While the technical equipment has changed since then, the main reasons for purchasing video equipment by the state remain the same: prevention and preservation of evidence.

Video surveillance in general is legitimized not only as a measure against property crimes and violent offences, but as a reaction to dissidence, political "extremism", and militancy in a broader sense. This line of argument was crucial for the seemingly unstoppable expansion of CCTV. Examples can be found in Northern Ireland and in England during the 90s as a response to the Irish conflict and campaigns of the IRA (Kammerer 2008: 39). In the German discourse there have been frequent calls for more cameras since the attacks of 9/11 and smaller or attempted assaults.

Cameras are deployed at assemblies and demonstrations in several ways. There are police officers and documentation units on foot holding cameras, and there are opto-electronically equipped police cars, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones). In addition, as most political assemblies and

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<sup>2</sup> Other examples of function creep are reported from Scotland and China by Fay (1998: 326).

demonstrations take place in public areas, CCTV systems installed there come into play, too. As a consequence of the low prices and the implementation of filming devices in mobile phones, etc., filming is no longer the prerogative of the police, but more and more frequently carried out by protesters themselves. Recently, films made with mobile phones and spread via Youtube and other web2.0 platforms have also provided evidence of police violence and gained remarkable publicity.



**Figure 2:** Police photo unit taking pictures of individual participants and press at a small and peaceful demonstration (London 2005) (private photo)

## 2. Legal Regulations<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1 The German Federal Assembly Law and the regulation of video surveillance

The right to assemble for political purposes, especially to express political opinions, is a basic right enshrined in the German constitution. In the eye of the law, demonstrators (unlike people taking part in other mass events like festivals or soccer games) do not create a group by chance, but follow a goal, which is connected with society's constituting values. Political assemblies such as demonstrations are acknowledged as fundamental elements of democracy. Restrictions or hurdles to exercising the right of free assembly have to be well justified and regulated by law. Because of this, the police in Germany are bound to follow the regulations of the law of assembly, which restrict their margins of intervention much more than does the policy law that regulates their competencies in most other fields.

In 1989 a paragraph was introduced into the law of assembly which regulates the video surveillance competencies of the police. Following this, filming is only allowed if significant circumstantial evidence is given that public order or security is endangered considerably. By public order is meant all kinds of unwritten rules which are essential for living together. Public security refers to legally protected interests like health, property, and freedom. It is agreed among lawyers and acknowledged by courts that mere suspicion is not enough to justify video surveillance of demonstrations.<sup>4</sup> Also, the illegal action taking place has to be of the same rank as the freedom of assembly (e.g. right to physical inviolability). Considering these regulations, videotaping is primarily non-preventive and allowed for preserving evidence of considerable acts of law-breaking. There is one exception: persons who are not involved in illegal behaviour may be videotaped if this cannot be avoided, e.g. because of proximity. Standard police practice at political demonstrations seems not to be in line with this interpretation of the law. Yet, for practical reasons it is almost impossible to go to court to stop the police from videotaping while a demonstration is taking place. To sue the police afterwards for filming illegally, on the other hand, often seems fruitless, as the event is over.

Not just police practice, but also some of the regulations are highly ambiguous. First, it is unclear if videotaping is allowed at assemblies taking place indoors<sup>5</sup>. Second, the law of assembly does not distinguish between simple camera-

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<sup>3</sup> As the international readership of this journal will not be too interested in the minor details of the German law of assembly and the disputes to which it is subjected, we restrict our account to the basic features and most important changes in recent years. For a more detailed account, see Koranyi/Singelstein (2011) and Ullrich/Wollinger (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Administrative Court Münster AK1403/08.

<sup>5</sup> This dispute involves the interpretation of the constitution and the basic right to assemble as well as the law of assembly. Under the latter, any limitation of the basic right to assemble is allowed only at demonstrations that take place outdoors (Dietel/Gitzel/Kniesel 2008: 243 ff.). Despite this, the law of assembly has several regulations for assemblies which take place inside.

monitor surveillance and videotaping with storage of the data. The former is often used at demonstrations. Here, a camera is connected to a monitor, so the police are able to get an overview of the demonstration or rally. This is meant to improve the police's field work. While some lawyers argue (Brenneisen/Wilksen 2007: 234 et seq.) that this does not infringe on individual rights, because it is not intended to identify persons, judges contend that the right to informational self-determination is infringed upon, owing to the uncertainty of those assembled as to whether they're under surveillance or not.<sup>6</sup>

Thus there may be an impact on behaviour just because of the potentiality of surveillance and the general availability of the option to an officer to press the record button at any time. Demonstrators do not know if they are being filmed in the moment or if their pictures are "only" transferred to a monitor where other police officers are watching. A further question is how to evaluate overview recordings. Demonstrators want to be seen—that is the reason they go into the streets. However, there is a difference between being seen by passersby or journalists and being registered by the police. In its judgement from 4/24/1990, the Higher Administrative Court of Bremen<sup>7</sup> emphasized that overview recordings are also individual-related data, owing to the technical possibility of identifying persons captured.

In conclusion, one can say that the legal regulations of video surveillance do not grant certainty of their rights to protesters or clearly restrict the police. A reason for this is their age. Camera usage today is quite different than in 1989. Better technology allows for more thorough control. With higher camera resolution, analysis software and the numerous and well connected data bases it has become much easier to identify people even from overview shots. As a consequence, the law often needs to be interpreted by courts, among which there is no agreement in many aspects of jurisprudence (Gintzel 2010).

## **2.2 Deepening the "culture of control"—recent legal changes and debates**

Against these uncertainties it was planned to create a new law of assembly that would take the various court rulings into account. Yet the bill was never passed in the Bundestag because of the reform of the organisation of the federal German state, which gave the individual states the power to enact laws of assembly. The federal law, since then, only applies to the federal states (*Bundesländer*) who waived their right to enact individual laws of assembly. To date, five states (Brandenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Bavaria and Lower Saxony) have exercised their rights, while one (Baden-Württemberg) has a

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<sup>6</sup> Administrative Court Münster AK1403/08.

<sup>7</sup> This was the argument of an American court, which forbade the New York police from producing overview pictures. The behaviour of the police criminalised demonstrators, a lawyer involved argued (United States District Court, Southern District of New York, 71.Civ. 2203, CSH).

legislative proposal pending. In all of the other states, the federal law of assembly remains in force. Except for the law in Saxony-Anhalt, all the laws and proposals are more authoritarian in their basic orientation, imposing several restraints for demonstrators and bureaucratic instruments that allow authorities to restrict demonstrations arbitrarily.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of video surveillance, several changes have been introduced into the Bavarian law of assembly of 2008. It is worth while analysing this law—although some of its specific measures later had to be dropped because of a decision of the Federal Constitutional Court in the law of assembly of 2010—as it was the model for some other reform proposals and thus hints at a general trend: the deepening of the culture of control.<sup>9</sup>

A key change was the introduction of video surveillance as a preventive measure. This meant that a specific, dangerous or law-breaking, situation was no longer required for recording. Demonstrators could be filmed independent of their behaviour. The fact that they participated in a legal assembly was reason enough for filming them. Camera-monitor broadcast without the storage of data was legalised, too. It was not just the police's powers to film which were extended; so too were their rights to store the video material.

Whereas the old federal law determined that recordings had to be deleted immediately after an assembly except when they were needed for criminal proceedings, the new Bavarian law of assembly (and proposals) legalise the maintenance of the records for years and even for unlimited periods of time if they may be useful for police training. It should be noted that this video recording is of such a quality that it allows for identification. Future misuse cannot be prevented; people recorded have no right to information and no possibility to check if there exist records including them. This uncertainty was exacerbated by the legalisation of hidden police cameras, which must give informed protesters the feeling of being potentially always under surveillance.

The Federal Constitutional Court stopped several elements of the Bavarian law

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<sup>8</sup> The Saxon law of assembly, despite generally following the old federal law, defines areas where demonstrations can be easily illegalised. Among them are monuments, like the Dresden Frauenkirche, even a whole part of the city of Dresden and places of remembrance of victims of "National Socialist and communist tyranny" or victims of wars. The broad and unspecific formulation (e.g. "victims of a war") enables administration to forbid demonstrations arbitrarily (Lehmann 2010). The 2008 version of the new Bavarian law of assembly contained several bureaucratic restrictions on demonstrators: the leader of a demonstration was to be held responsible personally for the assembly, and personal data were required of all persons involved in staging the demonstration. After the Federal Constitutional Court stopped many regulations in the Bavarian law, Bavaria has modified it again. Nevertheless it is more restrictive than the previous federal law. Lower Saxony and Baden-Württemberg created legislative proposals, both strongly oriented by the Bavarian motion. After the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court, both federal states planned to rework their proposals. However, the tendency (also after the law in Lower Saxony having been passed in early 2011) is still clear.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed account of how the Bavarian law of assembly of 2008 corresponds to the general trends David Garland (2002) analysed (although mainly referring to Great Britain and the US), see Wollinger (2010) and Section 5 in this article.

in the form of an interim order. On this, Bavaria modified the law in April 2010 and withdrew some of the bureaucratic restrictions and obstacles for demonstrators. Hidden filming was dropped in the new version. Filming now is only justified if there is (circumstantial) evidence of illegal activity. Still, overview filming without storage is allowed, if necessary for police work, because of the demonstration's size or complexity of the situation. Regulations in Lower Saxony, which came into effect as late as February 2011, are similar. This will hardly prevent police from generally using the measure. To record overview filming, indications of illegal activity are necessary. Therefore, at demonstrations a situation emerges, in which the police can be equipped with cameras and the demonstrators do not know if they are being filmed or not.

The new laws of assembly in Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt are very similar to the federal law; so, too, is the Saxon law in terms of video surveillance. Hence, these states maintain the old, ambivalent regulations related to video surveillance. There is no amending law which pays attention to its existing problems and, most importantly, the respective judgments of the Federal Constitutional Court.

The amending laws of assembly tend to strengthen the authority of the police, especially in relation to video surveillance. Considering the harmonisation of laws and the ongoing integration of security services on the European level, changes for the worse are highly probable. Currently, Great Britain seems to be pioneering an authoritarian tendency, because of a database, which stores names, video records, and pictures of people participating in demonstrations for seven years. Furthermore, the police are permitted to draw up demonstration-participation profiles of activists (Lewis/Vallee 2009).

### **3. Technical arms build-up**

In recent years, video surveillance by police has repeatedly become a public issue. This is related to the above-mentioned legal changes as well as to political contention about the new federal states' laws, and especially to legal action against the Bavarian law of assembly in the Federal Constitutional Court. Another recent development, which caused a degree of public attention, was the test of a flying camera, a so-called drone of the "SensoCopter" type, by Saxon police.

In the beginning, its usage against political protest events was not officially announced. Its main purpose was for soccer games, where fans and hooligans, who had caused several violent clashes in recent years, especially in Saxony, could be observed. However, it is highly plausible that drones will be used for videotaping demonstrations, because for flying cameras the legal regulations are the same as for other forms of video surveillance on assemblies. This issue was what the bigger part of the media debate concerning police drones was about.





**Figure 3:** UAV "md4-1000" (microdrones Ltd.), used by police in Lower Saxony.

The first drone was launched in February 2008 and was tested until 2009. The initial test phase was extended to try out a new drone that is heavier and therefore better suited to windy conditions (anonymous 2009). After the first test phase, press reports stated, that drones do not give any usable pictures (ibid.), whereas the police announced a general "positive experience" (Wend 2009), without any systematic evaluation of the impact of this specific measure—similar to the police's unevaluated and strongly biased support of stationary CCTV. The first unmanned air vehicle cost about € 65,000. Its successor has been rented for € 2,400 per month. Considering the several riots, mostly caused by right-wing hooligans, which accompanied soccer games in Saxony and contributed to the already bad image of this state as a right-wing stronghold, drones seem to be helpful devices (at least from the police's perspective), to observe crowds without putting officers in any danger. Contrary to critics of the flying cameras,<sup>10</sup> the police do not see problems in terms of data

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<sup>10</sup> For instance the lawyer Frederick Roggan, who emphasized the juridical significance of the hidden character of the drones, which operate from an immense distance:  
<http://www.zeit.de/online/2008/03/unbemannte-drohnen-hooligans-sachsen?page=all>  
[26.1.10].

security, because sports fans automatically accept monitoring upon entering a stadium (Kälin 2009). Recently other police forces followed suit. The police of Lower Saxony deployed a drone at the protest against nuclear waste transports in late 2010 (Castor protest). The police of North-Rhine Westphalia and the Federal Police have purchased drones (for the policing of crowds, among other reasons). Yet there is until now no information about their usage.

In France, Switzerland, Great Britain, Italy, and other countries, drones are used and Europe-wide cooperation is under consideration (Eick 2009, 2010, Schnober 2009, Monroy 2010). Protests and crowd policing are among their main areas of application (Eick 2009, 2010). Compared to CCTV or mobile surveillance by foot patrols and vehicles, the introduction of drones represents a new quality of surveillance. Drones are quiet, fly high, and can even be used at night time, if equipped with infra-red or thermal imaging cameras. All these decrease direct visibility and therefore the possibility for the affected persons to realise their being under surveillance, to act accordingly, or just to be able to calculate the consequences of their actions. Hence, drones are highly problematic, like other forms of hidden surveillance such as cameras which are technically disguised or hidden due to the inconspicuous carrying along of devices. This procedure was—among other instances—reported from the annual demonstration “Freedom not Fear” in Berlin (Heitmüller 2008). Ironically, exactly this demonstration of a broad alliance, which was directed against the general increase of surveillance, was heavily filmed in 2009 (Laufer 2009). Yet it was not this fact but a video about police violence made by protesters themselves, which caused widespread media attention in the aftermath of the 2009 demo. This raises questions about the impact of technical developments on the prospects for counter-surveillance.



**Figure 4:** Two German police officers, obviously amused by their footage of a demonstration in Hamburg in 2005  
(<http://media.de.indymedia.org/images/2005/03/108664.jpg>)

#### **4. From protest to counter-surveillance?**

Various forms of protest against the above described developments towards a more and more authoritarian and illiberal concept of the state have emerged in recent years. Associations of all kinds, unions and political parties have positioned themselves against the new state laws of assembly. In September 2008 an alliance of unions, liberal and left wing parties, lobbying and grassroots groups initiated a constitutional complaint against the Bavarian law of assembly, and in Saxony a request for judicial review was submitted in September 2010. Besides taking the legal course, which seems a main strategy of today's protesters against surveillance (Steven 2009, Steinke 2009, Leipziger Kamera 2009, Ullrich/Lê 2011), grassroots alliances started campaigning with petitions, info stalls, demonstrations and the like. One problematic point for the protesters may be the fact that most policy modifications to the right of assembly have been legitimised as being directed against "right-wing

extremism". Yet, the new (like the old) regulations constitute restrictions which have an impact on all demonstrators equally. Therefore, a challenging task for critical voices is to clarify the overall meaning of the new laws and to identify the underlying general norms.

However, socio-technological practices often have multidimensional effects and under certain circumstances yield processes with their own inner dynamics, which it may be hard for the institutions concerned to get under control. In this section, a recent example will be used to show that the dynamics involved in the process of establishing a surveillance society can go along with entirely unintended effects, like counter-surveillance.

The reason is plain and simple: access to video devices is no privilege of the police. By now, taking pictures and making films has become very easy for demonstrators, too, for instance by using cameras which are integrated into most mobile phones. Recently, such a mobile phone camera caused a considerable stir with a film of a violent situation during the "Freedom not Fear" demonstration in September 2009.<sup>11</sup>

The video shows a young man, who addresses a police officer, apparently to ask for his identification number, because he has a sheet and a pencil (and it was later reported accordingly). The officer dismisses the man and follows him a few steps. Then the officer grabs his arm and drags him to other policemen. The video take goes on to show the first officer holding the man while another officer hits him in the face. A moment later this officer beats another demonstrator, who tries to help the first man, right in the face. Around the young man a circle of policeman then develops. He is beaten while still being held tightly and still even when lying on the ground. The authentic film was posted on Youtube and spread through the blogosphere. Within days, the video had been watched by hundreds of thousands of people. Later on, more footage from different sources was synchronised, to extend visual information on the case. Even the biggest media reported very critically about this police attack—most of the time referring directly to the Youtube video. Quickly, this little mobile phone video had cause a public stir. Obviously due to the media attention, a legal case against the officers was initiated which is not common practice in cases of police violence.<sup>12</sup>

So, video footage of demonstrators seems to be a good way to preserve evidence of police violence. Nevertheless, it is doubtful if the described case can be generalised, because counter-surveillance is *per se* of a highly ambiguous character (Monahan 2006, Wilson/Serisier 2010). On the one hand, there is the incredible affinity of the new protest generation for the internet. They engage against surveillance (for example in the highly involved Pirate Parties in many

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<sup>11</sup> One of the many posts on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GucY8MpHDc> [15/11/2010].

<sup>12</sup> To date there has been one conviction against an officer in that case, with two other decisions due to follow soon (<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/polizei-justiz/geldstrafe-fuer-pruegelnden-polizisten/1949016.html>) [15/11/2010].

countries), and the interactive web2.0 is the platform par excellence for their organizing and disseminating information. This strategy obviously proved useful in the case analysed. On the other hand, it will be hard to trigger such amazing media attention on a regular basis. Still, it is likely that counter-surveillance affects the behaviour of the police, as has been shown for officers under CCTV scrutiny. They do act more carefully if they can expect their offences to be recorded (Goold 2005: 227). The Youtube footage described above does not directly indicate such an effect, because the police officers—one can assume—must already have been aware of the possibility of being videotaped. Yet, because of the extraordinary attention the incident received, it may also represent a turning point in this respect.

Independent of all opportunities counter-surveillance seems to offer, it finds its limitations in the general asymmetry of power. The police are in a systematically better position than protesters: better equipped, outfitted with public legitimacy, more trusted by courts, in possession of other preventive and repressive instruments. Legal regulations manifest the different degrees of visibility. Demonstrators in Germany are not allowed to march uniformed, to cover their faces or to hide behind flags or banners, whereas police officers are not individually marked<sup>13</sup> and thus undistinguishable in their uniforms and behind their helmets. It is quite difficult to identify offending officers, a job their colleagues also tend to avoid. Due to the long data storage periods being established with the new law proposals, the identification of demonstrators is possible even years after a demonstration takes place. These data are accessible to a variety of police forces, and they enable the creation of individual profiles.

Filming demonstrations by demonstrators is not favoured even by all of the latter. One reason is the possibility that the police might confiscate the footage and feed it into their own databases. Yet counter-surveillance also seems to concern administrations a bit, too. In the new law of assembly of the federal state Sachsen-Anhalt, demonstrators are only allowed to film if there is a dangerous situation. The power to decide about the character of situation in these cases is more on the side of established actors, who have the instruments of power, like the police. In short, counter-surveillance can hardly ever outweigh police surveillance.<sup>14</sup> And it may even be a part of the surveillant assemblage through triggering vicious circles of surveillance (Fernandez/Huey 2009: 200).

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<sup>13</sup> A sign of hope for protesters is a new regulation in the State of Berlin, which recently introduced individual identification labels for police in protest events.

<sup>14</sup> Some phenomena like new protest styles and action repertoires may be linked to increasing surveillance. Pink and Silver, the Rebel Clown Army and other performative protest repertoires as well as "artveillance" (Brighenti 2009, Ullrich/Lê 2011) are definitely not only a response to police cameras, but they engender a special symbolic significance through their opposition to police cameras.

## 5. Theoretical perspectives

It is obvious that the observations outlined here are far from a systematic empirical inquiry into the effects of video surveillance of demonstrations. We know too little, especially about the habitual practices of the police and their institutional background, and not least about what videotaping demonstrations really does to the persons affected. And the analytical gap between the programmatic and the practice level of analysis is too great. Nevertheless, the obvious changes in techniques, practices, and legal surveillance and protest must have effects. It remains to be seen whether the multiple approaches towards the notorious "surveillance society" (Haggerty/Ericsson 2000: 606) or "disciplinary society" (Foucault 1979) or society (or culture) of control (Deleuze 1992, Garland 2001, Stolle/Singelstein 2006) are fruitful for an analysis of this particular area of research.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The surveillance studies focus, which we restrict our analysis to, implies that other facets will only be touched upon marginally. Most important in that respect is the literature on the police in general (see for example Ericson and Haggerty 2001) and protest policing styles from a protest research perspective in particular (cf. Della Porta and Reiter 1998 for an overview and case studies of several countries; for recent global justice protests see Della Porta et al. 2006 and Fernandez 2008; for the changes in Germany see Winter 1998). While a general pacification trend has been observed in the last decades, substituting strategies of "escalated force" with pragmatic, de-escalating policing strategies, the number of preventive measures is increasing heavily ("de-escalated force" in Winter's terms) and thereby blurring the distinction between prevention and repression.



**Figure 5:** Police filming the protests against the Munich Security Conference in 2004. <http://media.de.indymedia.org/images/2004/02/74432.jpg>

### **5.1 Discipline and governmentality**

In particular, a critical review of Foucault's (1979) notion of panopticism is required. For a long time, the concept of the panopticon had a significant influence over this field. It was and still is *the* standard metaphor for discussing CCTV (Norris 2005: 360, Haggerty/Ericson 2000). Undeniably, this perspective has contributed essential aspects to the comprehension of the disciplinary claims of video surveillance by emphasising the institutionally enforced, unequal distribution of seeing and being seen, and it enabled scholars to conceptualise the subjectification processes initiated by it. This inequality, combined with the panopticon's architecturally-enforced uncertainty if one is currently in focus or not, Foucault argues, initiates reflexive processes in the

objects of surveillance. Uncertainty initiates self-reflexive reasoning and the smooth incorporation of the surveillants' demands into the surveilled through the internalisation of the surveillant's gaze.

These ideas are important, because they laid ground for the establishment of later Foucauldian (and post Foucauldian) approaches to the study of governmentality, which are interested in bio-political human resources management as a modern way to govern people and, to put it sociologically, to establish social order. Applied to our field of interest, this means greater attention or scholarly sensitivity to the subjectifying consequences of video monitoring (Kammerer 2008: 124 ff.), which are part of an institutional ensemble of less obvious forms of indirect and subtle techniques of governing the self (Rose, O'Malley, und Valverde 2006; Bröckling 2005, Lessenich 2010). We will come back to this idea.

Primarily, the concept of panopticism is excellently qualified to focus on the disciplining and deterring effects on (potential) demonstrators. It leads to the hypothesis that video monitoring fosters well-adapted, peaceful, disciplined behaviour and eventually the avoidance of demonstrations – a result of the visibility and fear of the unwanted use of the footage. German courts, when restricting police surveillance measures, have always argued accordingly (although without any obvious knowledge of or reference to Foucault's works). Of course, without any empirical research, this assumption remains speculative.

Possibly, video surveillance of demonstrations and assemblies corresponds even better to the specific view of panopticism than does CCTV in urban areas—the field to which the concept is most often applied. The panoptic situation is not only based on the asymmetry of visibility, but also comprises extensive classification, identification, as well as the occasional direct disciplining of individuals. However, these aspects are generally absent from routine video surveillance in urban areas (Norris 2005: 369, *ibid.* 362) where the ubiquity of CCTV (at least in Great Britain, which Norris analysed) produces information that can hardly be analysed for police purposes any more due to its sheer amount and the often deficient quality<sup>16</sup>.

The video surveillance of demonstrators is much more “real” and easier for them to perceive, because of its spatio-temporal limitations, which give it more of an exceptional character than, say, CCTV in shops. It is a temporary panoptic situation. Additionally a demonstration is accompanied by lots of symbolic and tangible regalia of power besides the cameras. These regalia (uniforms, weaponry, armor, barriers, searches, reading of restrictions) point to the palpable threat that unwanted behaviour be sanctioned quickly and powerfully, if not violently. Video surveillance of protest is, more than the classical architectural panopticon and its modern form CCTV, a part of a *situational* disciplinary strategy. Still, there is a separation between the function (and actors) of monitoring and intervening. A future use of the data is possible as

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<sup>16</sup> See Hempel and Töpfer (2009) and [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/7384843.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7384843.stm) [15/11/2010].



well. Demonstrators can perceive this as a threat—thereby stepping beyond the situational aspects towards a general disciplinary function.

Two sets of research questions arise from that umbrella question about the videotaping effects. First, what effect does police videotaping have on lawsuits? Is video evidence a powerful tool for police and prosecutors? Does it really change legal proceedings, or is it just another facet of the omnipresent surveillant assemblage (see below) that is of little use even from the police's point of view and hardly more successful than common methods of investigation? This is the question about the (possible) gap between the disciplinary *demands* and their reality. Second, the questions arise of whether there are direct preventive effects on demonstrators at all and of whether there really are those effects, that transgress the situational control situation. Are there more subtle, invisible, complex, subjectifying effects that can be traced back to the multiple forms of surveillance, and more specifically, to its unexpected or uncertain forms that drones and covert cameras represent?

If video cameras do have an impact on demonstrators (i.e. the latter are not indifferent to surveillance), but not following a simple stimulus-response schema, behaviour in a more subtle sense is evoked. The more abstract the threat, the greater either the dulling of demonstrators in relation to the measure, or the emerging degree of self-reflection. Seen from the latter perspective, video cameras can be understood as a part of neoliberal preventive governmentality (Bröckling 2008, Ullrich 2009), the purpose of which is not only disciplinary, but is also meant to initiate processes of activation, responsabilisation and self-management. Such processes need to be mediated between society's, the state's or the police's interests and the (potentially) protesting individual. This mediation is achieved exactly through uncertainty and self-interest (cf. Ullrich 2010). To put it less theoretically: demonstrators are required to weigh risks of their participation and specific behaviour—while they can never be sure about the consequences (Are personal data stored? Will they be used and for what purpose?). Hence, specific subject positions or habitus of demonstrators who are confronted with video surveillance may evolve. These subject positions reflect a mixture of disciplinary (direct power wielding) and post-disciplinary (self-managing or "advanced liberal"; cf. Rose 1996, Deleuze 1992) modes of governing.<sup>17</sup>

It would be good to explore both aspects and the relative share they contribute to the field. Research is highly recommended, because of the potentially vast influence on political participation and protest. This is all the more so as the authoritarian tendency, which is indicated by video surveillance and the tightening of various legal regulations, represents a general attack on the legitimacy of protest. Political assemblies, as Gintzel (2010) notes, are becoming more and more an object of the police law (which is by definition primarily repressive), with its competencies widened and the states grip on protestors

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to mention that governmentality does not replace disciplinary power, like disciplinary power did not replace sovereign power. They can and do co-exist in differing ratios.

tightened. Thus protest loses its character as a basic right, which should be protected and not hindered by the self-identified democratic state. This process exposes the legitimacy of assemblies to a permanent symbolic attack. Overall, in the field of surveilling demonstrations, the disciplinary aspects seem to us to outweigh the post-disciplinary ones compared to prevention, activation and self-management initiated in other sectors like health (Ullrich 2009) or labour markets.

## 5.2 Surveillant assemblages instead?

These considerations show that panopticism is not a one-size-fits-all explanation (compare Norris 2007: 151 ff., Hempel and Töpfer 2009: 160 f., Porter 1996). An influential alternative perspective has been presented by Haggerty and Ericson (2000) in the form of *surveillant assemblages*. With this concept they explicitly oppose panopticism and the popular notion of highly centralised surveillance à la George Orwell's *1984*. Their view, which is heavily influenced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is not so much focused on the disciplinary and governmental effects of concrete architectural and institutional arrangements. In fact, they emphasize the decentralised and network-style, or *rhizomatic* character, of the surveillance society with no centre, no beginning and no end of surveillance institutions, apparatuses and procedures, which all ascertain, collect, classify, arrange and rearrange data ("flows" as they put it). Each of the parts of the assemblages owes its existence to a *desire*. Yet, the utilisation of the information thus produced is independent from the original desire and takes on its own life.<sup>18</sup>

One example of this character can be shown in the Berlin police law (*Allgemeines Sicherheits- und Ordnungsgesetz, ASOG*). This law allows the police the use of private CCTV footage. However, this video material often emerges in a chaotic and rampant fashion owing to different desires, with several techniques, arranged by and operated by many persons—in a grey zone of few regulations or public data protection. This tendency is also supported by the variety of open (= threatening) and hidden (= uncertainty-producing) forms of video surveillance. From Haggerty and Ericsson's point of view, even counter-surveillance footage must be considered part of the infinite net of the rhizomatic surveillant assemblage. The normalisation of all those kinds of opto-electronic monitoring of demonstrations has to be added to the diverse situations of data registration, classification and control, which influence everyday life in the surveillance society<sup>19</sup> and which are the reasons for the "disappearance of disappearance" in modern societies (Haggerty and Ericsson 2000: 619). This

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<sup>18</sup> Thus, the authors argue, it is meaningless to criticise or reform this or that branch. It would not make a change in the general structure.

<sup>19</sup> The notion of the surveillance society does not suggest that the determinant (surveillance) alone represents the specific character of current society, as the notion of capitalism does. However, it does indicate that surveillance is a major constitutive aspect (compare Haggerty and Ericson 2000: 606).

concept, if taken into account, forces scholars to avoid singling out this technique or that practice and reminds us of the overall interconnectedness of surveillance structures.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike the power-analytical panopticism perspective, the idea of surveillant assemblages comprises all kinds of observations. This may mislead one into creating an idea of an overall randomness or a general contingency of surveillance, which is organized, network-like, in ties and edges but without centres (of power) and without differences in the strength and potentials of the various desires, e.g. in the state as well as in private "security producers". In view of the importance of the expected disciplinary effects of the police' video surveillance on demonstrations, this approach, though analytically productive, is also not fully sufficient.

### 5.3 Towards a "culture of control"

These various phenomena may be thought in a common framework. It is David Garland's (2001) book *The Culture of Control* which allows us to understand culturally and discursively the rise of a new restrictive approach towards demonstrations which is indicated by the increasing use of video cameras.

Garland observed the emergence of a culture of crime<sup>21</sup> control in the US and Great Britain, examining laws, practices, and public discourse. This culture of control arose out of its predecessor societies. Their "penal-welfarism", as Garland puts it, was characterized by the guiding idea of social integration. Punishment aimed at returning deviant (or: "lost") subjects into accepted ways of bourgeois life. Causes for deviance were predominantly seen in disadvantageous social circumstances. This complex was largely restricted to an expert discourse and not an issue of election campaigns. Today, we live in a society where a view like "social problems have social causes" has become antiquated. Yet, the political system and the general public are strongly interested in deviance. In today's "high-crime societies", crime, dangers, annoyances and their (perceived) increase are most salient topics. But politically they are framed as management problems—a practical question of how to handle them. The debates in criminology comprise two main currents reflecting this situation: the "criminology of the alien other" and the "criminology of the self".

The first one goes along with a strict classification of good and bad, victims and offenders. In this view, "bad" people are bad *per se* (by nature or for other

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<sup>20</sup> Related techniques include databases, travel bans, wiretapping, mobile phone tracking, searches of activist infrastructure e.g. in preliminary investigations, police spies, and many more.

<sup>21</sup> To use Garland's ideas for our field of research, it is necessary to apply his analysis of societal ways to deal with crime to the general mode of perceiving and handling deviance and everything that challenges public order or good manners. In a restrictive and illiberal social environment like that, it is not too hard to perceive protest as such an unwanted or deviant form of behaviour (See Singelstein and Stolle 2006).

reasons) so society does not offer integration or therapy, but locks them up, punishing and sorting them out. Guantánamo, enemy criminal law and preventive detention are examples for that. Yet this logic can also be applied to police reactions to protest. There are obvious differences in the way police deal with different types of demonstrations (in all likelihood depending on the expected degree of political radicalism, or “extremism”).<sup>22</sup> So it has to be explored which good/bad stereotypes guide police decisions (cameras or not?) and if the demarcation between their good/bad distinctions moves. In such a framework one can also ask, if police cameras on demonstrations (like stationary CCTV) increase discrimination of other social sectors through the reproduction of the surveillants’ and the surveilling institutions’ stereotypes (e.g. sexist or racist categories, cf. Norris and Armstrong 1999, Fay 1998).

The ‘criminology of the self’ takes quite a different perspective. It is based on strictly individualistic economic and neoliberal approaches, in which human behaviour results from a cost-benefit-calculation. According to this view, agency does not depend on people, their status, character or previous experience, but on situations: “Instead of addressing human beings and their moral attitudes or psychological dispositions, the new criminologies address the component parts of social systems and situations. They consider how different situations might be redesigned so as to give rise to fewer opportunities for crime (...)” (Garland 2001: 183). It is the situation which restricts cost and outcome, and so people should behave equally in the same situations. Thus, it is no longer a specific group of the population which is under suspicion of deviant behaviour. Everybody with the opportunity is a potential offender. This logic substantiates the necessity to control certain situations and within them all people equally. This idea, too, underlies the more and more preventive approach towards video surveillance of demonstrations, especially in the form of overview shootings of all demonstrators, where no illegal action has taken place. In the economic logic of human behaviour, video cameras will increase the cost of unwanted behaviour.

The phenomenon under study shows the relevance of both criminologies—the mixture of sorting out the bad and managing the rest. These two views are not antagonists in the debates—on the contrary they are complementary. The crucial point bringing them together in the culture of control (which includes the regulations and practices as well as their cultural legitimacy) is that the demonstrations affected seem to be perceived primarily as spaces of potential deviance and by that as a security problem to be solved or managed.

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<sup>22</sup> See Willems et al. (1988), Winter (1998), Fernandez (2008: 8), and Bunyan (without date). In the case of the already mentioned 2009 “Freedom not Fear” demonstration for example, police justified video monitoring with the participation of “radical groupings” like the “black bloc.” See <http://www.daten-speicherung.de/index.php/polizei-diesmal-kein-anlassloses-filmen-auf-demonstration-freiheit-statt-angst-geplant/> [15/11/2010].



**Figure 6:** Hamburg police camera van, 2010 (private photo)

## **6. Conclusion and additional perspectives**

Both approaches to delinquency, deviance and their expansion to unconventional modes of political expression are in opposition to a democratic society. The development of video surveillance of demonstrations described here is thus of interest for research into democracy, public debates and political participation. The problem touched on is often labelled as “disenchantment with politics”. It is likely to assume a relation between disenchantment with politics and video surveillance of demonstrations, because video monitoring might (rightly) be understood as a classification of a (potential) “deviant subject”. This

experience of criminalisation and exclusion will not correlate positively with the belief of having a potential to act politically. It implies aspects of socio-political disintegration and alienation, which might especially affect those (few) people, who still have an interest in politics and engagement (Schneekloth 2006: 106).

As we already stated, there is no empirical research focusing directly on video surveillance of protest, however, other empirical studies already carried out can be enlightening, when focused on comparable situations and problems. For instance, Wells and Wills (2009) demonstrate that speed limit enforcement cameras evoke contention because of their producing a "data double" (cf. Haggerty and Ericson 2000), which in its characterising of those affected as deviants is in harsh conflict with their self-perception. In accordance with surveys related to CCTV in other fields (Hölscher 2003), they concluded that the degree of personal concern and proximity to the surveillance measure increases the degree of refusing it. This suggests a research perspective beyond the realm of discipline and security, focusing on the perceptions of demonstrators, their personal feelings under surveillance and the consequences they draw from that. This also points to the question of whether surveillance produces the obverse effect and even incites frustration and contributes to spirals of confrontation. Several other questions are possible: Is there still a function creep of stationary CCTV for political purposes? How does videotaping demonstrations influence the police and their behaviour? Questions like these, arising from research on CCTV, have to be applied to the field of surveillance of demonstrations as well.

Still, the crucial question remains whether videotaping demonstrations, in the context of generally increasing degrees of surveillance, influences the process of forming the political will. This includes focusing on individual political participation as well as on the general legitimacy of demonstrations, protest and social critique. Considering that successful revolutions have taken place despite thorough surveillance and repression, the symbolic aspect of video cameras (singling out the "bad" as a security "threat" and thus delegitimising their demands) seem to be the main problem. It makes one feel pessimistic, considering that the measures evaluated also often take place in grey areas of the law and are spreading fiercely, while administrative competencies are widened and there is a technical arms build-up of open and concealed surveillance. This development signals the encroachment of authoritarian concepts of the state and is a potentially dangerous attack on political participation from below.

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## **Public policy is class war pursued by other means: struggle and restructuring as international education economy**

**Liz Thompson and Ben Rosenzweig**

### **Abstract**

*Our goal is to provide an account of the state-imposed restructuring of international education economies, begun in Australia in 2009 and continuing as we write. This restructuring is to a significant extent a response to the diverse struggles of those on international student visas, and the consequences that these struggles had for these economies, in the context of xenophobia and economic nationalism (visible within Australia as a spectrum from street violence to trade union lobbying for border control). Decisions concerning the economy were inseparable from attempts to disempower international students and undermine their capacity for struggle and resistance, and ultimately to frustrate their ability to fulfil many of the needs and desires which underlay their movement into Australia. This restructuring dispensed with significant sections of these economies and effectively expelled a significant proportion of those on international student visas, in efforts to re-found the international education industry on bases less vulnerable to student struggle or to the vagaries of particular markets – shifts articulated as a defence of the “integrity” of Australia’s border control regime and a reassertion of labour market management in immigration policy. In discussing these processes, we question received categories of migration, politics and struggle.*

### **Capitalism is the restructuring**

In the familiar, stripped-down narrative, post-war capitalism was increasingly reproduced in “the West” in the form of “Keynesian” social democratic states characterised by a socio-historically specific definition of “full employment”, the development of welfare provision and the recognition and incorporation of trade unions in negotiation of the terms of integration of the proletariat. This “settlement”, created, with variations, by parties across the mainstream political spectrum, entered a period of crises in the late 1960s, and by the early 1970s was subject to political and economic agendas which sought to erode or abolish this form of the capitalist state, and to (re)impose upon the population a more direct relationship between wage-labour and income, between work and quality of life and even survival. This occurred in large measure by actively creating market-based processes of discipline and subjectivation – the reimposition of “money as command” – all often retrospectively understood as the

neoliberalisation of capitalist social relations. This, too, was implemented, with variations, by political parties across the mainstream political spectrum. (Burnham 1990; Clarke 1988).

The process of neoliberal restructuring is not simply a period of transition between the capitalism of the post-war period and some new stabilised "settlement" which will come over the horizon along with a new cycle of accumulation; the restructuring has no predetermined endpoint, and is characterised by struggles in which the dynamics of the self-expansion of capital intersect with the imperatives of neoliberalisation. Capitalism *is* restructuring.<sup>1</sup>

### **Knowledge-mongering institutions and the development of international education economies**

*"A schoolmaster who educates others is not a productive worker. But a schoolmaster who is engaged as a wage labourer in an institution along with others, in order through his [sic] labours to valorise the money of the entrepreneur of the knowledge-mongering institution, is a productive worker."* (Karl Marx 1977: 1044)

In Australia, the neoliberal reconstitution began in earnest under the Hawke/Keating Australian Labor Party (ALP) governments, which began incremental processes of financial deregulation and privatisation, and slowly dismantled the centralised negotiation of wages and conditions for significant sections of the workforce, while undermining or destroying those trade unions which would not be effectively contained within the limits of the federally-managed reform process (Kuhn 1993). The subsequent election of the Howard Liberal-National government saw an acceleration of neoliberalisation combined with efforts to systematically undermine or abolish existing forms of socio-institutional mediation and representation. The significant productivity growth over the period of neoliberalisation is largely explainable through the increase in working hours, and in unpaid overtime, as well as intensification of labour (Bryan 2004). Meanwhile, the stronger relationship of debt to the imposition of work meant that, in a literal, quantifiable sense, large sections of the proletariat were those with less than nothing to sell but their labour: large debts accrued in the course of tertiary education would play an increasing role, alongside mortgages and credit card debts, in the forms of proletarianisation of domestic students and those on international student visas, albeit in very different ways.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Our account partly follows the analyses of *Theorie Communiste* (notwithstanding certain differences and reservations); for discussion of the development of *Theorie Communiste's* account of the restructuring, see Riff-Raff 2005.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of the different forms of debt and credit used to facilitate international mobility from India to elsewhere, see Biao 2005.

The massive changes to Australian post-secondary education developed within, and were moments of, this wider restructuring, which only exists in the struggles which define its moments; the reconstitution of the Australian state within the combined and uneven restructuring of capitalist social relations on a planetary scale.

A central aspiration of social democracy had been articulated as the (covertly-national) principle of "free education", abandoned from the mid-1980s as the ALP government reintroduced fees for higher education. As a former Hawke Government minister, Peter Staples, later put it, previous proposals to reintroduce fees for "domestic students" had failed because of opposition within the party and a belief "that such a move would be quite electorally damaging". However: "a drastic fall in the Australian dollar led to a last-minute round of budget cuts in order to give the message to the world's finance markets that the Hawke ALP Government was AAA-rated when it came to being fiscally tough" – a message which included the introduction of fees (Rosenzweig and Thompson 2009). These fees went from a standard fee across institutions and courses, a small portion of the costs of education, to ever-higher fees differentiated by course and institution, primarily experienced as debt through the Federal Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) system (Chapman & Ryan 1997).

In the 1950s, Australian involvement in international education had been framed as "aid" under the "Colombo Plan" - designed to bring South East Asian elites to study in Australia in the hope that this would help to inoculate them again "communism". (Lowe 2010; Oakman 2004). By the 1980s, the Federal government began to see "international education" in terms of "trade", introducing so-called "full fees" for international students in 1986. International education in Australia became measured in foreign exchange earnings and exports, though in the early stages the consumers were still substantially South East Asian elites.

At the same time, the ALP governments of the 1980s and then 1990s would begin a process of restructuring both higher education and the vocational education and training (VET) sector (these VET providers are often known as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers) (NTEU 2009). The VET sectors were opened up so that private, mostly commercial "registered training organisations" could operate alongside the publicly-funded TAFEs (Kell 2006); these would expand and become the foundation of a significant part of the international education industry (Victorian Auditor General 2010).<sup>3</sup>

By the late 1990s, universities were downsizing or abolishing sometimes highly-regarded departments, faculties and courses judged to be insufficiently or not profitable; the benefit to the reputation of the university of such areas was being assessed essentially as a form of advertising, the results of which could be achieved better and cheaper by commercially traditional forms of marketing.

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<sup>3</sup> Since 2003 in particular, private, commercial providers have grown to more than 50% of VET providers in some states (Victorian Auditor-General 2010).

Pure sciences and the liberal arts faced cutbacks as well as pressure to find ways to generate income, to produce and sell commodities as well as acquire grants, as universities pursued more marketable IT, engineering, and business courses, largely marketed to international students (Hinkson 2002). The traditional academic structure of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programs on offer would also shift to better meet these new imperatives. Undergraduate programs were “rebadged” as Masters programs with a postgraduate price tag (Marginson 2002), and often shifted and changed in length to fit the moving requirements of minimum study periods in Australia necessary for applications for permanent migration.<sup>4</sup> These Masters courses would be often taught by domestic students, usually very recent or imminent graduates employed as casual staff.

Over time the internal relations of universities would become more of an interlocking set of competitive markets, with the generation of income as a primary measure of success and more senior academics spending ever-more time as managers of the casualised bottom end of the academic labour-market.

Meanwhile in 1999, the now Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations introduced the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). This list was framed as enabling the recruitment of people with particular skills into the Australian labour market from overseas, by awarding such people “points” which could be used to make access to permanent residency and some temporary visas easier.

And then, in 2001, the Howard government introduced changes allowing international students to apply for permanent residency from within Australia upon completion of their courses. Alongside the MODL, this shift gave Australian institutions a competitive edge. For international students, application for permanent residency relied upon completion of a credential in an occupation or field on the MODL – which included accounting, nursing, and various trades (to which cooking and hairdressing were subsequently added) – which gave them close to half of the necessary points for successful General Skilled Migration application.<sup>5</sup>

For many commentators, these policy changes are what created “distortions” in the market (Stone 2010; Mares 2010), when in fact they created the market.

The top source countries shifted, with a drop in numbers from the US, Japan and Hong Kong, and a sharp rise in Indian student enrolments and continuing rise in students from mainland China (Study Melbourne 2009; DIAC 2011). Students from India were and are largely concentrated in private colleges, in vocational trades courses and Masters programs.

The private college sector from which anti-violence protests emerged (discussed in detail later in this paper) is distinct from both universities and domestic

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<sup>4</sup> And are tellingly now considered worthless by the Department of Immigration (DIAC 2010c).

<sup>5</sup> DIAC figures show an average annual growth rate in student visa holders of 13.9% per year after June 2001 (Koeth 2010).

TAFEs. Whilst offering vocational certificate and diploma course like TAFE, the courses are not delivered in a traditional campus environment. Private college campuses (and often the international recruitment-focussed arms of public universities like CQU Sydney and Melbourne and RMIT Business) are largely old office blocks in either suburban shopping centres or the Central Business District of Australia's capital cities. Many students would use public facilities like local libraries to study, with there being little or no facilities on the premises. Private colleges running hospitality courses might rent out commercial kitchens to run their courses, or hire out restaurants (Das 2009). Students would often pay course fees in monthly instalments, as opposed to the twice yearly, or per semester, payment standard at universities. With business plans and financial strategies contingent on monthly instalments, the college sector is vulnerable to any delays or dips in demand.

By contrast, Chinese students often start in the secondary education and English language training sectors, before moving through to higher education courses. Further, Australian "dual sector" institutions, that is those that run both university and TAFE programs, would build a market based on running Australian TAFE programs offshore, particularly in China, with the students eventually completing their studies in Australia (Study Melbourne 2009). An example of this is the RMIT and Wuhan University of Science and Technology (RMIT WUST) Diploma of Business program, which was the largest single source of international students into the RMIT Bachelor of Business program in 2000. At the effectively subcontracted, pre-existing Wuhan campus in China, students were simultaneously taught the English language and Diploma of Business material (in English) by a combination of local WUST and fly-in RMIT staff, before moving to Melbourne to complete a Bachelor of Business. Though the Diploma was not educationally equivalent to the first year of a Bachelor of Business program, students were articulated into the second year of a Bachelor program in Melbourne with full credit. Several cohorts of these students failed miserably, and faced a hostile response from the institution when they sought help (Rosenzweig and Thompson 2009).<sup>6</sup> Internal reports documented the failure, but did not dampen the enthusiasm for this profitable recruitment for several more years, on an identical basis (Patrick 2005).

In 2002 Simon Marginson outlined some of these processes, detailing the imperatives which led to the development of these new Masters courses, but suggesting that these processes – of creating new commodities saleable to particular markets and offshore programs to "feed" people into Australian universities – somehow happened "behind the backs" of the "old collegial

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<sup>6</sup> This response included the automatic rejection of appeals from Chinese international students submitting medical certificates from certain ethnically Chinese doctors in close proximity to its Business campus, alleging some kind of conspiracy (McNamara 2006). When this campaign occasionally ensnared a local (often ethnically Chinese) student, this was used as proof that no discrimination against Chinese international students existed. This then became a campaign to change the policies of the entire institution to clamp down on appeal mechanisms and appeal rights.



structures" of Academic Boards when of course, as Marginson notes, Academic Boards still exist and still largely contain academics with responsibility for course approval (Marginson 2002: 128). These processes took place under the watchful eyes of academics, indeed at their instigation; the effectiveness of the restructuring at producing academic subjects competing to pursue the imperatives of the properly capitalist university is surely one of the great success stories of neoliberalism in Australia.

Government funding per student and as a percentage of university budgets would fall drastically, while the proportion which was acquired through commercial activity would rise equally sharply (Marginson et al 2010). The point is not that the university becomes "properly capitalist" when the proportion of its budget which derives from international students and other entrepreneurial activity reaches a certain size. Rather, as government funding decreased, entrepreneurial activity became increasingly constitutive of the relations and processes defining institutions, organised around increasing the source of commercial income which *could* be increased: the self-expansion of the institution-as-capital. These shifts in the form of subsumption of university work under capital reconstituted revenue as profit, and government funding as income closer to the external state subsidies provided to other industries, despite the formal retention of "public" status. While the state and capital in general retain a stake in the role of post-secondary education in producing labour-power and reproducing capitalist social relations, universities would start to appear as properly capitalist institutions, part of a broader shift in the relation of "society" to "economy", and more specifically in the form of integration of the reproduction of the proletariat in the circuits of the valorisation of capital.<sup>7</sup>

### **Categorical imperatives**

Having rehearsed this narrative in some detail, we would like to question and destabilise a series of assumptions and distinctions which function in relation to international education economies and at the intersection of political economy, contemporary border control and (social) movements more broadly.

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<sup>7</sup> This is obviously a controversial thesis, including amongst Marxist writers on education, and one informed by the specifics of Australian institutions. A more orthodox account of universities-in-general would be that of *Theorie Communiste*, who argue, discussing universities in contemporary Greece in particular, that: "Unless they are private universities in which particular capitals requiring at least the average profit rate are invested, and in which the student is a consumer who buys the lesson as a commodity, universities are not fractions of capital (even in this case, universities would not be a productive sector). They are an essential function of the production/reproduction of labour-power, but regardless of their *utility*, to the extent that – *via* the state – it is money as revenue that functions here, and regardless of the necessity of the rationalisation of their performance (the less the student dawdles in his studies, the less it costs), they are not capitalist companies, as for any *faux-frais* of production." (*Theorie Communiste* 2009: 2)

## 1. Marxist educational theory

I contend that Marx would have scorned this idea of a separate Marxist educational theory because it implies that education belongs to some separate aspect of human life [ ....] It also implies that our current existence can be understood as the sum of many separate and distinct parts rather than as a totality of inter-connected relations. (Allman 2007)

We question not merely the relevance but the existence of “Marxist educational theory” as a specific discipline, to the point where even our retention of the phrase “international education economies” is problematic, as is our continuing use of the phrase “international students”. While this move is not ours alone, even the sharpest of those who invoke such a critique do so in order to re-found such theory on better bases.<sup>8</sup> We take this point seriously and literally, however. Without a Marxist educational theory to be applied to differing circumstances, we need to construct an account of the current moment in the history of capitalism, understanding the specific processes of the economies and institutions operating under the sign of “education” without any generalisable assumptions about the “function” of education.

In other words, and in particular in relation to Australian tertiary education and its “international education” economies, we need to ask what it means for these to exist as moments of capital, as a process of exploitation operating through the movement of labour, of complex commodities, of exchange, of the efforts required to realise surplus value as profit, of the self-expansion of capital.

These economies are indeed moments of a process of reproduction of capitalist social relations – a process whose terms are produced as active subjects, a process which has no existence except as the activity of these subjects. That this activity is contradictory, and exists within and as one pole of a contradiction, that there is struggle over the terms of reproduction, means that we should not think struggle as outside of structure or of “everyday life”, and resistance as the opposite of economy and external to capital, i.e. to a conflictually-constituted, non-symmetrical relation.

## 2. Movement across borders

Though its force and implications are rarely elaborated within even the more politically-radical academic circles, the development of illegal cross-border movement on an enormous scale has been the starting point for critique of accounts which would relegate such movements to the realm of the non- or pre-political. Accounts which sometimes occlude the “agency” of those concerned by placing such movement under the sign of “desperation”, positing a distinction between “struggle for survival” and “political” or “social” struggle, or else, conversely, de-legitimizing this agency as excessively aspirational. For some, illegal cross-border movement stands opposed to the construction of a locally- or nationally-grounded project – recapitulating the terrain of politics in the

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<sup>8</sup> Glenn Rikowski would probably be the most rigorous in his questioning of the foundations of such theory (Rikowski 2007).

shadow of sovereignty and (hence) the nation, i.e. of representation, of democracy, of the citizen, of rights (Mitropoulos and Nielson 2006).

It should be no surprise, and is not a truth limited to "international students" or to those who cross borders, if the individual and collective struggles of people – over their conditions of life and over the terms of their integration into capitalist social relations, however contradictory and antagonistic – are not external to the development of capitalism, of the dynamic of its reproduction and *restructuring*. What appears disconcerting for some on the Left, however, is that the form and content of such struggles, such *movement*, does not conform to established figures of the political and of struggle, figures which became hegemonic to the point of seeming universal and obvious during a previous cycle of struggles – precisely the cycle whose defeat has been the restructuring (Simon 2008).

### **3. Undocumented/documentated migrants**

Whilst "no border" movements have sought to contest the criminalisation of "undocumented migrants", within Australia such tendencies, always marginal, seemed to be dispersed, or recuperated into a more conservative "refugee advocacy" more accepting of the legitimacy of the processes through which people crossing borders are categorised, largely before international education economies were forced into political visibility (Mitropoulos and Nielson 2006; Kumar 2010).

Particularly in the case of Australian border control, the decision to arrive with a visa and try to squeeze through the bureaucratic processes is not qualitatively different from the decision to arrive as an asylum-seeker and attempt the same, both in pursuit of goals that should not be defined out of the political. Beyond the seemingly simple oppositions of legal and illegal migration, documented and undocumented migrants, are the realities of people negotiating, squeezing into and under and through, pushing at the edges of an array of bureaucratic categories and processes which collectively make up Australia's border control regime and its integration with political economy – the proliferating apparatuses of surveillance and control which seek to police and produce the authenticity of those supposed to embody these categories, while disciplining and excluding those deemed insufficiently authentic, patrolling the borders across the social terrain.

The more extensive and intrusive state systems of border control and socio-economic surveillance and policing become, the more such systems can act as disincentives to people who might otherwise add to those statistics of the enormous rise of illegal border crossing (but who wish to avoid the permanent relegation to black economies this would increasingly entail), as well as other consequences of the national and international development of such systems - forms of exclusion and criminalisation which would in particular impact upon their ability to integrate access to conditions of social reproduction in Australia to strategies of survival of, particularly but far from exclusively, partners and

family.<sup>9</sup> Insofar as this leads people to individually and collectively gamble on getting through “legal” processes, the possibility is created for enormous legal industries to be constructed by economically recuperating and shaping this mobility.

International students are certainly “documented” migrants, but, as they move through the stages involved in attempting to become a “permanent resident”, many if not most will at times breach a shifting subset of their visa conditions (DIAC 2010d) – if “caught” or even suspected, even retrospectively, they become illegal very quickly, sometimes *en masse*. Further, as “temporary migrants”, those on international student visas are excluded from virtually the entire of the state-managed or –sponsored systems of welfare, which exist for “permanent migrants” and which were built up under the sign of “multiculturalism”, as well as from broader social services – government-funded women’s refuges, legal services, community health care centres, etcetera.

Moving solely within the terrain of the bureaucratic categories of migration, people receive solidarity as a defence of authenticity: those seeking asylum are “real refugees”, fleeing political persecution; those non-citizens working illegally in (for example) sex-work are “victims of trafficking”; those on international student visas are “genuine students” motivated by a love of learning, with everything this entails.

Beyond the “genuine student”, however, there is another significant discourse of legitimacy and its other: the respectable, non-queue-jumping and *useful* migrants, who will be productive New Australians. As we will see, a movement within Australian academia has sought to intervene in favour of enhanced border policing and exclusion through claiming to determine the productive and unproductive, tracking of degrees of “progress” (or otherwise) of migrants (or just non-white people) in labour markets, and exposing those deemed insufficiently successful and useful (Perera 2006).

#### 4. Two movements

Capitalism is not made up of an aggregation of atomised individuals passively channelling objective laws of economy, with social movements contesting such processes as external oppositional subjectivities; capitalist society is saturated by movement and struggle. These are not best viewed as exceptions to a capitalist norm; the history of capitalism, of what capitalism *is*, is the history of

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<sup>9</sup> For example, if you choose the humanitarian or refugee pathway to either Australia or Canada, your parents will never be able to join you: in Canada, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* (Canadian Council for Refugees 2004) prevent minors from bringing parents out once they have obtained residence, while, in Australia, the processing time for a standard parent visa is close to 20 years, and other “humanitarian” parent pathways permit the entry of only one relative, or entry only on a very restricted basis (*Migration Act 1958*). In Australia, if you have enough money, there are other mechanisms through which you may be able to get your parents out to Australia.

what people *do*, including the collision of movements in struggle over the terms of reproduction.

We will call “movement” those networks that seek to intervene in the reproduction of relations, which coalesce in projects and agendas and form alliances based in the assertion of desires and interests.

Within this framework, we want to discuss two movements which existed and collided within and around international education economies in Australia: the movement of guest consumers, of which the wildcat strikes and demonstrations were only the most publicly visible and conventionally politically-coded manifestations, and the movement of a *de facto* alliance of nationalist academics, particular trade unions and officials in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, coalescing in a demand for stronger and more restrictive border control.

## 5. Repression of social movements and reproduction of economy

Within this context, the apparently obvious distinction between acts of repression of “social movements” and the reproduction and definition of objective economy should be refused in the same movement of theory which would make problematic the definition of “social movement” and question the production of *the political*. It is the production and content of the distinctions which we must question rather than take as the grounding of theory.

In attempting to move beyond the received figures of the political and of “social movements”, we should also seek to move beyond received ideas of “repression” in our understanding of relations of force and economy: the constitution of economy always moves through and as relations of force and indeed acts of violence – there is no economy prior to such force. And as we will see in the instances under discussion, the restructuring of economy and the defeat of resistances are two sides of the same coin which meet in the regularised, normalised violence of the management of national borders and regulation of educational institutions and economies, as moments in a geopolitics of reification.

### Guest consumers

One of your delegation been to India and assured us that you will have bright future in Australia in wide list of courses and then you will be eligible for Permanent Residency (PR) [...] And I have done diploma of community welfare work, and honestly I enjoy it very much.... There is no value of this qualification in my country. I feel like I have been ripped off thousands of dollars on the pretext of getting good future after finishing the studies and could get a permanent residency. Now when I have done whatever suggested by the immigration minister and spent \$40,000 to \$50,000 on my study and living here and now I have be informed that I might not get permanent residency because Australian government doesn't need us this means that they have smuggled me

to Australia to make money and when we have spend that money and expecting a better future here, they are planning to through [sic] us out of the country. (Singh 2010)

Some have tried to collapse those in Australia on international student visas into the category of "migrant labour" or, less sympathetically, "the children of Third World elites". While both have a moment of truth, even if only in a very qualified and substantially anachronistic sense in the latter case, we have tried to understand the integration of those on international students visas – the specificity of their integration into capitalist social relations, that is – somewhat differently, through developing the concept of the "guest consumer" (Rosenzweig 2010).

Not only do these reductions erase this specificity and indeed falsify the nature of the guest consumers even in crudely sociological-empirical terms; they arguably do so through an uncritical deployment of versions of covertly national "class analysis".<sup>10</sup>

"Class analysis" must be able to attend to the socio-historical specificity of the differences, divisions and mediations which constitute the proletariat as the reproduction of capitalist social relations, and in the contemporary period to the specificities of the ways in which the reproduction of the proletariat is integrated into the cycle of valorisation of capital.

The concept of "guest consumer" is intended to account for interests and imperatives of the state and capital, in this instance when searching not primarily for foreigners who can be induced to work, but for non-citizens who can induced to *pay*, bringing "export" income and contributing to what is considered a healthy national balance of payments. That these were the primary interests and imperatives which underlay the massive expansion of these economies does not mean that these were the only interests and imperatives; nor is this to deny that these economies became integrated into other economies within Australia in significant ways, especially as the number of guest consumers rapidly grew (Thompson 2009).

The dynamics of these economies were persistently rendered opaque by two officially-sponsored fantasies: that these economies were essentially about "education", with the desire for migration secondary or incidental; and secondarily that all of these genuine students did not to have to work for money.

The relationship between the forms of commodification that produce international students as guest consumers primarily in Australia to have large amounts of money extracted from them, and their proletarianisation producing a new bottom end of labour markets, was pushed into the background by and within these official representations of international education economies. The latter fantasy was animated by the requirement that all prospective international students claim to be so wealthy that they will be able to pay their enormous fees upfront and live for the duration of their studies without ever

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<sup>10</sup> For an historically-important if controversial discussion of race in the form and content of Australian trade unionism and of the Australian Labor Party, see McQueen 2004.

having to work. (Any student who did need to work for money, rather than “cultural” benefits, was an exception *a priori* guilty of immigration fraud.)<sup>11</sup>

However this account of the interests of institutions and states does not account for the imperatives of those who came to consume. To look at why Indians and others seemed to rush to help Australia build a massive export industry on their expropriation is to ask about the process of class formation.

“Class formation”, referring to the totality of social relations that serve to produce individuals as proletarians, is a process that obviously cannot be adequately defined purely at the point of production (i.e. in the direct encounter of labour and capital in wage-labour). Nor can this totality be understood in purely national terms: the process of class formation is increasingly, for many, *immediately international*.<sup>12</sup> It is impossible to adequately understand contemporary patterns of migration, of guest workers and international students and remittance economies, without an appreciation of these forms of transnational class formation.

Whether because of the impact of the Green Revolution, the diminishing capacity to work small landholdings, or simple lack of jobs for those no longer working the land, people have good reasons to want to leave the Punjab (Mathew 2005: 149).

Attacks on people from UP and Bihar in Mumbai haven't stopped them from migrating to Mumbai, have they? As long as there are no jobs in Punjab, the youth will continue to go to Australia or wherever its easy to go.<sup>13</sup>

The remittance strategy of the international student pathway requires significant outlay for the first several years. There is no capacity to remit money whilst driving taxis on the streets of Melbourne, earning \$8.50 per hour (Gascoigne 2008)<sup>14</sup> (just over half the legal minimum wage), as all this money is ploughed back into paying course fees and rent. But, at least until the recent restructuring, it had a good chance of success. With the promise of permanent residency one could eventually look forward to better paying work, which even at the lower ends of the Australian labour market might be enough to pay back a bank loan, re-secure family property and guarantee family reproduction both in India and Australia. Significantly, citizenship and a passport provides the possibility of continuing circulation in the global economy (Biao 2005), as

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<sup>11</sup> When asked directly during a Senate Committee hearing whether the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the peak council of Australian trade unions, supported easing the restrictions on international student work rights, Senior Industrial Officer Michelle Bissett stated: “We would not support no cap on the hours... What we do say is you have to balance the study requirements and you have to recognise that the purpose of being here is study and not to work.” (Official Committee Hansard 2009: 7)

<sup>12</sup> For an account of the failure of the labour movement to understand and respond to the processes of transnational class formation, restructuring as response to resistance, and its framing of the movement of capital as the movement of “jobs” see Chang and Wong 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Father of Punjabi international student living in Australia, quoted in Vashisht 2010.

opposed to the one-way ticket home that awaits South Indian workers toiling in the Gulf States.

One agent, who claims to have sent over 9,500 students to Australia in the last ten years, describes the relationship between Australian policy and Punjabi mobility like so:

There are two factors at play here. Australia was so upbeat about the foreign exchange earning potential that their policy initially appeared to be to get as many students as possible. This policy found immediate takers in Punjab, where the average youth has an inherent desire to settle abroad. This led to the proliferation of dubious private vocational centres in Australia and unscrupulous agents in India. (Vashisht 2010)

Agents in places like Chandigarh or Jalandhar assisted students to organise bank loans, course enrolment and offer letters, and interview preparation<sup>15</sup>, and some even provided students with contacts in Melbourne to assist with finding work. Sushil Suresh describes these Australian-based Indian contacts as “middleman in the global economy, facilitating the deployment of India’s globalising workforce in Australia’s labour market.” (Suresh 2009: 17)

We can not capture all the motivations underlying the global movement of people from India, or the array of factors which shape those particular determinants of proletarianisation which define the specifics of their transnational class formation; for our purposes it is enough to suggest some of the processes at work, which we hope give some force to our suggestion that only a broader account of capitalist restructuring can capture the dynamics involved in the seemingly “domestic” economies of “international education”.

In work, employers took the opportunity to hyper-exploit, in particular using difficulties of contestation, largely produced by the restrictive work rights permitted by international student visas, to impose a quasi-illegal work status. The requirement for a certain number of hours work to apply for permanent residency meant that even the requirement for remuneration sufficient to reproduce life could sometimes be evaded by employers who realised that the goal of migration and the often-massive family-wide stakes involved supplied an astonishing space for exploitation in the shadow of a threat of deportation (Thompson 2009) – a situation drastically worse following recent regulatory changes and the massive increase in desperation they have imposed, on those already in Australia in particular.<sup>16</sup>

The logic of extraction which drove state management of the development of guest consumer economies would loom large in response to struggle. The Victorian government refused to make international students eligible for concessions available to domestic students and welfare recipients, thus annually

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<sup>15</sup> For one such example see Cambridge Educational Service Pty Ltd, based in Jalandhar, Punjab <http://www.cambridgedu.com/> (accessed 9.12.2010).

<sup>16</sup> For these reasons, many struggles of guest consumers – for wages as legally-prescribed levels, for instance – have tended to take place retrospectively, when the need for such on-going work, and usually the period of study, is over. For some examples, see the UNITE quasi-union’s account of struggles against 7-11 franchises, available at [www.unite.org.au](http://www.unite.org.au) (accessed 9.12.2010)



extracting additional millions from those on international student visas. When problems were later recognised, much emphasis was put on the importance of “providing information”, as if people were simply ignorant of where to go, even though they were in fact ineligible for the vast majority of social, welfare and legal services, since eligibility is largely based on possession of just such concession cards or else on permanent residency or citizenship.<sup>17</sup>

As their numbers grew and socio-economic composition shifted away from “elites”, those on international student visas ever-increasingly faced a social terrain of predatory extraction, in (at least nominally educational) institutions, housing, transport, healthcare and wage labour – everyone wanted a cut and the states wanted several (Rosenzweig 2010; Sonja 2008).

### **The multicultural patriotism of screwdrivers and baseball bats**

Within and beyond such predatory economies, a cross-class, multi-cultural phenomenon of anti-international-student xenophobia arose, focussed on Indian males as seemingly a metonym of international education economies or of what is disturbing about restructuring more broadly.

It would be difficult to overstate the degree to which hostility to international students, and anti-Indian-student sentiment in particular, began to leak out seemingly across the entire of Australia’s social terrain, particularly in Melbourne, with actual incidents of physical violence only a tiny element occurring in relation to these much larger shifts. Hostility to Indian non-citizens in particular rose in Melbourne like a wave of anti-Semitism complete with mini-pogroms. Racism and violence assumed a new weight, a thousand acts giving a new context to subordination and to the movement, in all senses, of guest consumers through Australian society.

One notable tendency within this hostility was its constitution as a violent end of multicultural patriotism: Australian citizens, regardless of ethnicity, enacting antagonism to non-white non-citizens.

In one incident in the south-eastern fringes of Melbourne at the beginning of 2010, a car with its headlights off mounted the pavement in an effort to run over a group of Indian students and ex-students, and when this failed several men jumped out of the car and started attacking the students with baseball bats. At this point one of the victims yelled out “I am Australian”, and the assault ended. This was the second time strangers had violently assaulted these students just

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<sup>17</sup> Where services were created which did more than just (pretend to) refer, they were either small and cheap – such as the largely volunteer-based the International Student Legal Advice Clinic in Melbourne – or else operated as apparatuses to minimize damage to economy and keep issues out of the media as much as possible – such as the International Student Care Service run by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

around the corner from their home, in the space of 3 months.<sup>18</sup> This was not the only serious assault which was reported to have ended when the assailant came to believe that the non-white person or people being attacked were actually Australian citizens.

Beyond those picking up knives or baseball bats, it is a quality of some of the most socio-institutionally entrenched forms of contemporary racism and prejudice that those who routinely articulate or enact such taken-for-granted bigotry would, if asked what they thought about racism *in general*, reply, maybe sincerely, that it is *bad*. *Specific* racisms are exempted from this judgment by not being seen as really racism. Rather than affirming bigotry, they feel that they are just being confronted by people who are themselves simply bad in some way; criminal, backward, fanatical, dirty. Or else that they are just being confronted by non-citizens who are taking *something* from "us". Thus abstractly anti-racist racists can feel aggrieved both at those they dislike and toward anyone who they feel may characterise such views and the actions they enframe as racist – the unjust accusation of "politically correct" people who do not understand what "they" (Kurds/Roma/Muslims/Indians, take your pick) are really like/doing.

In Australia, such racism can be expressed in many social circles in relation to Indigenous people, and more recently Muslims; Indian students are an even more recent inclusion, which became prevalent very fast. In such a dynamic, the act of protesting or even publicly pointing out racism can seemingly provoke further racism and extend the social terrain characterised by the normalisation of anti-Indian attitudes – this was certainly evident in some of the visceral responses to taxi driver protests, the comments pages on newspaper sites, for example, suggesting that if Indian drivers did not want to get stabbed they should learn to read the street directory and wear more deodorant, or that students were after all just trying to "buy their way into Australia".<sup>19</sup>

While the denial of racism became prominent in the ALP state government's economic booster-ism, the Victorian Liberal Party had worked for years to incorporate the recognition of racism, and of racist violence against international students in particular, into a broader law-and-order politics.<sup>20</sup> In response, the ALP Victorian state government played to public resentment of any suggestion that there may be a problem with racism in Victoria, denouncing the Liberal leader for describing the attacks as racist: "Ted Bailieu has called Victorians racist. I'd like to ask Ted Bailieu to name those racist people, maybe

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<sup>18</sup> Story told to author by two of the victims, university students who have since returned to India and abandoned their Australian studies.

<sup>19</sup>This video of the first cabbie strike against violence (described interestingly as "Punjabi student strike") is illuminating as much for the ferocious anti-Indian commentary underneath as for the protest footage and the poster's description of what the protest is:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqGki\\_Om3EU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqGki_Om3EU)

<sup>20</sup> See Ted Bailieu's monthly column in the Melbourne-based Indian community newspaper *Indus Age* 2007–2010.

it's my next-door neighbour, maybe its someone's mum and dad, maybe it's somebody's friends." (Rood 2010)

In the aftermath of their protests against racism and violence, international students were confronted by publicly-visible responses which largely fit these patterns, including a persistence of institutional denial, some quite vicious, and a police force which deployed a variety of strategies to prevent international students from lodging complaints and to not pursue complaints if they were nonetheless made.<sup>21</sup> Given the widely-discussed relationship between publicity concerning attacks and massive drops in export income, it is difficult not to think that this knowledge informed police efforts to prevent incidents from being officially or publicly registered. In addition, the view international students had of police was informed by the experience of many working as cab drivers, who reported almost daily negative experiences of police (Gascoigne 2008).

For these reasons, all statistics released by police concerning attacks upon international students need to be seen as unreliable not only because many would not report attacks (Overseas Student Education Experience Taskforce (Victoria) 2008: 13), but because not all efforts to report attacks would be recorded.<sup>22</sup>

### **"Soft targets"**

The term "soft target" emerged as a way for Victoria Police to deflect attention from the perpetrators to the victims, and quickly became a way for police and others to explain away any hint of racial motivation in the violence suffered by international students.

"We think that the majority of these things occur through opportunistic activity. When we look at international students, and particularly the Indian students, they are very quiet-natured people, they are very passive people. They do travel at night, from (sic) whether its from employment or from study, they have a tendency to travel on their own, but they

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<sup>21</sup>According to the students involved in the baseball bat incident, police response includes warning students that false reports of violence can result in visa cancellation. According to a Punjabi-Australian friend of the authors, racially abused and assaulted whilst travelling home on the train in early 2010, the police told Indian international students verbally abused at the same time that they would not take a statement unless the students could guarantee that their visas would not have expired by the time the incident went to court; according to students quoted in the play "Yet to Ascertain the Nature of the Crime", police informed students that they didn't have enough cars to respond to an incident, and that they should bash back to defend themselves (Melbourne Worker's Theatre 2010); see also (Naidoo 2010). In 2010, senior police were discovered to have circulated emails joking about the electrocution of an Indian man, suggesting it might be a way to fix Melbourne's Indian student problem (Moor 2010).

<sup>22</sup> With the establishment of the International Student Care Service, Victoria Police were officially requested by the Victorian State Government to refer any incident involving international student victims of crime to ISCS. From its establishment in November 2009, until September 2010, not a single referral was made by the Victoria Police to the ISCS.

also do carry valuable items such as Ipods, mobile phones, laptop computers, and of course money. So, we think that they're vulnerable for those circumstances. We don't think that is actually racially motivated, we just think that they're seen as a soft target." (Walshe 2010)

This description of "soft targets" circulated widely and repeatedly in the media, as effectively a list of great reasons to go "curry-bashing". Defendants, lawyers and commentators invoked this stereotype to deflect accusations of racism (see Jones 2010).<sup>23</sup>

### Strikes and protests

In August 2006, hundreds of taxi drivers, many Indian international students, shut down the city in response to the murder of a fellow student and cab driver, Rajneesh Joga (Petrie and Holroyd 2006). The students occupied a major intersection in the Melbourne CBD for more than 8 hours, blocking peak hour traffic, and marching to State Parliament (Hagan 2006). They demanded improvements in safety, and, significantly, many of their placards and demands denounced police inaction on racist violence. The then-Transport Minister met with the striking drivers at a mass meeting, and promised safety improvements (Sonja 2008).<sup>24</sup>

In April 2008, another Indian international student taxi driver was stabbed, prompting a 24-hour protest of, at one stage, over 1,000 students/drivers at the same intersection. The students/drivers again demanded safety improvements and condemned police inaction on racist violence. Shutting down this intersection for 24 hours, the taxi driver/student protests received saturation coverage in Melbourne (Dobbin 2008). Only after this protest were the safety initiatives promised in 2006 rolled out.

On 1st December 2008, a Punjabi shopkeeper, whose business serviced the then-growing Indian student community in the outer-western suburb of Sunshine, was attacked in his shop by 10–15 people. Two days later, over 100 Indian men marched on the Sunshine police station to protest the police response (Battersby 2008).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For example, see Jones 2010. The introduction of the *Sentencing Amendment Act 2009* would on paper have led to increased sentences for offences which are found to have been racially motivated, but appears to have had the effect of motivating defense lawyers to learn how to obscure and deny racial motivation even when such is freely admitted by clients ("Punji-hunting", "curry-bashing"), in which endeavor such lawyers were largely ramming an open judicial door.

<sup>24</sup> The Victorian Taxi Driver's Association was formed out of this protest, with protest participants Pritam Gill and Arun Badgujar on its executive.

<sup>25</sup> The protestors claimed that police took 50 minutes to respond to the assault, the latest in a string of attacks on Indians in the Sunshine area. They also cited being treated like "animals" by police, as a reason for the protest.

In May 2009, Sravan Theerthala Kumar was attacked with a screwdriver by white gatecrashers at a friend's party. With rumours circulating that he may have succumbed to his injuries, and local and international media gathered outside the hospital, calls for a protest at the now familiar CBD intersection on the next day, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009, spread rapidly, assisted by the networks of small businessmen, taxi drivers and private college students.

In fear of a violent confrontation and of a demonstration which it neither called nor controlled, the Federation of Indian Students Australia (FISA) called a different protest, outside the hospital.<sup>26</sup> One hundred and fifty people, primarily local students and members of socialist groups, showed up at the hospital, while several thousand Indian students and others, organised through informal networks, gathered at the site of the two previous taxi driver protests. The two groups would eventually merge, but the protest was broken up violently by police in the early hours of the following morning (ABC News 2009).<sup>27</sup>

Unlike the earlier protests, this last was publicly represented as a demonstration of *international students* rather than *taxi drivers*, and thus threatened recruitment to Australia's largest non-mining export industry. The different responses to these protests depended upon this shift in framing, and was mirrored by shifts in responses in India, as noted by one Indian Leftist magazine:

Remember that not long ago, taxi drivers of Indian and Pakistani origin had protested in Melbourne against police indifference to a series of attacks on them. That story had not been highlighted much by the corporate Indian media because it made less interest copy for elite media than the attacks on "people like us". (Saha 2009)

In fact these two apparently different groups were the *same people* protesting in the *same place* about the *same thing*. But only protests framed as by international students were seen as likely to dissuade people from applying for international student visas in future.<sup>28</sup>

Student taxi drivers - some loosely connected with the Victorian Taxi Drivers Association, but mostly connected through student networks - were organising their own self-defence against violent passengers, calling other cabbies when confronted with violent or racist passengers, and not relying on police. Cabbies would often gather at hospitals where their comrades were recovering to discuss whether they should protest again.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Personal communication with FISA, 30th May 2009.

<sup>27</sup> One student who was charged with offences related to property damage was prevented from returning to Australia because of the criminal charges laid, after he was forced to travel home to see his ailing father. (Personal communication with staff at International Student Legal Advice Clinic.)

<sup>28</sup> See Vasanth Srinivasan in (Fitzsimmons 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Personal communication with student taxi organiser, identified in Melbourne media as "Jazz Randy-Boy" (see Melbourne reporters 2008)

Self-defence patrols of international students had been operating in the Sydney suburb of Harris Park since 2007, and sprung up around Melbourne's outer-western suburban train stations in June 2009 – they were quickly dispersed by police.

The absence of formal organisation at the origin of the large protests seemed to bewilder many in both the media and organised Left, who automatically looked for some "representative" body – FISA would oblige. Others talked wonderingly about the technological miracle of people "horizontally" organising via text message. But in truth these protests could emerge fairly smoothly from the social relations of these students because they already existed as networks in a shifting set of individual and collective struggles, rendering irrelevant the conventional divisions between "political action" and "private life" as experienced by most Australian citizens. The surprise of some at the possibility of such organisation flowed not only from the social invisibility of the networks of those on international student visas, but from the reality that the terms of their constant engagement, not only with a hostile and predatory social terrain but with institutional impositions of economy connected to distinctly disingenuous public presentations of the content of such "educational" economies, meant that a retreat from visibility and partial clandestinity had become elements of resistance and survival (Thompson 2009).

For this reason, when we talk about the movements of those on international student visas, we are not talking of just the large spectacular protests, or even the broader history of overt collective actions of contestation, but rather of the movement of which these were moments – the needs and desires which inform the projects, and individual and collective struggles, making up their engagement in the transnational processes of these international education economies, and in all of the related socio-economic processes this engagement entailed.

### **The murder of Nitin Garg**

By the time that Indian student Nitin Garg was murdered in January 2010 (Wallace 2010) many international students had come to feel that any form of protest was likely to have substantially negative effects, regardless of how politely expressed. Public responses to protests, and the seemingly-continuing rise in hostility toward the students, together with the beginning of the Federally-managed restructuring in response to the problems their protest and resistance had helped to create, meant that this murder led to no large protests or collective "political" actions.

In this sense, those on international student visas were defeated and dispersed not merely by the institutions of the state or capital, but by a thousand manifestations of Australian society and its multicultural patriotism.

## Academics investigating academics

In her discussion of developments in industrial relations within universities, Eddy notes the role that new forms of "enterprise bargaining" played in the shift to what she calls a "regulated autonomy" for academics, "one consistent with the industrialisation of the scholarship discourse and the conditions of scholarship related work", "engineering the complicity of academics in this modernisation process." (Eddy 2003: 3)

Complicity. Broadly we would identify two academic tendencies in relation to international education economies: one characterised by an at least nominally cosmopolitan neoliberalism, evident in many academics whose work increasingly has centred on managing and expanding such economies, and the other a nationalist hostility to international students as a threat to universities and to education standards as well as to Australian economy and society – which we will discuss shortly as a key network within the *de facto* alliance of nationalist academics, trade unions and the Department of Immigration which was empowered by the crises in international education economies.

At the briefest of glances, one could posit that these two tendencies are sharply separated: one a spectrum within entrepreneurial ambition, the other relentlessly pursuing a nationalist politics which seizes on border control as one of the few remaining pillars of traditional laborism and its defence of the institutions of residual social democracy (the trade unions and nationally-constituted labour markets, the university) and the nationally-defined interests these institutions are perceived to embody, or at least to have embodied. Such a view might open up a space for a strange new alliance of neoliberals who don't want borders to get in the way of accumulation, and an anti-border politics with decidedly other commitments.

However, this division is something of a mirage. Just as harsh border control actually plays a vital role in determining the conditions of integration of, for example, Mexican proletarians into agricultural capital in the United States – i.e. as individually-dispensable low-wage workers – so too universities and departments organised around international students tended to increasingly institutionalise systems of student management characterised by entrenched suspicion, by efforts to minimise rights of appeal, by forms of discipline and assessment which can result in high rates of exclusion of international students in particular. Those managers and academics who create and manage such systems seem to relate to international students as a whole in ways which seek to reduce them to compliant guest consumers, and expel and deport them if they threaten to cause any problems – relations of force entailed by the micro-management of the imposition of economy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Some of those deeply embedded in such processes have, since the emergence of international student protest, been carving niches for themselves as commentators and researchers concerned for international student welfare, framing such concern in ways which render invisible exactly these institutional processes, and thus the role of academics. In the aftermath of the "Chinese doctor's plot" discussed earlier, and in pursuit of policies to curtail the number and avenue of

## Imperatives of decisions to restructure

The Federal Government would decide to restructure these economies, this industry. A number of elements seem to have informed this decision.

As Marginson recently put it, "the international student market [...] started to go belly-up, victim of tougher government rules driven by resistance in the electorate to immigration." (Marginson 2010: 16) The use of the word "electorate" can make this seem like simply a calculation made by the ALP of likely future voting, assessing the views and intentions of atomised voters, rather than a calculation within a broader set of processes, with criminal violence as one point on a spectrum which also includes a socio-institutionally mediated struggle for stronger border control.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, Marginson does neatly encapsulate an end-point of these processes: the Australian government deciding that it was impossible or undesirable to either critically confront the existence of significant xenophobia, or publicly acknowledge many key realities of these economies<sup>32</sup>.

These realities were combined with a new recognition of the fragility of the integration of Australian institutions into world markets, and of the possible consequences of this fragility. At the same time, universities and some academics were attributing all problems to private colleges and the non-"public" sector, deflecting attention from themselves and encouraging policies which might increase the market share of their institutions.

And finally, there was a *de facto* alliance of nationalist academics, trade unions and the Department of Immigration, a movement which coalesced in opposition to the movement of those on international student visas, which sought to use the crisis in international education economies to encourage and facilitate the restructuring.

There is a general recognition that the crisis empowered the Department of Immigration:

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academic appeals, Chris Ziguras chaired an RMIT sub-committee which surveyed and explicitly cherry-picked the most hostile aspects of a whole suite of academic policies across Australia's institutions. The resulting proposed policies were considered so hostile as to leave the institution vulnerable to potential legal action, and were withdrawn before being presented to the RMIT Programs Committee (for which one of the authors briefed RMIT Student representatives). Ziguras later wrote a 'sympathetic' article entitled "Indian students in Australia: how did it come to this?", which takes some chutzpah (Ziguras 2009).

<sup>31</sup> The latter can even cite the former as evidence in favour of the agenda broadly shared across this spectrum. The CFMEU can write that "most (but not all) of the illegal migrants detected by DIAC compliance work are from Asian countries" and that "illegal work is abhorrent and against Australia's national interest", so that: "Failure to prevent illegal work by a mainly Asian workforce is not conducive to developing positive community attitudes towards Asian people and indeed our nation's important place in Asia." (CFMEU 2010a: 4-5)

<sup>32</sup> Of course, prior to his recent reinvention as an international student security expert (Marginson et al 2010), Marginson was known to engage in a bit of denialism himself. See his nasty attack on journalist Sushi Das (Pier Online 2008), who is nonetheless later thanked in the preface of his book (Marginson et al 2010: xiii).



The outcome represents a significant victory for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship over the much bigger and generally more powerful Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. When the policy was contested in Canberra corridors, the heavyweight departments of Treasury, Finance and Prime Minister and Cabinet all came down on Immigration's side. (Mares 2010)

DEEWR, having facilitated this multi-billion dollar export industry through the MODL list, and by using Australian high commissions in Asia as a marketing apparatus, could do nothing as the MODL list was scrapped. Both "student representatives" and DEEWR felt obliged to promote and defend something called "international education", not the commodified international mobility that was in fact the foundation of the economy.

Into this confusion came the patriotic clarity of this alliance, this movement.

## Australian nationalism

What we ask is: why do the workers confront the state? For the sake of sectional or national "interests"? To chuck immigrants out? Against the Americans? Or because the state stands as the defender of market relations, and so of all the divisions of sector, of nation, of specific demands – against their communist movement? (Roland Simon 2005)

As a constitutive element of developing colonial Australia, the Australian "labour movement" has always existed as mobilisation within and negotiation and management of a racialised division of labour (and of exclusion from labour). From the very beginning, Australian trade unions assumed imperatives to police the boundaries of labour markets at the point of their intersection with the borders of the nation and the definition of citizenship. Even in the case of trade union opposition to conscription during World War One, class struggle and racial mobilisation were seen as closely related if not as identical.<sup>33</sup> When the trade unions created the Australian Labor Party, the "political" evolution of "economic" struggle would be formalised as the defence of national "racial purity", and institutionalised by government in the form of the White Australia policy.

The 1973 end of that policy overlapped with an emerging discourse of "multiculturalism" as the ideology of state management of "difference" and a soft-corporatist recognition and inclusion of "ethnic communities" within Australia – a discourse adopted and pursued by the dominant tendencies in both major parties. The economic nationalism which had been the *de facto*

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<sup>33</sup> That the early twentieth century ALP had as a key principle "the cultivation of an Australian sentiment based upon the maintenance of racial purity" is reasonably well known. This principle sat comfortably alongside that of "the securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies." Less known are the terms within which trade unions tended to oppose conscription, i.e., as a conspiracy to break down "the white walls of Australia" and "swamp us" with "colored labor" – "an unspeakable calamity alike to Australian unionism and race purity", as one writer put it in a special anti-conscription edition of *Builders Labourers News* in 1916 (Hagan 1986:26-7).

ideology of the Australian labour movement persisted but was discursively de-racialised, as the ALP came to be considered the party of multiculturalism (Jupp 1997).

In recent years, this ideology and its institutional embodiments would come under political attack, but socially would persist and harden into contemporary multicultural patriotism, persisting alongside and somewhat bizarrely overlapping with white racism and particularly xenophobia, in a spectrum increasingly overtly founded upon suspicion and hostility toward the non-white non-citizen. Yet, for Australian liberals and social democrats, "multiculturalism" remains the opposite of racism and xenophobia, and the lens through which most "mainstream" opposition to racism perceives questions of "race" – how to redraw "Australian identity" to include a greater proportion of those within Australia into a patriotic narrative, while urging generic "tolerance" for those who remain incurably un-Australian – or not.

With the conditions of possibility of traditional Australian laborism increasingly undermined, economic nationalist tendencies within threatened "social democratic" institutions – notably trade unions, but also some within or who saw themselves as defending the universities – would shift in focus, with the question of the foreigner once again coming to prominence.

## People in their place

If the dominant tendency in Australian academic education commentary was the kind of technocratic policy advice of which Simon Marginson was a progressive Left edge, the ruptures in the process of self-expansion of international education economies precipitated by the resistance of those on student visas would give a new political influence to another tendency. Back in 2002 Marginson would note that:

The recent discussion of university standards has focussed largely on instances of academic favour for fee-paying [international] students. While such problems exist, this issue carries an implicit Hansonite racism: "they" are the cause of falling standards; "they" benefit from special favours, without considering the educational preparation "they" need to compete on equal terms. (Marginson 2002: 123)<sup>34</sup>

The most systematic, politically aggressive manifestation of this tendency, and the most quoted in tabloid and other mainstream media, centred on Monash University academic Bob Birrell, the Centre for Population Research at which he is a Reader in Sociology, and the network of academics around the journal *People and Place*, which Birrell edits. Birrell - an "economic nationalist floating in an ocean of globalism (at Monash and beyond)" (Rodan 2009: 28) - has

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<sup>34</sup> "It also deflects attention from the central problems: the corrosive effects of credentialism, the shift from knowledge to skill, the fetish with apparent vocational utility at the expense of the life-forming power of the disciplines, and the collapse of all quality under resource pressure." (Marginson 2002: 123)

dedicated most of his career to arguing against the entry of foreigners he represents as insufficiently useful, increasingly burdensome, culturally corrosive and possibly dangerous or destructive. He was and is one of the key consultants regularly used by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and has boasted of having advised both the ALP and Liberal Party on immigration. He regularly appears as a "demographer" in tabloid newspapers which wish to run spectacular xenophobic stories – "Mass immigration kills Aussie culture, says demographer Bob Birrell", for example (Staff writers March 24 2010).<sup>35</sup>

As a journal, *People and Place* is dedicated to a socially and economically nationalist agenda (to put it politely), and a continuing mobilisation of race politics (Jupp 1997) by people of middle-brow appearance – a participant in the December 2005 Cronulla race riot writes an account justifying this "patriotic" action against non-whites, for example (Barclay and West 2006).

Within the context of constant public and academic commentary, two significant interventions into international education by this network were Bob Kinnaird's report for the Australian Computer Society (Kinnaird 2005) and Birrell's work for CPA Australia (Birrell & Rapson 2005).<sup>36</sup> Birrell and Kinnaird then launched a campaign, through *People and Place* and elsewhere, for higher English language and professional standards, and a reduction in the intake of recent graduates from these professions into the General Skilled Migration Program.<sup>37</sup>

This campaign against foreign accounting students in particular continued through *People and Place* (Bretag 2007; Watty 2007; Burch 2008; Nagy 2008)<sup>38</sup>. Kinnaird's most recent work has been as the "expert" face of opposition to the 457 visa scheme (Official Committee Hansard 2007; AMWU 2006).

This work fed into Birrell's co-authorship of *Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration* program, commissioned by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in 2006. Using statistics on the labour market destinations of international student graduates who went on to permanent residency through the General Skilled Migration program, Birrell claimed to demonstrate unequivocally that international students, masquerading as skilled migrants,

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<sup>35</sup> Of Birrell, James Jupp says "Part of the paranoia which grew during the 1990s centred around the proposition that governments would not listen to the people and that elites were shifting debate. The most elaborate version of this had already been developed by Katherine Betts in her study *Immigration and Ideology*. Betts emerged as a close ally of Bob Birrell who has consistently opposed mass immigration for 20 years. Together, they launched the quarterly journal *People and Place* in 1993, which effectively carried on the very debate which was supposed to be 'suppressed' by the 'politically correct'" (Jupp 1997: 34).

<sup>36</sup> Both of these bodies are able to accredit professionals for general skilled migration purposes.

<sup>37</sup> Kinnaird launched legal action against ACS for attempting to publish his findings without his recommendations urging more restrictive professional standards and English language requirements (Maslog-Levis & Foo 2005).

<sup>38</sup> And in fact in the role of *People and Place* contributors like Kim Watty in internal university campaigns like that against the "Chinese doctor's plot".

were in fact utterly unproductive foreigners. After international student protests in 2009, this research would prove crucial in the policy shifts intended to discourage many of those who would have used education in Australia as a pathway to permanent resident status: "An Immigration Department official acknowledged that research such as Dr Birrell's 2006-7 study was part of the reason the new points test weakened the monopoly status of Australian qualifications and [instead] recognised overseas degrees." (Lane 2010)

Nationalist academic networks around Birrell, *People and Place* and the Centre also work for various trade unions, writing for and advising trade union leaderships with complementary agendas. But more significantly, the arguments made by trade unions, publicly and in lobbying government, draw upon the work of these academics. Union leaders write for *People and Place*, such as the CFMEU's John Sutton writing against "the free movement of labour from the Asia-Pacific into Australia" (Sutton 2008: 88). But more pronounced is the reliance of trade union submissions and other efforts at lobbying government on nationalist demography and related research (Catalyst 2008).

Articles such as "Cooks Galore and Hairdressers Aplenty" (Birrell, Healy, Kinnaird 2007) recirculated endlessly within union journals, submissions and media statements and informed much of what the CFMEU and AMWU had to say about the 457 visa scheme and temporary work more broadly (AMWU 2006; 2008; Sutton 2008; CFMEU 2009; 2010; 2010a).

"Here numerical representation acts as a surrogate for explicit racial referencing and classification. One mode in which this proxy discourse of enumeration, in tandem with its invisible twin, essentialisation, operates is the demographic..." (Perera 2006). Demography, it seems, is being deployed as the phrenology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **"But..."**

Within Australia's multicultural patriotism, efforts to deny or minimise racism and xenophobia often make strategic use of the word "but". For example, arguing, in relation to Australia's seemingly "racist past", that "we have escaped it", Tanveer Ahmed intervened in the public discussion of xenophobia and violence against those on international student visas with two key "buts". Firstly, opposition to asylum seekers may seem racist, "but unchecked immigration touches on the sense of fairness for all Australians" while "[some] of the most vociferous opponents of asylum seekers have been other migrants". And many would see the White Australia policy as evidence of racism: "But even one of the nation's founding acts of racial exclusion, when Melanesian and Chinese labour was banned, may have had as much to do with economics as it did race. The cheap labour of these migrants threatened organised labour, just as it does today and continues to stir union opposition to immigration." (Ahmed 2010: 3)

Threats to organised labour. Unions constantly negotiate the reproduction of ever-changing divisions of labour – divisions of labour constituted in relation to

divisions between nations, and between citizens and non-citizens. The relationship of Australian unionism to border control has not been merely an external ideological imposition, but emerges as trade unions, whether dominated by Left or Right, pursue interests within this reproduction. However formally “anti-racist” it might (now) be, trade unionism – and social democracy generally – pursues interests defined against those deemed outside of the fictive border.

It is difficult to disagree with Bryan’s assertion, in relation to somewhat different aspects of the economic nationalism of trade unions, that the deployment of such nationalism reflects a process of “representation of the specific interests of those whose incomes are threatened” within the process of restructuring (Bryan 1991: 304). As a set of assumptions informing the discourse of trade unions, economic nationalism need not be persuasive or implementable as an overall national agenda in order to play a useful role in pursuit of particular goals and interests.

With the shift away from Keynesianism and the process of neoliberalisation, economic nationalism within Australian trade unions has been stripped of much of its traditional programmatic content – advocacy of tariffs and protectionism, opposition to “foreign capital”. But with the increasing legal and illegal movement of people across borders on a mass scale over the same period, economic nationalism has come to be asserted centrally in relation to border control.

The divisions within the proletariat as a transnational class are not just illusions, not simply false consciousness, but exist as divisions in the experience of material interest, of a global division of labour of vast distinctions in quality of life, stratifications of survival and life-span, and the constitution of the relatively privileged as increasingly nervous of a downward mobility, at its worst of an exclusion from employment, and precisely when neoliberalisation seeks to strengthen the relation of income to wage-labour and of wage-labour to life and survival.

The CFMEU used the inquiry into student welfare and further inquiries to call for not only a further restriction on student work rights, from the current limit of 20 hours per week, but also the immediate cutting off of a variety of temporary visa pathways that could lead students to permanent residency (CFMEU 2009; 2010). The incongruity of this as a remedy for exploitation did not go entirely unnoticed:

The CFMEU, for example, are very strongly arguing about restricting work entitlements, not just for students but for people on 457 visas, and certainly there are issues there about exploitation. But, as I say, you do not stop exploitation by preventing people from being able to work: you address the exploitation. (Official Committee Hansard 2009:10)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bartlett goes on to say: “I mention the CFMEU in particular as being vociferously anti migrants being able to work wherever possible.” (Bartlett 2009: 16)

Along the same lines, the ANF suggested more stringent English language requirements to study nursing as a remedy for exploitation of workers. (CFMEU 2010; ANF 2010).

The CFMEU affirms its support for immigrants who become Australians, and its opposition to those who they categorise as “temporary migrants”, who must be excluded from labour markets if not from the country. While the CFMEU of course “strongly supports” permanent migration, “temporary migration [...] is another story” (CFMEU 2009: 3). The CFMEU can hardly be unaware that its concrete proposals for a stricter border control are substantially constructed to minimise or abolish precisely the pathways which otherwise would have allowed many “temporary migrants” to become permanent.

In the context of state-sponsored restructuring, trade unions were able to get significant parts of these agendas adopted by the ALP Federal government.<sup>40</sup>

## **Restructuring**

Beginning almost immediately after the international student mobilisations in Melbourne and Sydney in May and June 2009, the ground rules started to shift rapidly.

Prior to the 2009-2010 reforms, the pathway to PR via vocational education was relatively straightforward. Entering with the assistance of agents and bank loans<sup>41</sup>, upon completion of a trade course, a student need only to complete 900 hours of work experience (loosely defined) and pass a reasonably rudimentary English language test. With a vocational qualification, the majority of the points required for skilled migration could easily be secured.

Over the next 12 months after the protests, a dizzying array of changes to initial entry requirements and the general skilled migration program took place: the replacement of the MODL with a much pared back Skilled Occupations List, a massive increase in the English language requirements for General Skilled Migration, and a total overhaul of the points test.

Australia’s visa rules allow international students to apply for permanent residency from within Australia in the six months following the completion of

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<sup>40</sup> In a reversal of the favoured student movement slogan “education for all, not just the rich”, the National Union of Students, and the Australian Federation of International Students (AFIS) both publicly argued for the raising of the income threshold for international students to get a student visa, or extend the same, as its response to the student protests against violence, and framed as for their “welfare” (NUS 2009). The founder and spokeswoman of AFIS, Wesa Chau, argued over: “number of international students who are genuinely here to study. Yes, there are people who are here just for permanent residency, but this is not the majority and I think we need to separate the issue of education and permanent residency.” (Hill 2009)

<sup>41</sup> Under a section of their website called “International Travel” one agency based in Jalandhar, Punjab ([www.cambridgedu.com](http://www.cambridgedu.com)), claims that 75% of all students going overseas for study avail themselves of Education Loans provided with minimum fuss by Indian banks.

their course, but the success of such an application is dependent upon the accumulation of sufficient points in relation to skills, education, English language proficiency and age, to avoid being voted off the island at the end of a temporary (student) visa (Spruce and Vanni 2005).<sup>42</sup>

On 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009, then Immigration (and now Education) Minister Chris Evans announced that the Immigration Department was stepping up measures to stamp out “fraud” in student visa applications, in particular “to ensure students have the financial capacity to live and study in Australia.” (Evans 2009). This led to a massive increase in both visa refusal rates (up 68% from the previous year) and the number of applications withdrawn (Koeth 2010: 12-13), particularly for those from Gujarat and Punjab (DIAC 2009).

For prospective Indian and Chinese students, the amount on top of fees required to be held in the bank, per year of study, went from \$12,000 to \$18,000 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 (DIAC 2010).

The new category of Superior English, an IELTS score of 8, earns 30 points – almost half the points needed for a successful General Skilled Migration application<sup>43</sup> - but is a massive barrier to the entry of non-native English speakers (Lane 2010: 25). Previously, an IELTS score of 6 gave you points for General Skilled Migration. Now it is the threshold for the application, but gives you no points – points are only given for a score of 7 and above. For many applications, for example in nursing or accounting, professional bodies now require a 7 to be assessed as skilled. Once again, the ALP and Australia are using language testing to keep out particular foreigners.

With the scrapping of the MODL in February 2010 and a paring down of the occupations that one could use to apply for General Skilled Migration – a much shorter “skills list” - the door was firmly closed behind the protesting students.

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<sup>42</sup> To be allowed to enter the country in the first place, international students have to meet a number of English language proficiency and financial criteria. The latter of these are effectively racially stratified by a system of “Assessment Levels” (DIAC 2005). These assessment levels are adjusted periodically by the Immigration department in a quasi-actuarial fashion to quantify and minimise ‘risk’ on a country-by-country basis: risk of people absconding, of applying for a protection visa, of overstaying. For example, a student from the United States, Malaysia or Hong Kong (Assessment Level 1) only has to *promise* that they have enough money to support themselves, while a student from China or India (Assessment Levels 3 and 4 depending on which of the student visas – high school, language study, vocational training, higher education they are applying for) has to *demonstrate* that they have a certain amount of money in the bank to sustain themselves per year of study.

<sup>43</sup> Superior English is considered incredibly difficult for a non-native English speaker to achieve – the chance of a Hindi speaker doing so is 6 per cent and Chinese 2 per cent, according to internal IELTS data (Lane 2010: 25).

## **The border controlled**

The increased border checks on the next generation of students precipitated a massive crisis in cash flow, which took down a string of colleges in 2009–2010 (Thompson 2010). Meridien College, one of an elite group of four within technical training in Victoria, closed down in November 2010 *not* as a result of a government audit, but as a direct result of Immigration's more vigorous checking of "student financials".

Under new rules, colleges will be prevented from offering courses solely on the weekend. Students will have to do a minimum of 20 contact hours per week, with a maximum 8 hours per day. As a "safety measure" colleges will be discouraged through a raft of financial disincentives from holding classes after business hours.<sup>44</sup>

The effect will be and has been the closure of a large proportion of those colleges that facilitate the survival of the poorest international students. By squeezing their classes into the weekend, or odd hours, these students can spend the rest of the time working to earn the money to pay their fees. The state's re-regulation of the sector will effectively remove institutions that allow students to eke out an existence whilst preparing for the final border-crossing – the General Skilled Migration application. Without these institutions, those who survived the skills changes, the language tests, the bashings and the closures of existing institutions will find it near impossible to last long enough to make an onshore application. Those who have not already accumulated enough credentials to jump onto another temporary visa, such as the graduate skills visa or employer sponsorship visa, will have to go illegal or go home, or a combination of both.

The Immigration Department is also busy cancelling the permanent residency of an unknown number of ex-international students and onshore GSM applicants. Those who have gained their work experience at workplaces "under investigation" by Immigration have had their permanent residency cancelled, on the assumption that they must have done something wrong.<sup>45</sup>

## **The end of a moment**

At the beginning of 2011, the figures are in: a drop of over 40,000 in the number of student visas granted to Indians between 2008-09 and 2009-10 (DIAC

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<sup>44</sup> Changes outlined at a meeting of the DIAC Student Welfare Reference Group, meeting August 2010, attended by one of the authors.

<sup>45</sup> (Nanda 2009) Applicants must individually challenge any *en masse* cancellation decision through the Migration Review Tribunal. Information provided at a Continuing Professional Development seminar in August 2010, conducted by RILC and delivered by Jensen Ma, partner with Tan & Tan Lawyers and Consultants; and information provided by a bridging visa holder to the author.



2011:11). Already, the taxis of Melbourne are missing their drivers (Lucas 2011; Quinn 2011).<sup>46</sup>

The ALP federal government responded to the movements of guest consumers and to fractures in the smooth development of international education economies by sweeping a large part of these economies away and many of those on international student visas out of the country – all in one movement collapsing together economic restructuring, border control and repression. The state sought to disperse struggles and solve problems without having to acknowledge or confront anti-Indian xenophobia in particular or broader hostility to non-white non-citizens, largely by acting to dispense with a section of the (particularly private) international education industry, and with a section of the (particularly less wealthy and/or more likely to be troublesome) students. An historical event in Australian border and population management, expelling tens of thousands of people and preventing future entry. The restructuring of these economies was thus configured as a reassertion of labour market management as well as a defence of the “integrity” of the immigration and border control apparatuses of the Australian state – a performance of sovereignty proudly evoking that readiness for violence the possibility of which seeks to ritually re-found state and nation.

The hope is to re-found such economies on new bases, with increasing controls over who makes it into the country, combined with efforts to develop new markets on this basis, to reduce reliance on guest consumers from particular countries, to buffer the fragility of the integration of international education economies into world markets.

Some of those here on international student visas will head to Canada to pursue a version of the same project<sup>47</sup>, but most will be forced back to their countries of origin, where many face a future in the shadow of an enormous debt they have no conceivable way of re-paying, with their chances of survival significantly diminished (Gonsalves 2010). In the kind of actuarial logic used by the Department of Immigration, this restructuring has probably killed thousands of people (Agnihotri 2010).

The fetishism of the concept of the “refugee” rendered international students invisible (or irrelevant) even to those who attempted to critically discuss Australian migration and border policy, until the movement of international students began to assume more conventional figures of the political, at which point the struggles of those on international student visas were reduced to abstract anti-racism (Peterson & Bolton 2009) or proposed recruitment drives

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<sup>46</sup> In 2011 *Campus Review* was noticing a “rising social movement [that] could collapse the nation’s \$18 billion export education industry” – as if partial collapse had not already begun and the movement had not already been defeated (Woodward 2011: 3).

<sup>47</sup> Attempts by North Indians to switch to the UK were defeated at the same time, in September 2009 (BBC 2010), and *en masse* expulsions of Indian students are about to take place in the US (Indianexpress.com 2011).

to extend trade union market share (Breen 2009; Trotskyist Platform 2009), while broader questions were effaced or de-politicised.

Covertly-national political categories, at the very least, cannot confront the developing transnational processes of class formation, except as a threat. For much of the Left, struggle is centrally understood in terms of the necessity to defend or try to recreate the assumed norms of Fordism, of a national social democratic state and a trade unionism whose decline in reality can not simply be attributed to capitalist anti-unionism, against neoliberalisation, while effacing the historically specific foundation of really-existing social democracy in particular, gendered and racialised, divisions of labour. Other forms of movement and struggle disappear from sight, or are registered as disturbing neoliberal subjectivity.

It is within this political terrain that key trade unions lobbied hard for and then celebrated the restructuring as a reassertion of (their role in) sovereignty through control of borders and labour markets (AMWU 2010), in tandem with nationalist academics. The CFMEU went further, trumpeting a Bill that would allow the Immigration Minister at any moment to cut off skilled migration applications already lodged, "capping" them on the basis of nationality, occupation, or any other number of as yet undefined characteristics:<sup>48</sup>

The Australian government must have the power to effectively manage the migration program. At present the government does not have that power. This Bill will give the government more power to control the number and characteristics of persons entering, living and working in Australia on most visa classes, though it does not guarantee that the power will be exercised. (CFMEU 2010a)

This restructuring was the end of a moment, the defeat of movements which had successfully pried open a space for mobility not completely under the control of authorities, in which people were not so efficiently judged on their absolute usefulness to established interests.

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<sup>48</sup> While this bill has currently been shelved, it has already had the desired effect of creating panic and uncertainty amongst the student population and skilled migration applicants (Mares 2010a).

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## **The other side of the COIN: counterinsurgency and community policing<sup>1</sup>**

**Kristian Williams<sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*This essay outlines the current counterinsurgency model, with an emphasis on its domestic application in the United States. It shows that many contemporary counterinsurgency practices were developed by police agencies inside the U.S., and illustrates the transfer of theory, strategy, and technique from domestic police to the military - and back. The essay also examines the state's use of non-governmental or nonprofit agencies, as one element of counterinsurgency strategy, to channel and control political opposition. The conclusion briefly considers the strategic implications for social movements, especially as we learn to recognize and respond to political repression.*

### **Introduction: expect repression**

Oppositional political movements inevitably face - and therefore ought to expect - repression at the hands of the state. But, while quick to condemn the most obvious and violent manifestations of this repression, especially when directed against peaceful groups, the institutionalized left has been slow to grasp the strategy underlying the state's approach.

We tend to characterize repression as the state's response to crisis, rather than seeing it also as a means to preserving normalcy. Hence, it has been very difficult to recognize it in quiet times, and when it does appear it seems like an exception, an excess, a panicked over-reaction.

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<sup>2</sup> The author reserves all rights.

But repression does not always come dressed up in riot gear, or breaking into offices in the middle of the night. It also comes in the form of the friendly "neighborhood liaison" officer, the advisory boards to local police departments, and the social scientist hired on as a consultant. Repression is, first and foremost, a matter of *politics*: it is the means the state uses to protect itself from political challenges, the methods it employs to preserve its authority and continue its rule. This process does not solely rely on force, but also mobilizes ideology, material incentives, and, in short, all of the tools and techniques of statecraft. We have to understand repression as involving both coercion and concessions, employing violence and building support, weeding opposition and seeding legitimacy. That is the basis of the counterinsurgency approach.

This essay outlines the counterinsurgency model ("COIN" in the military jargon), with an emphasis on its domestic application, especially in the criminal justice context. The evidence shows that, despite the term's association with colonialism and Latin American "dirty wars," many contemporary counterinsurgency practices were developed by police agencies inside the United States and continue to be used against the domestic population.

The argument proceeds through five stages. Part one describes the counterinsurgency approach as it is presented in military documents and the professional literature, especially the new U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) and recent studies produced by the Rand Corporation.<sup>3</sup> The second part illustrates the transfer of COIN theory, strategy, technique, and personnel from the military to the police, and *vice versa*. The third shows specifically how anti-gang efforts in American cities are shaping and being shaped by military COIN operations abroad. Part Four explains the state's use of non-governmental or nonprofit agencies, alongside military and police action, to channel and control opposition. And finally, the conclusion considers some implications for social movements, in particular those of the left, in their efforts to overcome repression and achieve political change.

In this context, the title - "The Other Side of the COIN" - has three distinct meanings, which correspond to the main themes of my argument. First, it refers to the strategic pairing of direct coercion and subtle legitimacy-building activities. Second, it points to the joint development of military operations overseas and police control domestically. And third, it reminds us that when the authorities turn

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<sup>3</sup> It's important to recognize the limits of the official documents. The practice of COIN often diverges from the doctrine, and sometimes diverges very sharply. Imperfect adherence to the counterinsurgency model may indicate institutional inertia, internal disagreements, inter- or intra-agency rivalry, limits of capacity and competence, a lack of political will, or any number of other real-world operational or organizational factors. But it may also point to the ideological constraints shaping the guiding documents. Admonishments to operate within the law and to demonstrate a respect for human rights, for example, are compulsory in official publications and should be met with skepticism.

to counterinsurgency it is because they fear that insurgency is brewing. Wars - especially revolutionary wars - have two sides.

The state understands that there is a war underway. It is time that the left learns to see it.

## **Part One: repression, counterinsurgency, and the state**

### **Some definitions**

One of my objectives in this paper is to broaden and deepen our understanding of repression. I hope to show how repression functions in the course of the normal operations of the liberal state, and to demonstrate its effects in contexts that are not usually thought of as repressive, or even necessarily as political. At the same time, however, I am not seeking to *redefine* "repression," but simply to apply the standard definitions with greater consistency; so I am employing the term in its usual political sense, referring to the "process by which those in power try to keep themselves in power by consciously attempting to destroy or render harmless organizations and ideologies that threaten their power" (Wolfe 1978, 6).<sup>4</sup>

"Counterinsurgency" is not simply synonymous with "repression," but has a narrow, technical meaning, which of course relies on the definition of "insurgency." U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, explains:

[An] insurgency [is] an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. . . . Stated another way, an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.

The definition of counterinsurgency logically follows: "Counterinsurgency is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency." (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-2).

### **Ends and means**

"Counterinsurgency," then, refers to both a type of war and a style of warfare. The term describes a kind of military operation outside of conventional army-vs.-army war-fighting, and is sometimes called "low-intensity" or "asymmetrical" combat. But counterinsurgency also describes a particular perspective on *how* such

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<sup>4</sup> I focus here on state repression, though of course other powerful actors engage in repressive activities as well. For example, *The Nation* reports that the mercenary firm Blackwater offered to infiltrate animal rights groups on behalf of the genetic-engineering behemoth Monsanto (Scahill 2010).



operations ought to be managed. This style of warfare is characterized by an emphasis on intelligence, security and peace-keeping operations, population control, propaganda, and efforts to gain the trust of the people.

This last point is the crucial one. As FM 3-24 declares: "*Legitimacy is the main objective.*" (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-113).

The primary aim of counterinsurgency is political. That's why, in the context of the American occupation of Iraq, we heard career officers arguing that "victory in combat is only a penultimate step in the larger task of 'winning the peace'." (Gage 2003, 1). And it's the need for legitimacy that they're referring to when they say that "Military action is necessary . . . but it is not sufficient. There needs to be a political aspect" (General David Petraeus, quoted in *BBC News* 2007).

The political ends rely in large part on political means. As David Gompert and John Gordon (2008: 76) from Rand Corporation write:

In COIN, the outcomes are decided mainly in the human dimension, by the contested population, and the capabilities of opposing armed forces are only one factor in determining those outcomes. The people will decide whether the state or the insurgents offer a better future, and to a large extent which of the two will be given the chance.

The Rand report is titled, appropriately, *War by Other Means*. War, as Clausewitz observed, is politics by other means. And politics, as Foucault reasoned, is war by other means (Foucault 2003, 15-6). But in counterinsurgency, the means are not so "other." In COIN, war-fighting is characterized by the same elements as state-building - establishing legitimacy, controlling territory, and monopolizing violence (Weber 2004, 33).

Consequently, the "newness" of counterinsurgency is in some respects debatable. Clearly there is nothing new about repression. And the combination of force and legitimacy is a lot of what makes a state a state. But, as one participant in a 1962 Rand symposium on counterinsurgency recalled, at that time there was already a distinctive COIN perspective emerging - and it was a minority view:

Probably all of us had worked out theories of counterinsurgency procedures at one time or another, which we thought were unique and original. But when we came to air them, all our ideas were essentially the same. We had another thing in common. Although we had no difficulty in making our views understood to each other, we had mostly been unable to get our respective armies to hoist in the message." (Frank Kitson, quoted in Hosmer, 2006, iv).

Clearly, then, *something* was new.

What sets COIN apart from other theories of repression, I believe, is the self-conscious acknowledgement that the state needs legitimacy to stabilize its rule, and that under conditions of insurgency its legitimacy is slipping. In other words, from the perspective of counterinsurgency, resistance is not simply a matter of the population (or portions of it) refusing to cooperate with the state's agenda; resistance comes as a consequence of the state failing to meet the needs of the population.

It is possible, therefore, to see COIN as representing a "liberal" or even "radical" politics (Slim 2004, 3, and Sewall 2007, xxi). Yet such apologetics miss the larger point. As a matter of *realpolitik* the authorities have to respond in some manner to popular demands; however, COIN allows them to do so in a way that at least preserves, and in the best case amplifies, their overall control. The purpose of counterinsurgency is to prevent any real shift in power.

Counterinsurgency is all about preserving (or reclaiming) the state's authority. Violence and territory are inherent to the project, but it is really legitimacy -- "the consent of the governed," "societal support" -- that separates the winners from the losers (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-113 and 1-115). As Gompert and Gordon put it: "The key in COIN is not to monopolize force but to monopolize *legitimate* force" (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xxxvii).

The strictly military aspects of the counterinsurgency campaign are, of course, necessary; but so are the softer, subtler efforts to bolster public support for the government. Both types of activities have to be understood as elements of political power.

### *Theories of repression*

Because they see insurgency as primarily a crisis of legitimacy, the Rand researchers argue that, conceptually, the "War on Terror" has been a mistake: first, because it identified "terror" as the problem; and second, because it proposed "war" as the solution.

The idea of GWOT [the Global War on Terror] . . . has fixed official U.S. attention on terrorists, with insufficient regard for the hostility that exists among vastly larger numbers of Muslims. . . . The indelible image of jihadists scheming alone in remote mountain caves is less the reality of Islamic insurgency than is far larger numbers of jihadists moving freely among Muslim populations. . . . [T]error inspired by Islamic extremism is part of a larger pattern of Muslim 'resistance' that has significant popular appeal. . . . [Therefore,] terrorism cannot be defeated unless the insurgencies in which it is embedded are successfully countered.

Thus, the solution requires, not just military might, but "intelligence, political action, civil assistance, and other nonmilitary means that might curb Islamic militancy more effectively and at less cost and risk" than simple combat (Gompert and Gordon 2008, 6-8).

### **Stages of insurgency**

In its adoption of COIN theory, it seems that the U.S. is slowly re-learning the lessons of the British colonial wars. In 1971 British brigadier Frank Kitson looked back on his efforts at holding the empire together in places like Kenya, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland. He observed:

Looking in retrospect at any counter-subversion or counter-insurgency campaign, it is easy to see that the first step should have been to prevent the enemy from gaining an ascendancy over the civil population, and in particular to disrupt his efforts at establishing his political organization. In practice this is difficult to achieve because for a long time the government may be unaware that a significant threat exists, and in any case in a so-called free country it is regarded as the opposite of freedom to restrain the spread of a political idea (Kitson 1971, 67).

Concerns with liberty aside, Kitson recommended that the government act to restrict the spread of ideas, prevent radicals from achieving influence, and disrupt their efforts to establish oppositional organizations.

*War by Other Means* offers a similar analysis. According to Gompert and Gordon, revolutions (and thus counter-revolutions) go through three stages: a proto-insurgency, a small-scale insurgency, and major insurgency.<sup>5</sup> At first, in the "proto-insurgency stage" the movement is:

small, narrowly based, vulnerable, and incapable of widespread or large-scale violence. Proto-insurgents may be barely noticeable, not seen as having the potential to inspire insurgency, or dismissed as criminals or inconsequential crack-pots. Therefore, during proto-insurgency, the most important aspect of COIN is to understand the group, its goals, its ability to tap popular grievances, and its potential. In turn, shaping the proto-insurgency's environment, especially by improving governance in the eyes of the population, may deny it wider support. . . .

In the second stage, as "a small-scale insurgency" the movement begins "attracting followers beyond its original cadre," and it may "commit more daring and destructive acts against the state, not (yet) with a view toward replacing it, but to demonstrate its capabilities, be taken seriously by the population, and recruit." For the government, therefore, "shaping political and economic conditions to head off popular support for the insurgency is imperative." Direct military intervention is *not* recommended: "As long as the insurgency is still small, action against it can and should remain a police and intelligence responsibility."

If the movement survives, it may develop into a "major insurgency." While it is still "essential" that the state gain information on the movement and intervene to shape social conditions, at this stage, "forceful action against the insurgents by regular military units may be unavoidable." (Gompert and Gordon 2008, 36-7).

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<sup>5</sup> The report also considers a final possibility -- *foreign military intervention*.

## **The social science of repression**

Rand advocates early, preemptive action short of direct military force. The problem is that at the first stage subversion is not obvious and the state may not know that a threat exists. Worse, the real threat must be understood as extending beyond the insurgents themselves - the militants, radicals, and subversives - to include the grievances they seek to address and the social conditions that produce those grievances.

To meet the challenges of counterinsurgency, the security forces have had to shift their understanding of intelligence. Since the cause of the conflict is not just a subversive conspiracy, but necessarily connects to the broader features of society, the state's agents cannot simply ferret out the active conspirators, but need to aim at a broad understanding of the social system. The U.S. Army Field Manual on *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24, incorporates this perspective arguing that strategists "require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups." (FM 3-24, 2006, 3-2).

This sort of intelligence work is concerned with questions that are primarily sociological. And so, a great deal of FM 3-24 is concerned with explicating basic social-science terms like "group," "coercive force," and "social capital." In fact, the entirety of Appendix B is devoted to explaining "Social Network Analysis and Other Analytic Tools." It offers this picture of how such analysis is practiced:

[A] social network is not just a description of who is in the insurgent organization; it is a picture of the population, how it is put together and how members interact with one another. . . . To draw an accurate picture of a network, units need to identify ties among its members. Strong bonds formed over time by family, friendship, or organizational association characterize these ties. Units gather information on these ties by analyzing historical documents and records, interviewing individuals, and studying photos and books (FM 3-24, 2006, B-47 and B-49).

The security forces can no longer focus narrowly on the hunt for subversives or terrorists, but must also collect information on the population as a whole. This changes, not only the *type* of information they're seeking, but also the *means* they use to collect it. A Rand report on information warfare in counterinsurgency emphasizes:

Even during a security operation, the information needed for counterinsurgency is as much or more about context, population, and perceptions as it is about the hostile force. . . . [O]nly a small fraction of the information needed would likely be secret information gathered by secret means from secret sources (Libicki 2007, 133).

The report suggests a few specific mechanisms for collecting broad-based information: tracking cell phone use, conducting a national registry-census, installing vehicle- and weapon-mounted video cameras, and analyzing internet sites (in particular, creating a "national Wiki (where citizens describe their community)") (Libicki 2007, 9).

The U.S. government's mapping of the American Muslim population should be viewed in this light. In 2002 and 2003, the Department of Homeland Security requested - and received - statistical data, sorted by zip code and nationality, on people who identified themselves as "Arab" in the 2000 census. And in February 2003, FBI director Robert Mueller ordered all 56 Bureau field offices to create "demographic" profiles of their areas of operation, specifically including the number of mosques. One Justice Department official explained that the demographics would be used "to set performance goals and objectives" for anti-terror efforts and electronic surveillance (Isikoff 2003).

Civil liberties groups compared the program to the first steps in the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (ACLU 2003) - a notion that seems less than hyperbolic if we recall that, during this same period, 700 Middle Eastern immigrants were arrested as they complied with new registration rules. More than 1200 were detained without explanation or trial following the September 11 attacks, and thousands more were "interviewed" under FBI orders (Heymann 2006).

Years later, in 2007, the LAPD began planning its own mapping program, dressed in the rhetoric of community policing. As the *L.A. Times* reported, the "Los Angeles Police Department's counter-terrorism bureau proposed using U.S. census data and other demographic information to pinpoint various Muslim communities and then reach out to them through social service agencies" (Winton 2007).

Deputy Police Chief Michael P. Downing, head of the counterterrorism unit, explained:

While this project will lay out geographic locations of many different Muslim populations around Los Angeles, we also intend to take a deeper look at their history, demographics, language, culture, ethnic breakdown, socioeconomic status and social interactions. . . . It is also our hope to identify communities, within the larger Muslim community which may be susceptible to violent ideologically based extremism and then use a full spectrum approach guided by intelligence-led strategy (Winton 2007).

The FBI, meanwhile, has sent infiltrators into mosques throughout the country to root out - or sometimes, to set up - terror cells (Markon 2010).

### **Intelligence and coercion**

"Why collect such information?" the Rand researchers ask.

The answer they provide is quite revealing. Properly analyzed, the information can be used in five types of activity: (1) police and military operations "such as sweeps, roadblocks, or arrests"; (2) assessments of progress in the counterinsurgency campaign ("How many people have been hurt or killed in the war; what kind of crimes are being committed; who is getting employment and where; and who is staying put or leaving the country?"); (3) "the provision of public services, whether security and safety services (e.g., an efficient 911 system) or social services (e.g.,

health care, education, and public assistance"); (4) identifying insurgents ("distinguish those willing to help from those eager to hurt"); and, (5) the coercion of individuals for purposes of winning cooperation and recruiting informants: "information about individuals may be necessary to persuade each one to help the government rather than helping the insurgents."

This last point shows something of the recursive relationship between intelligence and coercion. In an insurgency, both sides rely on the cooperation of the populace; therefore they compete for it, in part through coercive means. As Rand researcher Martin Libicki writes: "Those uncommitted to either side should weigh the possibility that the act of informing or even interacting with one side may bring down the wrath of the other side." Whoever is best able to make good on this threat will, Libicki argues, receive the best information: "The balance of coercion dictates the balance of intelligence." (Libicki 2007, 21-3).

### **"Disruption mode"**

Of course, the better the intelligence, the more effective the use of force can be. And the purpose of identifying the insurgent network is to disrupt it.

Consider the police efforts to frustrate protests against the 2008 Republican National Convention: A year in advance of the demonstrations, police informants began attending protest planning meetings around the country, while local cops and the FBI kept anti-RNC organizers under intense surveillance - following them, photographing them, going through their garbage (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"). Among the organizations targeted were Code Pink, Students for a Democratic Society, the Campus Anti-War Network, and most famously, "The RNC Welcoming Committee" (which later produced "the RNC 8" defendants) (Boghossian 2010).

Simultaneously, the Minnesota Joint Analysis Center invested more than 1,000 hours coordinating with other "fusion centers" around the country to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on suspected anti-RNC activists. The fusion center drew its information from a staggering array of sources, using law enforcement and Defense Department databases, as well as DMV records, court document, and information provided by private businesses (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"; Shulz, September 1, 2009, "What").<sup>6</sup>

In the days before the convention, police used this information to mount raids of activists' homes and meeting places, seizing banners, political literature, video

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<sup>6</sup> Fusion Centers are multi-agency bureaus that compile, analyze, and re-distribute information. The ACLU warns that the arrangement can sidestep legal restrictions on data collection and that it monitors the everyday behavior of large numbers of innocent people (German and Stanley 2007; German and Stanley 2008).

equipment, and computers (Boghossian 2010). By the Convention's close, more than 800 people had been arrested, many rounded up *en masse* (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"). The majority - 584 - were released without charges, or had their cases dismissed. Only ten arrests resulted in felony convictions (Gornun 2010).

But the conviction rate may be beside the point. One commander stated frankly that the police were acting in "disruption mode" (Shulz, September 2, 2009).

## **Part Two: military/policing exchanges**

### **The community policing paradigm**

In my book *Our Enemies in Blue*, the chapter titled "Your Friendly Neighborhood Police State" is devoted to the argument that the two major developments in American policing since the 1960s – militarization and community policing – are actually two aspects of a domestic counterinsurgency program. I summed up the idea with a simple equation: "Community Policing + Militarization = Counterinsurgency" (Williams 2004, 255).

In the last few years, the counterinsurgency literature has made this point explicit. For example, *War by Other Means* lists, among the law enforcement "capabilities . . . considered to be high priority" in COIN: "well-trained and well-led community police and quick-response, light-combat-capable (constabulary) police" (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xlv). Similarly, a Joint Special Operations University report, *Policing and Law Enforcement in COIN: The Thick Blue Line*, purports:

The predominant ways of utilizing police and law enforcement within a COIN strategy . . . consist of the adoption of the community-policing approach supported by offensive-policing actions such as paramilitary operations, counter guerrilla patrolling, pseudo operations [in which state forces pose as insurgent groups], and raids (Celeski 2009, 40).

The advantages the state receives from each aspect are fairly clear: Militarization increases available force, but as important, it also provides increased discipline and command and control. It re-orders the police agency to allow for better coordination and teamwork, while also opening space for local initiative and officer discretion.

Community policing, meanwhile, helps to legitimize police efforts by presenting cops as problem-solvers. It forms police-driven partnerships that put additional resources at their disposal and win the cooperation of community leaders. And, by increasing daily, friendly contacts with people in the neighborhood, community policing provides a direct supply of low-level information (Rosenau 2007). These are not incidental features of community policing; these aspects speak to the real purpose.

In fact, Rand goes so far as to present community policing as its *paradigm* for counterinsurgency:

[P]acification is best thought of as a massively enhanced version of the 'community policing' technique that emerged in the 1970s. . . . Community policing is centered on a broad concept of problem solving by law enforcement officers working in an area that is well-defined and limited in scale, with sensitivity to geographic, ethnic, and other boundaries. Patrol officers form a bond of trust with local residents, who get to know them as more than a uniform. The police work with local groups, businesses, churches, and the like to address the concerns and problems of the neighborhood. Pacification is simply an expansion of this concept to include greater development and security assistance (Long 2006, 53).

The military's use of police theory - in particular the adoption of a "community policing" perspective - shows a cyclical exchange between the various parts of the national security apparatus.

### **The cycle of violence: imports and exports**

Domestically, the unrest of the 1960s left the police in a difficult position. The cops' response to the social movements of the day - the civil rights and anti-war movements especially - had cost them dearly in terms of public credibility, elite support, and officer morale. Frequent and overt recourse to violence, combined with covert (often illegal) surveillance, infiltration, and disruption, had not only failed to squelch the popular movements, it had also diminished trust in law enforcement.

The police needed to re-invent themselves, and the first place they looked for models was the military. The birth of the paramilitary unit - the SWAT team - was one result (Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975). A new, more restrained, crowd control strategy was another (McPhail 1998). Military training, tactics, equipment, and weaponry, made their way into domestic police departments - as did veterans returning from Vietnam, and, more subtly, military approaches to organization, deployment, and command and control. Police strategists specifically began studying counterinsurgency and counter-guerilla warfare (Gates 1992; Lawrence 2006).

At the same time, and seemingly incongruously, police were also beginning to experiment with a "softer," more friendly type of law enforcement - foot patrols, neighborhood meetings, police-sponsored youth activities, and attention to quality-of-life issues quite apart from crime. A few radical criminologists saw this for what it was - a domestic "hearts and minds" campaign. As *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove* pointed out:

Like the similar techniques developed in the sixties to maintain the overseas empire (on which many of the new police techniques were patterned), these new police strategies represent an attempt to streamline and mystify the repressive power of the state, not to minimize it or change its direction. The forms of repression may change, but their functions remain the same" (Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975, 30).



Both militarization and community policing arose at the same time, and in response to the same social pressures. And, whereas the military largely neglected COIN in the period following defeat in Vietnam, the police kept practicing, and developing, its techniques. Decades later, facing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military turned to police for ideas (Beers 2007).

The lines of influence move in both directions.

### **Statistical control**

Among the police innovations that COIN theorists recommend for military use are: the Neighborhood Watch, embedded video, computerized intelligence files, and statistical analysis (Celeski 2009; Libicki 2007; Calese 2004). The last pair are particularly interesting.

In *Byting Back*, Martin Libicki explains the utility of statistical analysis programs, pointing to New York's Compstat (computerized statistics) system as an example (Libicki 2007). By compiling crime reports, analyzing the emerging statistics, and presenting the information on precinct-level maps, Compstat enabled police administrators to identify high-crime areas, deploy their officers strategically, and measure the progress of their efforts. Though its effect on actual *crime* is debatable, Compstat certainly served as the organizational keystone for the NYPD's city-wide crackdown during the Giuliani years (Harring and Ray 1999). Since that time, other departments around the country have adopted similar systems (Parenti 1999).

The Los Angeles Police Department's system was proposed by Shannon Paulson, a police sergeant and a Navy intelligence reservist; it was implemented under Chief William Bratton, who had previously introduced Compstat in New York. In L.A., street cops carry a checklist of 65 "suspicious activities" - behaviors such as taking measurements, using binoculars, drawing diagrams, making notes, or expressing extremist views. Officers are required to file reports whenever they see such things, even if no crime has been committed. The "Suspicious Activity Reports" are then routed through the nearest fusion center, the Joint Regional Intelligence Center, where they are compiled, analyzed, and shared with other agencies - including local and national law enforcement agencies, the military, and private corporations. The LAPD, along with the U.S. Directorate of National Intelligence, are hoping to replicate this system in 62 other cities around the country, beginning with Boston, Chicago, and Miami (Gorman 2008; Meyer 2008; German and Stanley 2007; German and Stanley 2008).

## **Biometric identification**

Computer networks are also being used by the military to identify and track insurgents: "Snake Eater," a variation of the system developed for the Chicago Police, "has been adapted by Lockheed-Martin for the U.S. Marines in Anbar province, apparently to good effect" (Libicki 2007, 25). The Snake Eater kit includes mobile fingerprint, iris, and retina scanners, a digital camera, a GPS system, and a laptop computer capable of linking to a database of the local population (Gonzalez 2009). Likewise, following the siege of Fallujah, the city's entire population was fingerprinted, retina-scanned, and issued identity cards required for travel or to receive government services. And since 2007, biometric readers have been used at military checkpoints in Baghdad to control movement between ethnic enclaves (Graham 2010). Of course, the military has been preparing for this sort of operation for a long time: 1999's "Urban Warrior" training exercises included the biometric scanning of "resistance fighters" - in Oakland, California (Graham 2010).

## **Part Three: gang wars**

### **From California to Afghanistan**

A decade after Urban Warrior, marines were still refining their skills in California's cities. In the summer of 2010, seventy marines from Camp Pendleton spent a week accompanying Los Angeles police in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan. The marines wanted to learn the basics of anti-gang investigations, standards of police professionalism, and techniques for building rapport with the community (Watson 2010).

A *New York Times* profile of Marine Captain Scott Cuomo gives some idea of what he learned in L.A., and how he applied it in Afghanistan:

The same Marines patrolled in the same villages each day, getting to recognize the residents. They awarded the elders construction projects and over hours of tea drinking showed them photographs they had taken of virtually every grown male in their battle space. 'Is this guy Taliban?' the Marines asked repeatedly, then poured what they learned into a computer database (Bumiller 2010).

After a couple months, their efforts paid off. A villager identified a suspect, and the marines raided his house, arresting him and seizing weapons and opium. They placed the man, Juma Khan, in "a holding pen the size of a large dog cage" and interrogated him for two days. The marines then tried him, and found him guilty of working with the Taliban. But, under an agreement with local elders, once Khan swore allegiance to the new Afghan government, he was released as a free man - or not quite. In exchange for his freedom, and a job cleaning a nearby canal, Khan will be supervised by a group of elders, who in turn report to the American military.

And he will himself become an informer, meeting regularly with the marines and answering their questions about his neighbors and friends (Bumiller 2010).

### *From Afghanistan to California*

These military lessons, adapted from domestic policing and battle-tested overseas, are now being cycled back into the homeland. Since February 2009, combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been serving as advisors to police in Salinas, California, with the stated aim of applying counterinsurgency tools to local anti-gang efforts. Along with their expertise, the military advisors also arrive with software, including a computer program that maps the connections between gang activity, individual suspects, and their social circles, family ties, and neighborhood connections (Vick 2009).

As Salinas Chief of Police Louis Fetherolf proudly notes:

Our work with staff from the U.S. Navy's - Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) [is] a first-of-its-kind collaboration. . . . Faculty at NPS are experts in examining violent groups around the world, including terrorists, insurgents and revolutionaries. By examining these violent groups they have developed a counterinsurgency model, which relies largely on social network analysis to determine how best to disrupt their violent actions and, more importantly, address the reasons for their violent behavior in the first place. NPS and SPD are working together to determine the applicability of the counterinsurgency model to violent domestic groups such as our street gangs (Fetherolf, October 2009, 9).

In Salinas, the police-military partnership is occurring simultaneously with a renewal and expansion of the SPD's community policing philosophy (Fetherolf, July 2009). The new community focus (encouraged by the Naval advisors) includes Spanish language training, a "Gifts for Guns" trade-in event, an anonymous tip hotline, senior-citizen volunteer programs, a larger role for the Police Community Advisory Council, and programs that provide "more youth in the community alternatives to gang lifestyles and in the process develop a growing pool of home-grown, future police officers" (Fetherolf, October 2009, 33-4).

Salinas police have also initiated partnerships with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Marshals, the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), the FBI, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Fetherolf, October 2009). The most spectacular product of these partnerships, so far, was a set of coordinated raids on April 22, 2010, codenamed "Operation Knockout."

The raids - coming after months of investigation by Salinas Police, the Monterey County Drug Task Force, the ATF, and the FBI - mobilized more than 200 law enforcement agents and resulted in 100 arrests, as well as the confiscation of forty pounds of cocaine, fourteen pounds of marijuana, and a dozen guns (Reynolds, April 23, 2010).

Operation Knockout was intended, not only to disrupt the targeted gangs, but to

serve as a warning to others. Deputy Police Chief Kelly McMillin said: "We're going to follow quickly with call-ins of specific groups that we know are very active. . . . We are going to tell them that what happened on the 22nd could very well happen to them" (Reynolds, April 24, 2010).

The SPD's agenda for the future remains ambitious, illustrating an emerging, multi-faceted intelligence-sharing network. It includes plans to expand the city's video surveillance and gunfire-triangulation system, to adopt Compstat, to connect to the regional law-enforcement database COPLINK, and to create "a centralized information center (Fusion Center) in Salinas for the purpose of gathering and sharing information from Federal, State and local sources" (Fetherolf, October 2009, 10).

Leonard A. Ferrari, provost of the Naval Postgraduate School, is enthusiastic about Salinas' potential. "The \$1 trillion invested so far in Iraq and Afghanistan could pay a dividend in American streets," he told the *Washington Post*. The Salinas approach, he suggested, could become "a national model" (Vick 2009).

### **Ceasefire, Compstat, COIN**

In fact, the Salinas collaboration, "Operation Ceasefire," is *already* part of national model, following a strategy developed in Boston under the same name. In 1996, Boston's Ceasefire began with a focus on illegal handguns, but soon broadened its attention to include the gangs that used them. In response to ongoing gang conflict, the Boston Police Department convened a working group consisting of law enforcement officers, social workers, academics, and members of the Black clergy (Kennedy 2001; Braga and Winship 2005; Braga and Kennedy 2002).

Researchers working with police created a list of 155 murders, mapping the crimes geographically and demographically. They examined the criminal records of both the victims and (where known) the assailants. Using this information, they created a map of various gangs, their territory, and conflict points (Kennedy 2001; Kennedy 1997).

Prioritizing the likely trouble-spots, police officers then sat down with gang members and gave them a clear choice: If there was gang violence in their area, both the cops and the district attorney were going to hit with everything they had:

They could disrupt street drug activity, focus police attention on low-level street crimes such as trespassing and public drinking, serve outstanding warrants, cultivate confidential informants for medium- and long-term investigations of gang activities, deliver strict probation and parole enforcement, seize drug proceeds and other assets, ensure stiffer plea bargains and sterner prosecutorial attention, request stronger bail terms (and enforce them), and even focus potentially severe Federal investigative and prosecutorial attention on, for example, gang-related drug activity (Kennedy 1998, 5).

On the other hand, if the gang members wanted to clean up their act, the police

would help them do so. Because of their coalition work, the cops came with offers of job training, drug counseling, and other services (Braga and Winship 2005; Kennedy 2001; Braga and Kennedy 2002). In this respect, Operation Ceasefire grew directly from the Boston Police Department's pre-existing community policing programs.

Over time, ceasefire developed four levels of intervention:

*Level One* was a warning, through forums or other means, to a particular group or groups to stop the violence.

*Level Two* was near-term street enforcement[:] . . . heavy police presence, drug market disruption, warrant service, misdemeanor enforcement, and similar actions. . . .

*Level Three* was a large, interagency, heavily coordinated operation . . . that was readily apparent to the target group. . . .

*Level Four* . . . was for those groups that were both violent and deemed essentially unsalvageable: *undercover, gangwide investigations* making heavy use of Federal sanctions and designed . . . *to permanently dismantle the group* (Kennedy 2001, 42-3, emphasis added).

The strategy worked through direct deterrence, denying the benefits of violence and raising the costs. As importantly, "Those costs were borne by the whole gang, not just the shooter" (Kennedy 1998, 6). So the cops could begin applying meaningful pressure before identifying a suspect, and the gang had an incentive to keep their members under control and maintain the peace.

The key elements of Operation Ceasefire - social network analysis, community partnerships, inter-agency cooperation, and a direct approach to deterrence - were quickly replicated and taken further in other cities, intersecting trends like zero-tolerance policing and the Compstat program. A report from the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Service, *Street Gangs and Interventions: Innovative Problem Solving with Network Analysis*, provides a case study illustrating the result:

In the mid-1990's Newark's police were being remolded according to the pattern set by Giuliani's New York. The director of the Newark Police Department, Joe Santiago, introduced a Compstat system and, in 1996, proposed a partnership with Rutgers University professor George Kelling -- famous as one of the authors of the "Broken Windows" theory underlying police zero-tolerance campaigns (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This partnership coalesced as the Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative (GNSCI) (McGloin 2005).

Slowly, Santiago built a working group including cops, scholars, social workers, the clergy, and even public defense attorneys. It began by focusing on a small number of repeat offenders, using the same deterrence model developed in Ceasefire. Then, in 2003, GNSCI turned its attention to gangs, leading it to look beyond the city limits. The North Jersey Gang Task Force was born.

Coordinating with law enforcement agencies statewide, the Rutgers researchers began to collect a wide array of data on gang membership, recent crimes,

recruitment practices, family ties, and so on - as well as "information on the criminal histories of all identified gang members." Once the data was assembled, the researchers, following Boston's example, used it to map gang territory and perform a social network analysis, illustrating rivalries and alliances, and identifying likely sites for conflict. They then took the analysis to the individual level charting the connections between gang members and others who associate with them. By diagramming these relationships, researchers were able to distinguish between core members and those only marginally involved (McGloin 2005, 14-18).

Such information was crucial for making both tactical and strategic decisions. Police could approach individual members differently, based on their role in the gang and their level of commitment. They could also identify the pressure points and know where to strike for maximum effect.

Network analysis also allows one to identify people who hold structurally important positions within the gang networks. Cut points, people who are the only connection among people or groups of people, may be ideal selections for spreading a deterrence message or for affecting the structure and organization of the street gangs (McGloin 2005, 18).

Unlike Boston, where the focus was strictly on stopping gang *violence*, in New Jersey the aim was to disrupt the gangs themselves.

### **Carrots and sticks, hearts and minds**

Operation Ceasefire and its progeny work chiefly through a "Cost/Benefit" approach to counterinsurgency: The government provides an admixture of incentives and deterrents to shape the choices of the rebels, their supporters, and the population as a whole. Simply put, the state creates a strategy to raise the costs associated with continued resistance and to reward cooperation. If the government can bring more force to bear and offer better rewards than the insurgents, rational self-interest should (in theory) lead people to side with the state rather than the rebels (Gompert and Gordon 2008). Ceasefire applied this same thinking to urban gangs.

At the same time, in developing Ceasefire, the police made sure to align other sources of legitimacy - social services, community organizations, the clergy - with its efforts, thus simultaneously increasing its leverage and heading off potential resistance. For example, in Boston, the Ceasefire coalition included Black ministers who had been vocal critics of the police. These men of the cloth began advising the cops in their anti-gang work, and eventually "sheltered the police from broad public criticism" (Braga and Winship 2005, 6).

The other major approach to COIN - the older and more famous "hearts and minds" strategy - operates by a somewhat different logic, focusing on "the problems

of modernization and the insurgent need for popular support." As Rand explains, the aim was to rebuild public confidence in the government by instituting reforms, reducing corruption, and improving the population's standard of living (Gompert and Gordon, 2008, 25).

We can see the "Hearts and Minds" approach employed in a separate domestic experiment - the federally-funded "Weed and Seed" program.

### **Weed and Seed: Clear-Hold-Build**

Weed and Seed was conceived in 1991, and gained prominence a year later as part of the federal response to widespread rioting after the acquittal of four Los Angeles cops who had been videotaped beating Black motorist Rodney King. Since that time, it has been implemented in over 300 neighborhoods nationwide.

The Department of Justice describes the project:

The Weed and Seed strategy is based on a two-pronged approach:

1. Law enforcement agencies and criminal justice officials cooperate with local residents to 'weed out' criminal activity in the designated area.
2. Social service providers and economic revitalization efforts are introduced to 'seed' the area, ensuring long-term positive change and a higher quality of life for residents" (Community Capacity Development Office 2005, 1).

In terms of strategy, Weed and Seed closely resembles the military's "Clear-Hold-Build." As FM 3-24 elaborates: "Create a secure physical and psychological environment. Establish firm government control of the populace and area. Gain the populace's support" (FM 3-24, 2006, 5-50 and 5-51).

*Clearing* and *holding* refer to the removal and exclusion of hostile elements. *Building*, on the other hand, means both, literally, repairing infrastructure and, more metaphorically, gaining trust and winning support. However, even *building* includes an element of force:

Progress in building support for the HN [Host Nation] government requires protecting the local populace. . . . To protect the populace, HN security forces continuously conduct patrols and use measured force against insurgent targets of opportunity. . . . Actions to eliminate the remaining covert insurgent political infrastructure must be continued. . . (FM 3-24, 2006, 5-70).

The domestic analogy is pretty straightforward. One police chief described the role of paramilitary units in his community policing strategy:

[The] only people that are going to be able to deal with these problems are highly trained tactical teams with proper equipment to go into a neighborhood and clear the neighborhood and hold it; allowing community policing officers to come in and start turning the neighborhood around (Kraska and Kappeler 1999, 473).

In such campaigns, the relationship between community policing and

militarization is especially clear. They're not competing or contradictory approaches. They work together, simultaneously or in series. One does the weeding; the other, the seeding. The implications are not lost on those subject to this sort of campaign. "They're gunning for us," Omari Salisbury, a Seattle teenager, said when he heard about Weed and Seed. "They're gunning for Black youth" (Lilly 1992).

### **Gang politics**

Gang suppression has to be viewed, not only in terms of crime, but also in terms of politics.

This is true in two respects. First, police are not only (or even mainly) fighting crime, enforcing the law, or preventing violence - they are also disrupting and disorganizing an incipient political force, striking against it before it can become a real nexus of resistance. A growing body of literature now specifically argues that gang violence should be treated as a type of insurgency (Manwaring 2005; Long 2010; Sullivan 2009; JP 3-24, Appendix A). And, by applying the techniques and analysis of counterinsurgency to counter-gang campaigns, the state tacitly admits that there is a political dimension to what is ordinarily presented as pure criminality. Insurgency and counterinsurgency are, together, a struggle over legitimacy. By applying the COIN framework domestically, the government concedes that its legitimacy is being challenged and that the challengers (however localized and weak) are rivals, or potential rivals, with independent claims to legitimacy and distinct spheres of influence.

Second, the gangs are sometimes self-consciously engaged in political action. As John Sullivan, an L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy, writes in one Rand report:

[S]ome [gangs] have begun to adopt varying degrees of political activity. At the low end, this activity may include dominating neighborhood life and creating virtual 'lawless zones,' application of street taxes, or taxes on other criminal actors. Gangs with more sophisticated political attributes typically co-opt police and government officials to limit interference with their activities. At the high end, some gangs have active political agendas, using the political process to further their ends and destabilize governments (Sullivan 2001, 102).

Among the examples Sullivan cites are the Gangster Disciples, a gang with 30,000 members in 35 states. In addition to employing themselves in the drug trade, "GD members infiltrate police and private security agencies, sponsor political candidates, register voters, and sponsor protest marches" (Sullivan 2001, 113-4). Other gangs have been active in resistance against gentrification, loan sharks, slum lords, price gouging, and police brutality (Jankowski 1991).

Historically, the Black Panther Party recognized the political potential of gangs. In Philadelphia, in the late 60s, the Panthers organized a series of gang conferences and tried to use negotiations to quell neighborhood violence. The Panthers also



directed some of their public education and recruitment efforts toward gang members. Some gangsters did enlist to help in the Panthers' free breakfast program, and a few went on to become full Party members (Dyson 2007). Most strikingly, the Los Angeles chapter was formed by a former gang leader, Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter of the Slauson Renegades (Jeffries and Foley 2007).

### **Anti-gang politics**

Facing these challenges, police anti-gang campaigns typically combine a variety of elements analogous to those in counterinsurgency: the creation of databases listing suspected gang members; the mapping of the social environment, illustrating connections between gang members, associates, families, *etc.*; the development of community contacts, especially with local leaders. These intelligence efforts are then paired with a campaign of persistent low-level harassment -- stops, searches, petty citations, and the like. Each instance of harassment offers police the opportunity to collect additional information on the gang network while at the same time creating an inhospitable environment for those associated with gang activity.

For example, the main group responsible for such work in Salinas is the Monterey County Gang Task Force, called "The Black Snake" by youths in the community. The Task Force has 17 members, drawn from local police and sheriffs departments, the California Highway Patrol, and the state Department of Corrections. Wearing distinctive black uniforms and driving black cars, Task Force members conduct mass-arrest "round-ups" (Salinas Police Department 2010, 4), make random traffic stops, and regularly search the homes of gang members on parole or probation (Kraft 2010). The sheer volume of such activity is astonishing: Since it was formed in 2005, the Task Force has been responsible for 21,000 vehicle or pedestrian stops, 5,000 parole and probation "compliance" searches, and 2,800 arrests (Long 2010).<sup>7</sup>

Such anti-gang efforts are always implicitly political, especially as they become permanent features of life in poor Black and Latino communities. Though ostensibly aimed at preventing gang violence, counter-gang campaigns inevitably lead police to monitor the community as a whole. A Fresno cop explains the intended scope of his department's gang files: "If you're twenty-one, male, living in one of these neighborhoods, been in Fresno for ten years and you're *not* in our computer—then there's definitely a problem." (Parenti 1999, 111, emphasis added). Disproportionate attention, especially when paired with lower - or "zero" - tolerance for disorder, then contributes to higher rates of arrest and incarceration (Greene and Pranis 2007).

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<sup>7</sup> Regardless, the rate of violent crime has not appreciably decreased (Long 2010).

Sometimes officials extend enforcement by securing gang injunctions, special court orders prohibiting activities that would otherwise be legal - barring alleged gang members from appearing together in public, restricting the clothing they can wear, and subjecting them to a nighttime curfew (Critical Resistance 2011; Barajas 2007). At a broader level, the police will often engage in efforts disruptive of ordinary social life in gang-affected areas, such as cordoning, saturating, or sweeping select locations (*e.g.*, parks, streets, or bars) or targeted events (ballgames, parties, car shows) (Padilla 1992; Sheldon 2001).

In the most advanced campaigns, police sometimes take the further step of strategically *causing* gang conflict. Following the 1992 Los Angeles riots, for example, police did what they could to wreck a city-wide truce between the Bloods and the Crips. The cops did not only attack negotiating meetings and inter-gang social events, but also engaged in some underhanded tactics to create friction: covering one gang's graffiti with another's, or arresting a Blood only to release him deep in Crip territory. This occurred, not only in a context of widespread anger and recent unrest, but also at a point in which the gangs themselves were becoming increasingly politicized (Davis 1992; Klein 1995; Spergel 1995).

Mike Davis described the government's response to the riots in military terms:

"In Los Angeles I think we are beginning to see a repressive context that is literally comparable to Belfast or the West Bank, where policing has been transformed into full-scale counterinsurgency . . . against an entire social stratum or ethnic group" (Davis 1992).

## **Part Four: preserving order, preventing change**

### **Hard and soft**

I began this paper by outlining, in some detail, the basic principles of counterinsurgency theory, the intelligence needs that accompany it, and its direct application in both (foreign) military and (domestic) policing contexts. I've explained the basics of Social Network Analysis, and the process by which its insights into both insurgent organizations and the surrounding population are translated into direct coercion and bids to win popular support. I have suggested that if the left wants to understand the repression it faces, it should study the ways the U.S. government responds to forces as varied as the Taliban, the Gangster Disciples, and the RNC 8. And I have stated, emphatically, that it is the *political* dimension of insurgency and counterinsurgency that really counts.

And yet, thus far, I have focused chiefly on the "hard" side of repression - the direct coercion, the forceful disruptions, the criminalization and incarceration, the violence. Now we need to look at the "soft" side - the strategic use of concessions, the promise of representation and access, the co-optation of leadership, and,

comprising all of these, the *institutionalization* of dissent.<sup>8</sup> These elements represent, at this point, the state's most typical response to opposition from the left. And, by these means, the state does not only achieve control and exercise power *over* the organizations of the left, but *through* them.

### Stages and strategies

In its earlier stages, repression may be hard to recognize for exactly the same reasons that a proto-insurgency is - because everything seems normal. We should remember, however, that the authorities aren't just *preparing* for unrest, they're actively *preempting* opposition. They do that by broadly monitoring the community, building alliances, channeling political efforts into projects they can control, and disrupting networks and social ties that might otherwise form the basis for resistance.

Of course, as COIN moves into its later stages it will become increasingly military in character. Both the overt use of force and covert surveillance, infiltration, and disruption will increase. Emergency powers may be granted, civil liberties suspended, and the life of the overall population increasingly restricted. (FM 31-20-3, 3-23).

But as the crisis progresses to higher levels, the work of lower stages continues. Smart revolutionaries don't *stop* organizing as they escalate their tactics; they use their actions to help build their organizations. Likewise, the security forces do not cease their efforts at intelligence gathering or alliance building, but use those efforts in support of their more bellicose activities.

Of course, the aim of any counterinsurgency campaign is a return to normal - that is, to the lowest level of manageable conflict (Galula 1965). In effect, this is a return to the proto-insurgency stage: Opposition is either channeled into safe, institutional forms, or suppressed through normal police and intelligence activity (Celeski 2009).

The British strategist Frank Kitson summarizes the overall process:

In practical terms the most promising line of approach [in COIN] lies in separating the mass of those engaged in the [revolutionary] campaign from the leadership by the judicious promise of concessions, at the same time imposing a period of calm by the use of government forces. . . . Having once succeeded in providing a breathing space by these

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<sup>8</sup> "Institutionalization . . . is composed of three main components: First, the *routinization* of collective action. . . . Second, *inclusion* and *marginalization*, whereby challengers who are willing to adhere to established routines will be granted access to political exchanges in mainstream institutions, while those who refuse to accept them can be shut out of conversations through either repression or neglect. Third, *cooptation*, which means that challengers alter their claims and tactics to ones that can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998, 21, emphasis in original).

means, it is most important to do three further things quickly. The first is to implement the promised concessions. . . . The second is to discover and neutralize the genuine subversive element. The third is to associate as many prominent members of the population, especially those who have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government. This last technique is known in America as co-optation. . . (Kitson 1971, 87).

Byman argues similarly:

The ideal allies for a government implementing control are, in fact, nonviolent members of the community the would-be insurgents seek to mobilize. . . . If regimes can infiltrate - or, better yet, cooperate with - mainstream groups they are often able to gain information on radical activities and turn potential militants away from violence (Byman 2007, 24).

Broadly speaking, counterinsurgency offers two approaches to dealing with opposition, and they must be used selectively. Some adversaries, especially moderates, may be co-opted, bought off, and appeased. Others, the more recalcitrant portion, must be forcefully dis-organized, disrupted, deterred, or destroyed. The balance of concessions and coercion will be apportioned accordingly. Some adversaries win new posts - offices in a "reformed" administration, or jobs in "responsible" nonprofits, labor unions, or progressive think tanks. They gain access, inclusion, or representation in exchange for working within the existing institutional framework. The others will face harsher outcomes - including, for example, imprisonment, exile, or assassination. Whatever the approach in a particular case, the important thing is that the opposition is neutralized - rendered harmless, made controllable, and exploited as either the object or the tool of state power.

### **"Force multipliers": the military-NGO complex**

Counterinsurgency theory places a heavy emphasis on shaping the social environment in which the population lives and resistance develops. One way governments exercise this influence is with their money. As FM 3-24 explains:

*Some of the Best Weapons for Counterinsurgents Do Not Shoot. . . .* Counterinsurgents often achieve the most meaningful success in garnering public support and legitimacy for the HN government with activities that do not involve killing insurgents. . . . [L]asting victory comes from a vibrant economy, political participation, and restored hope. Particularly after security has been achieved, dollars and ballots will have more important effects than bombs and bullets. . . . 'money is ammunition.' (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-153, emphasis in original).

Foreign aid has thus often been criticized as an instrument of imperialism, even when the funds are distributed indirectly through nongovernmental or nongovernmental humanitarian organizations (NGOs or NGHOs) (Roy 2004; Ungpakorn 2004; Engler 2010; Petras 1999).

As the U.S. began its war against Afghanistan in October 2001, Colin Powell - the former General, the founding Chairman of the nonprofit America's Promise Alliance, and, at the time, the Secretary of State - managed to embarrass NGO leaders with his praise for their work. Speaking at the National Foreign Policy

Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations, he said: "[J]ust as surely as our diplomats and military, American NGOs are out there serving and sacrificing on the front lines of freedom. . . . [NGOs] are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team" (Powell 2001).

Later, guidelines negotiated by representatives of the military and the major humanitarian groups discouraged any repetition of Powell's gaffe, specifying that "U.S. Armed Forces should not describe NGOs as 'force multipliers' or 'partners' of the military" (U.S. Institute of Peace, no date). FM 3-24 managed to retain Powell's meaning while avoiding the offensive language: "Many such agencies resist being overtly involved with military forces," it cautions; but then: "some kind of liaison [is] needed. . . to ensure that, as much as possible, objectives are shared and actions and messages synchronized." (FM 3-24, 1-122).

The Rand study *Networks and Netwars* outlines "a range of possibilities" for the military's use of international nonprofits:

from encouraging the early involvement of appropriate NGO networks in helping to detect and head off a looming crisis, to working closely with them in the aftermath of conflicts to improve the effectiveness of U.S. forces still deployed, to reduce the residual hazards they face, and to strengthen the often fragile peace (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001, x).

One result of this perspective is that aid money, and thus NGO attention, increasingly follows the state's priorities - and its military's priorities in particular (Grain 2009). For instance, in 2010 the U.S. awarded \$114 million to aid groups working in Yemen, with the stated goal of "improving the livelihood of citizens in targeted communities and improving governance capabilities" (Rieff 2010). This supposedly humanitarian assistance came alongside \$1.2 billion in military aid, clandestine military and intelligence activity, and a CIA assessment that the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen represents the largest threat to United States' global security (Miller and Finn 2010; Zelin 2010).

Meanwhile, the Defense Department now controls 20% of the U.S. government's budget for Official Development Assistance (Grain 2009). "[D]evelopment priorities follow the battle space," David Rieff writes in *The New Republic*. "[D]evelopment is a continuation of war by other means" (Rieff 2010).

### **The Marshal Plan**

The domestic counterpart to the nongovernmental "force multiplier" is the community policing "partnership." We've seen nonprofit funding tied to the criminal justice agenda in the Weed and Seed program; the use of social services and Black Churches to create "the 'network of capacity' necessary to legitimize, fund, equip, and carry out" Boston's Operation Ceasefire (Braga and Winship, 2005, 4-5); the collaboration of social workers, the clergy, and public defense attorneys for similar ends in Newark; police-sponsored youth and elders programs

in Salinas; and, in Los Angeles, the government's use of social service agencies to gain access to Muslim communities suspected of breeding terrorists.

But sometimes police-led partnerships go further, using progressive nonprofits to channel and control political opposition, moving it in safe, institutional, and reformist directions, rather than toward more radical or militant action. For example, consider the efforts of liberal nonprofits to contain community anger after transit police shot and killed an unarmed Black man in Oakland, California:

Oscar Grant was killed on January 1, 2009. A week later, on January 7, a protest against the police turned into a small riot (Ciccariello-Maher, January 9-11, 2009). Organizers with the Coalition Against Police Executions (CAPE) -- a group largely composed of local progressive nonprofits and Black churches -- denounced the violence. One CAPE leader said that he wept watching the riots on television, feeling that years of hard work were being "destroyed by anarchists" (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009).

But - likely because of the revolt - the cop in the case, Johannes Mehserle, was arrested and charged with murder. Before the riots there had been no statement of concern from the mayor's office, no Justice Department investigation, and no arrests. In fact, the transit agency - for whom Mehserle worked - had not even interviewed him about the incident. "The rebellion was really about the fact that nothing was being done," George Ciccariello-Maher explains. "If there's one lesson to take from this, it's that the only reason Mehserle was arrested is because people tore up the city. It was the riot - and the threat of future riots" (Ciccariello-Maher, October 23, 2010).

In an effort to re-assert its leadership, CAPE organized another demonstration for January 14. Speakers included Mayor Ron Dellums, the rapper Too \$hort, and representatives of various nonprofits - all of whom urged the crowd to remain peaceful. Furthermore, CAPE's designated marshals, operating under the supervision of a private security guard, surrounded the demonstration while unidentified informants mingled in the crowd to look for troublemakers (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009).

Despite the tight control, things did not go as planned. When the speeches were over, much of the crowd refused to leave. Organizers announced that police would intervene if the group would not disperse; but rather than wait, CAPE's own marshals formed a line and began pushing people off the streets. The crowd - now very angry - started breaking windows. The security team, after consulting with police, withdrew from the area and left it to the cops to handle the crowd. The police fired teargas and made arrests (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009; *Advance the Struggle* 2009).

Future demonstrations, beginning on January 30, were likewise handled with threats, arrests, and violence (Raider Nation Collective, May 2010; Ciccariello-

Maher, February 3, 2009). At the same time, and in keeping with the COIN model, local, state, and federal agencies all undertook extensive intelligence operations targeting protest organizers - monitoring websites, videotaping crowds, sending plainclothes officers into the demonstrations, and infiltrating planning meetings (Winston, December 15, 2010; Winston, December 16, 2010; Winston, January 6, 2011; Winston, January 7, 2011; Winston, January 27, 2011).

"If we learned on January seventh that our power was in the streets," Ciccariello-Maher concludes, "what we learned on the fourteenth is that the state was going to counter-attack. . . . The state didn't counterattack by force at first; the state counter-attacked through these institutions, the nonprofits" (Ciccariello-Maher, October 23, 2010).

### **No justice, Urban Peace**

A year later, the process repeated itself. As Johannes Mehserle's trial approached, Nicole Lee, director of the nonprofit "Urban Peace Movement," circulated an email focused, not on winning justice, but on preventing violence should justice be denied. Titled "Bracing for Mehserle Verdict: Community Engagement Plan," the June 23, 2010 memo offered two sets of instructions:

1) Organizations, CBO's [Community-Based Organizations], and Public Agencies should be thinking of ways to *create organized events or avenues for young people and community members to express their frustrations with the system* in constructive and peaceful ways. If people have no outlets then it may be easier for folks to be pulled toward more destructive impulses.

2) We need to *begin 'inoculating' our bases and the community at-large so that when the verdict comes down, people are prepared* for it, and so that the 'outside agitators' who were active during the initial Oscar Grant protests are not able to incite the crowd so easily" (Lee 2010, emphasis in original).

The memo listed several talking points, which served the state's interests so well that the City of Oakland ran an edited version on its webpage (Raider Nation Collective, July 2010).

Around the same time, another organization, ironically named "Youth Uprising," sponsored a public service announcement centered on the slogan, "Violence is Not Justice." The video includes local rappers, civil rights attorneys, school administrators, representatives from nonprofits, a police captain, and the District Attorney of San Francisco - all urging a peaceful response to the verdict (Youth Uprising 2010).<sup>9</sup>

Religious leaders also got into the act, using the pulpit to ask people to remain

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<sup>9</sup> The organization's website, YouthUprising.org, presently quotes Attorney General Eric Holder, saying the group is a "perfect example of what we need to be doing around the country" (viewed October 14, 2010).

safely at home when the verdict was announced (Ciccariello-Maher, June 29, 2010).

The pacifying efforts, though broadly distributed, were centrally coordinated. Shortly before the trial, the mayor and police held a meeting with several Bay Area nonprofits. The topic, of course, was the prevention of riots (Ciccariello-Maher, June 29, 2010).

In practice, avoiding unrest became the primary focus of the institutionalized left; CAPE's stated goal, the prevention of police brutality, receded into the background. If anything, by condemning the rioters and cooperating with the cops, liberal leaders helped to legitimize the police counter-attack and made further brutality more, not less, likely.

In the end, Officer Mehserle was convicted, but of a lesser charge - manslaughter, rather than murder. And, when the verdict was announced, rioting did ensue (Ciccariello-Maher, July 12, 2010). Hundreds of people, mostly young people of color, braved not only the clubs and the tear gas of the police, but also the condemnation of their purported community leaders.<sup>10</sup>

### **Advance the Struggle**

In their published analysis of the Oscar Grant crisis, the revolutionary group Advance the Struggle argued that, by trying to de-fuse popular anger, "Bay Area nonprofits effectively acted as an extension of the state" (Advance the Struggle, 2009, 8-9).<sup>11</sup>

Had the rage over Grant's murder not been channeled into ritualized protest, had the leaders not been more concerned with controlling the community response than in confronting injustice, had the organizing not been, in a word, institutionalized - it is hard to know what might have been possible.

Advance the Struggle contrasted the trajectory of events in Oakland with those of Greece, just a few weeks before the Grant killing:

There, the police murder of a 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos triggered reactions which, very quickly, evolved from protests to riots to a general strike in which 2.5 million workers were on strike in December 2008. Within days the killer cop and police accomplices were arrested, but even this concession didn't trick the movement into subsiding.

The police murder set off the uprising, but the participants connected the murder with the issues of unemployment, neo-liberal economic measures, political corruption, and a failing education system. Aren't we facing similar problems in Oakland...? (Advance the Struggle

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<sup>10</sup> A few months later, radicals in Seattle reported a similar dynamic, co-opted community leaders suppressing unrest after police killed a Native American man. (Nightwolf and Mamos 2010.)

<sup>11</sup> For similar critiques of the role non-profits play in managing political struggle, see Incite 2007.



2009, 22. Paragraph break added for emphasis.)<sup>12</sup>

Of course there are differences between Oakland and Athens - differences of geography, history, and political culture. The type of insurrection unleashed in Greece may not, at present, be possible in California. But that is not an *objection* to the radical analysis; it is, instead, *the premise*. The political environment in Oakland has been shaped in such a way so as to sharply limit the possibilities of struggle. And the institutionalization of conflict in professionalized nonprofits is an important part of that restrictive context. There is no guarantee that things would have gone further had the nonprofits not intervened, or that greater conflict would have won greater gains. But their intervention certainly helped to contain the rebellion, and closed off untold possibilities for further action. That is, quite clearly, what it was intended to do.

### **Conclusion: resisting repression**

I began this essay by suggesting that a great deal of political repression goes unrecognized, and that the left needs to revise its understanding of repression if it is to resist it effectively. This need has developed alongside - in some respects it is a reflection of - similar changes in the thinking of our adversaries.

With the emergence of the counterinsurgency model, the state has ceased to view subversives in isolation from the society surrounding them. Increasingly, it has directed its attention - its intelligence gathering, its coercive force, and its alliance building - toward the population as a whole. Repression, in other words, is not something that happens solely, or even mainly, to activists; and it not just the province of red squads, but of gang enforcement teams, neighborhood liaison officers, and even police advisory boards. It comprises all those methods - routine and extraordinary, coercive and collaborative - used to regulate the conflict inherent in a stratified society. Our task is to decipher the politics implicit in these efforts, to discern the ways that they preserve state power, neutralize resistance, and maintain social inequality.

Our further task is to respond. As repression is primarily a political process, any adequate response must take - at least in part - a *political form*. It will not be enough, as is usual, to put the case before a jury, or adopt strict secrecy in the name of some cloak-and-dagger notion of "security culture." Such things must be done at times, but both these responses, though in very different ways, treat repression chiefly as a legal, and thus technical, problem. They are also entirely defensive. While such devices may protect the individual or small group with greater or lesser

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<sup>12</sup> The cop who shot Grigoropoulos was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. (Associated Press 2010)

efficacy, they do not generally touch - or even attempt to touch - the overall *system* of repression, to say nothing of the social iniquities that system maintains.

Whatever defensive measures may be necessary, an effective response to repression must also involve an offensive component - an attack against the apparatus of repression, which will (if successful) leave the state weaker and the social movement stronger. This outcome, of course, should be the aim from the start.

It is, in a sense, misleading to speak solely in terms of *responding* to repression. Repression exists already. It intervenes preemptively. It forms part of the context in which we act. Oppositional movements cannot avoid repression; the challenge, instead, must be to overcome it.

When facing counterinsurgency, we need to learn to think like insurgents: The antidote to repression is, simply put, *more resistance*. But this cannot just be a matter of escalating tactics or increasing militancy. Crucially, it has to involve broadening the movement's base of support. We have to remember that an insurgency is not just a series of tactical exchanges with the state. It is, instead, a contest for the allegiance of the population. For the rebels, no less than for the authorities, "*Legitimacy is the main objective.*"

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### **About the author**

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## **"Não somos chilenos, somos mapuches!": as vozes do passado no presente da luta mapuche por seu território**

Fernanda Maria Vieira, J. Flávio Ferreira

### **Resumo**

*A luta da Nação Mapuche no Chile pelo reconhecimento de sua "territorialidade" vem de longa data. No entanto, é após a independência nacional que o processo de repressão e expropriação pelo Estado do território mapuche se apresenta de forma mais brutal. Como resultado de processos históricos, assistimos na atualidade a massiva criminalização dos mapuches, cujas lideranças, dentre outras ameaças, respondem a ações penais, inclusive por "terrorismo".*

*O revisar da história permite-nos compreender as permanências das "linhas abissais" que se revelam plenas na manutenção de discursos de inferiorização das "tradições mapuches": vistas, então, como uma expressão do "atraso" que colide com os anseios de uma nação em busca da sua "modernidade". Trata-se de compreender o atual cenário como um legado das políticas coloniais – em referência à edificação do Estado Chileno – assim como as problemáticas derivadas das políticas econômicas mais recentes, que obedecem predominantemente aos interesses de exploração destes territórios por setores do Estado e de determinadas transnacionais.*

*Faz-se pertinente, portanto, questionar as raízes históricas que desencadearam um processo de forte repressão estatal às reivindicações mapuches por seus territórios ancestrais.*

Palavras-chave: mapuches; linhas abissais; territorialidade; Estado chileno e transnacionais; civilização e barbárie.

"Por legitimo derecho  
reclama el pueblo Mapuche  
pa'que el Governo lo escuche  
que ellos no están satisfecho (...)  
esta terra fue su cama  
(...) siendo legítimos dueños  
de esta angosta y larga faja  
hoy están en desventaja  
cien por ciento de sus predios  
tienen perturbado el sueño  
lejos de cantar victoria  
com su esperanza ilusoria  
piden al cielo esta abricia

para que se haga justicia  
a Chile dijo la historia.  
(...) su sentir es uno solo  
su tierra pa'tener paz  
marginados allí están  
quieren ser parte en la historia  
reconocer sus victorias  
es parte sorda en su lucha  
si el Gobierno les escucha  
van a conquistar la gloria.  
somos parte de su sangre  
de su raza y su valor".

Domingo Pontigo – El Hermano  
Pehuenche

"*Não somos chilenos, somos mapuches!*". Essa é uma das frases repetida por Matías Catrileo, uma das lideranças mapuches presente em inúmeros vídeos que circularam nacionalmente no Chile nos últimos tempos. O pano-de-fundo: o conflito entre as reivindicações mapuches e os interesses políticos e econômicos que objetivavam desarticulá-los, seja pela política de criminalização exercida por meio do Estado, seja, no limite, pela sua eliminação política e cultural.

As redes de televisão chilenas, em geral, acabaram por reduzir as imagens transmitidas a discursos binários e marcados pela força do estigma: os mapuches de um lado, sob o discurso da *periculosidade*, e a polícia do outro, sob a necessidade de melhor organizar-se para debelar os *entes perigosos*.

Matías Catrileo foi "mais um" a cair pela força dos "Carabineros de Chile", a polícia nacional, nos últimos anos. De toda a forma, trata-se de uma frase potente: a sua força torna-se reveladora da essência do conflito que se instaurou no Chile entre o Estado (muitas vezes representando os interesses de empresas transnacionais) e a Nação Mapuche.

Este é um conflito que não se inicia com a independência nacional, em 1818, mas que, no entanto, se agudiza a partir daí gestando não apenas a redução territorial do povo mapuche, como também um processo brutal de criminalização – o movimento que separou o Chile de Espanha acabou por permitir que a elite emergente deixasse o país à mercê do imperialismo inglês. Mas foi sensivelmente desde a década de 1990 que a tecnocracia estatal articulou o legado colonial da perspectiva sobre os mapuches, os interesses dos filhos das elites que se pronunciavam após a independência e a política econômica que resultou na entrega progressiva ao neoliberalismo.

Apesar das nuances nesta conflitual relação dos mapuches com o Estado desde tempos mais distantes, é justamente nessa década, em meados de 1990, que a distinção mais abrupta do movimento mapuche vem à tona em resposta à opressão estatal: cresce fortemente a reivindicação pelo reconhecimento das especificidades socioculturais mapuches face ao restante da comunidade chilena. Se por um lado o domínio do Estado buscava atingir a sua *totalidade*, é justamente da tensão deste processo que o movimento mapuche emerge com discursos bem mais elaborados, utilizando-se da sua "identidade".

A ligação entre "identidade" e "terra" é visceral na cosmovisão mapuche, no entendimento de *si* e da sua comunidade, do próprio *wallmapu*, o País Mapuche. *Mapu* significa *terra*, enquanto *che* significa *pessoa*. Há aqui uma ligação indissociável da identidade coletiva e individual com o meio: a *pessoa*, o que ela é [e representa], está intimamente ligado à *terra*. O "mapuche" é literalmente a "gente-da-terra", ele complementa a *terra* – o seu território – e a *terra* o adorna reflexivamente de significados para que sua própria existência seja preenchida de sentido. O indivíduo *nasce* da sua relação com o meio, com a biodiversidade, ou *Itrofillmongen*. O segredo desta "ecologia" assenta em três conceitos que se entrelaçam em espírito na relação humano-natureza: *küme felen* [podendo ser traduzido como "bem-estar"], *küme morgen* [ou "qualidade de vida"], e *nor-felen* [ou "lei natural" / auto-regulação da natureza] (Tricot, 2009: 177).

A "ecologia mapuche", como nos informa *J.*, liderança mapuche que nos guiou por Temuco, Collipulli e outras cidades da Araucanía, resume-se ao entrelaçar dos conceitos de "vida" e "terra": "as águas e árvores são meus irmãos, como você. Defender a [nossa] cultura está ligado à terra, ao nosso lugar, à nossa forma de ver o mundo".<sup>1</sup> Há um leque de inconformidades transversais à relação entre o povo mapuche e o povo chileno. Os valores socialmente atribuídos à construção da *pessoa* e presentes na sua relação com o *meio* são permeados de lógicas aparentemente inconciliáveis.

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<sup>1</sup> "*J.*" é uma jovem liderança mapuche que aceitou nos conceder entrevistas. Ao longo do trabalho de campo no Chile, em finais de 2010, *J.* acabou por se tornar o nosso informante preferencial. Ele nos deu informações não só sobre a "causa mapuche" e o seu conflito com o Estado chileno, mas também sobre a sua cosmovisão. *J.* aceitou falar-nos acerca do modo de vida em geral do povo mapuche, mas também de muitos detalhes da sua hierarquia interna e da sua cosmovisão que, *a priori*, deveriam ser passados a "estranhos" somente após o consentimento da sua comunidade. Este "voto de confiança" deveu-se, segundo o próprio *J.*, ao anseio de que a "causa mapuche" pudesse ser divulgada fora do território chileno, papel que nos pediu para exercer em troca de informações. *J.* acredita que boa parte do que acontece a respeito de sua causa é "filtrado" pelo Estado antes de chegar ao exterior. É sob este ponto-de-vista, sobretudo após o trabalho de campo e o contato com os jornais e a televisão chilena, que se amplia o sentido de *importância* dos relatos de *J.*. Diante de tal contexto, *J.* será citado na introdução deste trabalho. É necessário ressaltar que sua perspectiva sobre o povo mapuche aproxima-se bastante do que pudemos encontrar junto a outros informantes, assim como na literatura especializada. Utilizamos aqui apenas a sua inicial por questão de segurança, uma vez que *J.* diz-nos que muitos dos seus amigos foram "levados" pela polícia após a concessão de entrevistas a pessoas que se identificaram como "jornalistas" e "pesquisadores".

Enquanto o mapuche busca sua harmonia com o *meio* considerando a si próprio como sua parte dependente, os *winkas* são providos pelas reminiscências do iluminismo, resultando na apreensão da *natureza* como algo *inerte*, pronto a ser explorada e domada pelas técnicas humanas de produção.<sup>2</sup>

**J.** acredita que esta incompreensão é fruto da separação entre o *humano* e a *natureza* nos *winkas*:

Nosso sistema... explica o [ser-]mapuche, mas não o winka... A natureza do [nosso] espírito é distinta, é feita de outra coisa e obedece a outra lógica. Somos mais espirituais, tudo está conectado; o winka vê a posse, divide as coisas e parece não estar conectado a elas.

Logo, o movimento mapuche reclama não somente a "reconstrução" da sua identidade há muito desvalorizada e corroída pelo processo colonial, mas remete à vontade de criação de uma *identidade coletiva* que face ao projeto de Nação chileno passa a reafirmar-se pelo questionamento do "outro estabelecido": da sociedade chilena e do próprio Estado.

Não sem razão, Bebbler Ríos aponta para a década de noventa como um marco referencial na modificação da luta mapuche, onde não apenas o território será reivindicado, mas a própria necessidade de se afirmar a sua autonomia, ou *wallmapu tañi kizungünewün* [*autogobierno del País Mapuche*], em relação ao Estado Chileno.

Esse "reafirmar" se expressa na busca da "recuperação" e na (re)sedimentação identitária da Nação Mapuche. Dessa forma, a década de noventa introduz novos desafios para a luta, pois "se empieza a plantear el tema de la autonomía política y territorial del pueblo mapuche, y la exigencia de ser reconocidos como un "otro" distinto del resto de la sociedad chilena, con derechos que surgen de su particularidad" (Bebber Ríos, 2002: 326).

Essa diferença de visão, onde a *natureza* possui o *direito* a ser respeitada, onde a relação homem-natureza dá-se em harmonia, colide com os interesses das grandes empresas extrativistas e florestais, que veem no território mapuche grandes acúmulos de reservas naturais e, em especial, o potencial de exploração dos seus rios, de fontes energéticas e das suas reservas madeireiras. É no

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<sup>2</sup> *Winka* significa "os novos Incas", recurso alusivo no *mapudungun* [ou *mapuzugun*, língua mapuche, que literalmente quer dizer "fala da terra"] para comparar o "branco" aos Incas. Esta alusão remete à tentativa de conquista dos mapuches pelos Incas, assim como posteriormente pelo colonizador. Nos dois casos houve uma resistência do povo mapuche, que conseguiu defender, entre intempéries e muitas perdas, o seu território e a sua integridade linguística e cultural. Pelo fato de que tal expressão retrata a "resistência" como meio de sobrevivência do povo mapuche face aos dois grandes grupos com os quais guerrearam (os Incas e os colonizadores), fica clara a evocação de um *espírito* do "guerreiro", característica marcante do auto-reconhecimento mapuche. Este "reconhecimento" esteve presente mesmo na perspectiva do próprio colonizador, que somava derrotas nas constantes tentativas de tomar as terras mapuches. Para mais sobre estes embates ver: Quemenedo, 2006: 54-58. Acreditamos que o conflito contemporâneo entre mapuches e o Estado chileno está permeado deste imaginário do *guerreiro*. Por parte dos primeiros, como forma a fortalecer simbolicamente a sua causa diante dos interesses econômicos sobre o seu território; enquanto que por parte do Estado este imaginário acaba por justificar ações mais repressivas – como veremos ao longo do texto.

resultado do processo de estigmatização da cosmovisão mapuches que reside a perfeita "desculpa" para o estabelecimento das atividades extrativistas das transnacionais: face à representação do "atraso", impedimento à modernização, chegam novas técnicas industriais sinalizando o desenvolvimento econômico e social de regiões rurais e/ou menos urbanizadas no país, com "falta" de ofertas e recursos de manufaturas e de mão-de-obra. Deste processo ideológico deriva o apoio dos populares nas cidades espalhadas pelo *wallmapu*, os quais almejam beneficiar das promessas do "desenvolvimento".

De fato, não apenas os mapuches, mas muitas outras comunidades indígenas na América Latina estão em territórios de interesse das empresas transnacionais, o que tem acirrado conflitos e posto em causa as garantias dos direitos dos povos originários. Sob esta perspectiva foi aprovada pela ONU, em setembro de 2007, a Declaração Universal dos Direitos dos Povos Indígenas.

A percepção dos movimentos indígenas da necessidade de se buscar efetivação dos seus direitos e, acima de tudo, da autonomia dos seus territórios é patente. Um mês após a aprovação da Declaração pela ONU realizou-se, entre os dias 10 e 12 de outubro, o Encontro Mundial dos Povos Indígenas nas cidades de La Paz, Tiwanaku e Chimoré, na Bolívia. Dentre os objetivos estava o de se discutir a autonomia das terras indígenas como forma de proteção destas diante do «modelo econômico global».

Esse encontro estabeleceu parâmetros de organização para os povos originários, e foi encerrado com a divulgação de uma Carta que estabelece 14 pontos comuns de reivindicação aos Estados Nacionais. Tal Carta apresenta clareza com relação ao atual estágio de gestão do capitalismo neoliberal e as consequências locais do seu modelo global, assim como complexifica esta questão aos antagonismos conceituais acerca da *natureza* e das diferentes formas de *uso da terra* entre a exploração em larga escala e o modo de vida dos povos originários:

Que a 515 años de opresión y dominación, aquí estamos, no han podido eliminarnos. Hemos enfrentado y resistido a las políticas de etnocidio, genocidio, colonización, destrucción y saqueo. La imposición de sistemas económicos como el capitalismo, caracterizado por el intervencionismo, las guerras y los desastres socio-ambientales, sistema que continúa amenazando nuestros modos de vida como pueblos.

Que como consecuencia de la política neoliberal de dominación de la naturaleza, de la búsqueda de ganancia fácil de la concentración del capital en pocas manos y la irracional explotación de los recursos naturales, nuestra Madre Tierra está herida de muerte, mientras los pueblos indígenas seguimos siendo desalojados de nuestros territorios. El planeta se está recalentando. Estamos viviendo un cambio climático sin precedentes, donde los desastres socioambientales son cada vez más fuertes y más frecuentes, donde todos sin excepción somos afectados y afectadas.

Que nos asecha una gran crisis energética, donde la Era del Petróleo está por concluir, sin que hayamos encontrado una energía alternativa limpia que la pueda sustituir en las cantidades necesarias para mantener a esa civilización occidental que nos ha hecho totalmente dependiente de los hidrocarburos.

Que esta situación pueda ser una amenaza que nos dejará expuestos al peligro que las políticas neoliberales e imperialistas desaten guerras por las últimas gotas del llamado oro negro y el oro azul, pero también pueda darnos la oportunidad de hacer de este nuevo

milenio un milenio de la vida, un milenio del equilibrio y la complementariedad, sin tener que abusar de energías que destruyen a la Madre Tierra.

Que tanto los recursos naturales como las tierras y territorios que habitamos son nuestros por historia, por nacimiento, por derecho y por siempre, por lo que la libre determinación sobre éstos es fundamental para poder mantener nuestra vida, ciencias, sabidurías, espiritualidad, organización, medicinas y soberanía alimentaría.<sup>3</sup>

Seria esse novo patamar de conscientização dos interesses que as transnacionais possuem sobre seus territórios um grande potencializador para o processo de repressão por parte do Estado?

O revisar da história permite-nos melhor compreender as permanências das «*linhas abissais*» no atual cenário da luta mapuche. É daí, talvez, que as marcas das políticas coloniais desvelem os fenômenos mais recentes do aguçado interesse de exploração destes territórios por setores do Estado e do Capital transnacional. Faz-se pertinente, portanto, questionar o que se esta a passar no Chile de agora, mas igualmente o quê do passado acabou por semear a conflituosa relação do projeto de Nação chileno e dos "arcaísmos" que *essencializam* a Nação Mapuche, resultando na legitimação de uma repressão estatal que parece não ter fim.

### **O que vejo no Outro é somente a possibilidade do Eu: silenciamento dos mapuches e um pouquinho da técnica colonial**

A luta da Nação Mapuche pelo reconhecimento da sua territorialidade vem de longa data. No entanto, é após a independência nacional chilena que o processo de repressão e expropriação pelo Estado do território mapuche dá-se de forma mais persistente, cujo pano-de-fundo nas últimas décadas retrata o movimento de criminalização dos últimos, pelo qual as lideranças mapuches respondem a ações penais, inclusive por "terrorismo".

Em geral, há uma forte percepção das lideranças mapuches acerca dos "recuos" sofridos no seu papel sociopolítico a partir da independência do Chile: **J.**, ao falar do passado em contraste ao presente, remonta a um olhar positivado do período sob o jugo espanhol, dando-nos conta de que os processos de construção da independência chilena foram mais «violentos para a identidade mapuche» se comparado ao espaço que dispunham no confronto com o espanhol. Embora sua perspectiva possa ser uma reconstrução idealizada do passado frente às dificuldades que **J.** vivencia no presente, resgatá-la implica também em agregar elementos novos para se compreender o contexto atual. Para **J.** havia uma «respeitabilidade» dos territórios mapuches pelos colonizadores, que em grande medida devia-se à própria potência da Nação

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<sup>3</sup> *Mandato de los Pueblos y Naciones Indígenas Originarios a los Estados del Mundo para o Encuentro Mundial: "Por la Victoria Histórica de los Pueblos Indígenas del Mundo"*. Acessível em [http://www.movimientos.org/12octubre/show\\_text.php3?key=11084](http://www.movimientos.org/12octubre/show_text.php3?key=11084).



Mapuche - que travou vários embates vitoriosos contra os espanhóis. **J.** destaca também que esta perspectiva tende a crescer à medida que novos estudos historiográficos sejam produzidos pelos próprios mapuches, a subverter a *História* que «se naturalizou desde o ponto de vista dos chilenos».

Partindo de pressupostos similares – de que os processos de construção da nação chilena entraram em conflito mais agudo com os mapuches do que em período anterior – José Bengoa (2009) analisa esta passagem histórica revelando-nos que tal leitura tem razão de ser:

Justo al iniciarse la República, se produjo el primer desentendimiento entre el recién nacido Estado chileno y los mapuches. Éstos, los mapuches, no se habían independizado de España. La Independencia no los había involucrado, era asunto de criollos. Los araucanos del sur incluso tenían más a los nuevos ocupantes del gobierno de Santiago que a los antiguos. No les faltó razón. Los antiguos gobernantes españoles les respetaban sus fronteras y realizaban cada cierto tiempo parlamentos con ellos, en que se les reconocían sus fueros. A los nuevos no los conocían, y se les notaba en los ojos su ambición. En el origen del Estado Republicano se encuentra esta contradicción, que perseguirá quizá la historia de Chile: por un lado, patrióticos discursos en torno a la "valerosa sangre araucana"; por el otro, un comportamiento de enfrentamiento, discriminación y conflicto.

Durante a *guerra defensiva*, no início do séc. XVII, estimulada por figuras como o jesuíta Luís de Valdivia, desenhava-se um complexo processo de "reconhecimento" e de tentativas de dominação do povo mapuche. Numa perspectiva historiográfica crítica, este período pode elucidar tanto os *essencialismos* os quais estes foram vítimas outrora, como as permanências deste olhar rebaixador que potencialmente semeou a repressão estatal que hoje os acomete. Se os mapuches nunca foram vistos como senhores de si na política de "reconhecimento" e "diferenciação" ao longo do colonialismo, por que assim seriam vistos pelo Estado atualmente?

É bem verdade que os registros históricos apontam o jesuíta Valdivia como apoiante das ações que visavam o domínio espanhol sobre a sociedade mapuche; no entanto, o seu trabalho acaba por representar hoje um mapeamento da cosmovisão mapuche e da sua política face ao projeto colonial que se instaurava – demonstrando igualmente a resistência destes em defender o seu território, e a incapacidade do colonizador em perceber integralmente o "objeto" que desejava dominar.

À época de Valdivia a relação mapuche-espanhóis apresentava substanciais equívocos no reconhecimento dos primeiros. Pode-se dizer que pelas interpretações atuais dos escritos de Valdivia, tornava-se já evidente a impossibilidade da cultura mapuche coexistir com "noções" culturais exteriores, sendo previsível a reação destes aos elementos exógenos por meio da linguagem da resistência.

Em *Lengua Araucana*, publicado por Valdivia em 1606, fica claro que a motivação da resistência mapuche reside não só no desrespeito que o elemento externo implica à sua visão-de-mundo pela distinta percepção da *posse*, mas antes deixa registrada uma série de interpretações acerca do *mapuzugun*

marcadas pelo olhar literalmente colonial: os conceitos mapuches se distanciam muito da sua realidade pela forma em que são interpretados pelo jesuíta.

Ora, sendo o *mapuzugun* um sistema demonstrativo da cosmovisão mapuche, os equívocos da sua tradução não são fruto do acaso, tampouco necessariamente intencionais, mas antes de tudo são demonstrativos do (des)encontro de sistemas epistemologicamente tão distantes que a relação entre ambas as partes não poderia ser outra senão tendencialmente voltada à verticalização e ao conflito.<sup>4</sup>

É possível de se perguntar se não seria este mais um dos processos que incentivaram os *imaginários* do colonizador acerca dos povos originários. O enquadramento do *outro* e da forma como este vê o mundo diz respeito não só os valores de quem está acima numa relação vertical, mas serve também de estrutura "reguladora" da própria economia social, que passa então a ser baseada na naturalização das essências de tal verticalidade.

Ainda assim, esta *verticalidade* não define um modelo absoluto. Num contexto distinto (que desvela, porém, os possíveis papéis dos povos originários no projeto colonial), Taussig (1987) convida a um revisitar do colonialismo tomando por base as populações do vale de Sibundoy, nas cabeceiras do rio Putumayo (Andes Setentrionais), onde o conhecimento farmacopéico e práticas xamânicas baseadas na administração do *yagé* (ou *ayahuasca*) resultaram em inversões sumárias do papel de poder do colonizador sobre o colonizado. O poder colonial, desejoso da sedimentação do seu controle, viu na força e no castigo a implantação do seu sistema. A "moeda" desta economia era convincente: o *medo*. Ao mesmo tempo em que o *medo* corroeu as estruturas sociais alvo da sua investida, é com a mesma moeda, no entanto, que o colonizado vai encontrar, por vezes, a forma de fazer recuar o seu algoz.

Se o *imaginário colonial* europeu assentava na idéia do indígena como um selvagem desprovido de razão e apto, portanto, ao cometimento de desumanidades, é percorrendo o caminho inverso deste enquadramento do *outro* que os indígenas podiam lançar o "mal contra o seu feiticeiro": utilizando-se deste *imaginário* sobre o "desconhecido" é que o indígena podia implantar no colonizador a insegurança que ele mesmo acabava por criar. Eram, por vezes, nas mistificações dos papéis "desumanos" que lhes eram atribuídos que os indígenas conquistavam espaços de *negociação*.

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<sup>4</sup> Valdivia traduz *mapu* [ou terra] como *pátria*, palavra já dotada de ideologias que não correspondiam à forma de ver o mundo de acordo com as *leis mapuches*. Mesmo para os outros grupos presentes nas Américas, em países de colonização espanhola ou portuguesa, a palavra *pátria* fará sentido entre 100 e 200 anos após a publicação dos escritos de Valdivia, entre finais do séc. XVIII e início do séc. XIX; é neste período, em geral, que os contextos políticos e econômicos entre colônias e metrópoles desenrolam-se sob outros tensionamentos que não os presentes na relação mapuches-Espanha no séc. XVII. Valdivia interpreta de forma "distanciada da realidade" também os pronomes possessivos e frequentemente toma como exemplo frases que desvirtuam as mensagens que evidenciavam as relações pessoais e coletivas mapuches. Para mais, ver: Paillal, 2006: 28-30.

De fato, podemos afirmar que é recorrente nos estudos críticos pós-coloniais uma tendência à produção historiográfica que se baseie não só no reconhecimento das permanências contemporâneas das relações do colonialismo, mas também na revisão dos papéis sociais e políticos das partes envolvidas, desnaturalizando perspectivas estáticas e dicotômicas dos seus atores: o colonizador enquanto senhor absoluto de um lado, e o colonizado com seu tom passivo, de outro. Tais estudos nos ajudam a perceber as ambiguidades na história da colonização, as fissuras do processo de rebaixamento do *outro*, e nos permitem detectar as permanências dessa *colonialidade* no presente.

Reis e Silva (2009), por exemplo, revisitaram o período escravagista brasileiro e acabam por reunir documentos que apontaram para uma frequência muito acima do esperado de levantes dos *negros-escravos* face aos seus *senhores*. Estes levantes contrastam com o imaginário popular atual acerca do "escravo", que ao mesmo tempo dotado de artimanhas de "resistência" era também fruto de uma subalternização *bem-concluída*.

Provavelmente os fatores que contribuíram para uma contenção do despotismo dos *senhores de escravos* sobre a sua "mão-de-obra" tiveram origem na «negociação e conflito» – como dizem os autores – que caracteriza a polifonia da relação colonial face às realidades dicotômicas que se instalaram [e que perduram] com as *histórias únicas* (Chimamanda Adichie, 2009). A vantagem numérica sobre os *brancos* e outras estratégias baseadas no *imaginário colonial* acerca das práticas religiosas negras (interpretadas comumente como atos maléficos direcionados aos seus *senhores*), assim como a própria utilização das suas línguas ancestrais como forma a não serem percebidos foram, sem sombra de dúvida, meios de resistência e de inversões pontuais das relações de poder.

Quanto ao contexto chileno, não é difícil de se encontrar documentos históricos que relatam a "inferioridade" dos mapuches por parte dos membros da coroa espanhola ou, mais recentemente, do próprio Estado chileno. Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1831-1886), por exemplo, Senador, historiador e advogado defendia que o indígena:

[não era] sino un bruto indomable, enemigo de la civilización porque sólo adora todos los vicios en que vive sumergido, la ociosidad, la embriaguez, la mentira, la traición y todo ese conjunto de abominaciones que constituye la vida del salvaje.<sup>5</sup>

Essa dimensão marcada por pré-conceitos, que impôs aos mapuches um rebaixamento que perdura aos dias de hoje, cuja condição de *primitivos* impossibilitava a constituição de uma estrutura política, será colocada em causa por Menard e Pavez (2005). Ao estudarem o período compreendido entre o final do século XIX e início do século XX, os autores esclarecem como, de um modo geral, há um certo "silenciar" sobre esse momento histórico marcado, por um lado, por uma ofensiva do Estado chileno sobre o território mapuche com a política de parcelamento do solo e a posterior lei de desmembramento das suas comunidades; enquanto por outro lado este mesmo período retrata uma incrível capacidade de organização política mapuche com força para questionar o

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<sup>5</sup> In Tricot, 2009:183.

Estado, resultando na criação do *Congreso Araucano*, *Sociedad Mapuche de Protección Mutua* e da *Federación Araucana*.

Faz sentido, logo, interrogar se o reconhecimento histórico da organização política dos mapuches – com a sua força de intervenção – não seria um dos motivos para que se formasse um presente tão marcado de interdições estatais à coordenação do movimento mapuche.

Interessa-nos aqui perceber nesse processo histórico a situação política do povo mapuche e como esta foi diretamente refletida na decrescente legitimação dos mesmos como detentores de terra. A "terra" de *mapu* não indica somente a percepção mapuche do mundo, mas foi o epicentro das ameaças à sua identidade desde a empreitada colonial: a terra como desejo do *winka*, a perda da terra como perda da concepção de si.

Em carta datada de 1860, Mañil Huenu, líder mapuche, vem a informar as autoridades *criollas* acerca das consequências das práticas de compra e venda de terras, indicando o desagrado social que se sedimentava por meio desta ação:

"Nuestra ley es terminante, pues prohíbe toda venta de terrenos a españoles, bajo pena de muerte sin perjuicio de restituírnos el terreno". Estas mismas leyes solo facultan a los indios para vivir en sus posesiones durante su vida pasando estas a sus descendientes en la línea de varón, pudiendo poblarse cuando otros quieran permitiendo su extensión a los que lo soliciten, siendo de ese mapu, sin derecho a vender (in Pavez apud Córdova, 2011: 103).

Uma vez que a "terra" representava o modo mapuche de se estar no mundo, o parcelamento do seu território realizado pelo Estado não poderia ser outra coisa senão um duro golpe na organização dos mapuches. No entanto, é como resposta a este processo de fragmentação, expresso pela redução territorial do *wallmapu*, que: *la primera dirigencia mapuche posreduccional se criará en este contexto de crisis, caracterizado por el empobrecimiento, los abusos y sobre todo la pérdida de soberanía política* (Menard e Pavez, 2005: 212).

Assim, podemos dizer que se antes do movimento promovido pelo Estado com a *Pacificación de la Araucanía*, em 1861, os mapuches ainda possuíam parte relevante das suas terras – fonte de subsistência, mas também da sua própria identidade – as políticas promovidas desde o início do século XX e, principalmente, as (re)instauradas na década de 1990 evidenciaram o ápice de um crescente processo de saqueio do território dos povos originários. Não obstante, o que parece ser um processo político e evidentemente econômico "recente", acaba por retratar as estruturas de poder há muito desenvolvidas pelas tecnologias do passado colonial.

Enquanto Taussig traz-nos alguns detalhes da economia colonial, provavelmente tão próprios aos desencontros interpretativos no imaginário espanhol acerca dos mapuches descritos por Valdivia, é no Chile atual que a transposição temporal de tais *desencontros* parece provocar reproduções de imaginários e de medos. Os termos coloniais utilizados na qualificação do povo mapuche não diferem sensivelmente dos empregues atualmente pelo Estado e pela sociedade chilena.

A imagem recorrente dos mapuches trazida tanto pelo poder público quanto pela mídia retrata um grupo social marcado pela *barbárie*, que em razão de uma índole guerreira é naturalmente *insubordinado* e, logo, *desordeiro*. Tal imagem do *guerreiro* perpassa o discurso não só do nosso entrevistado, mas também dos textos historiográficos escritos por pesquisadores mapuches que veem nesse *ethos* de *guerreiro* uma característica positiva, a ressaltar a coragem dos seus antepassados e as valências deste caráter como instrumento na luta atual contra a perda do território.

Não é mera coincidência que as repercussões [inter]nacionais dos não-mapuches face à utilização/desapropriação dos seus territórios seja contida e/ou inexistente. Assim como o mapuche foi definido como inferior desde a colonização espanhola ao surgimento do Estado chileno, ficaram na sua carne e na sua cultura as marcas de um rumo arbitrário à civilização. O resultado é um efeito menos estarrecedor na sociedade em geral da desterritorialização mapuche do que se o mesmo estivesse ocorrendo com outros grupos nacionais. Essa lógica de apartação do povo mapuche remete ao que Santos (2009) define por "*fascismo do apartheid social*":

Trata-se da segregação social dos excluídos através de uma cartografia urbana dividida em zonas selvagens e civilizadas. As zonas selvagens urbanas são as zonas do Estado de natureza hobbesiano, zonas de guerra civil interna como em muitas megacidades em todo o sul global. As zonas civilizadas são as zonas do contrato social e vivem sob a constante ameaça das zonas selvagens. (...) A divisão entre zonas selvagens e zonas civilizadas está a transformar-se num critério geral de sociabilidade, um novo espaço-tempo hegemônico que atravessa todas as relações sociais, econômicas, políticas e culturais, e que por isso é comum à acção estatal e à acção não estatal (Santos, 2009: 37)

No decorrer dos séculos deste *silenciar* do povo mapuche, entre o jesuíta Valdivia, o Senador Mackenna e tantos outros que nestes tempos passaram, fica o que parece ser a marca do presente: a do crescimento da luta mapuche, o recuperar da sua história e da sua cultura, e o desejo de combater as *permanências* dos projetos que os quiseram subalternizar. *J.*, por exemplo, encontra no passado heróis mapuches e batalhas ganhas pela bravura dos seus guerreiros,<sup>6</sup> como a *batalla de Curalaba* [ou batalha da pedra partida, do *mapuzugun*], ocorrida em 1598, e que segundo a "memória mapuche" representa uma das maiores derrotas militares sofridas pelas investidas espanholas na tomada dos territórios mapuche.

No passado, pois, para um mapuche, não está somente a liga que constrói a coletividade, mas parece indicar que é por meio da memória dos tempos remotos que se concretiza um presente, assim como se dimensiona as possibilidades de futuro.

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<sup>6</sup> O próprio *J.* nos confirma que de acordo com a «forma mapuche de ver o mundo», a identidade do indivíduo e da coletividade passa quase sempre pela evocação de uma história comum do passado.

## **Estado de exceção e a criminalização dos mapuches**

Uma das formas encontrada pelo Estado Chileno em apoio as grandes empresas florestais para conter os movimentos reivindicatórios dos mapuches foi o uso do Poder Judiciário com a abertura de múltiplos processos criminais.

Tais ações se inserem em um processo global onde a perspectiva "punitiva" cresce em detrimento das políticas sociais. Muitos são os autores que vêm se debruçando sobre esse cenário global onde se pode perceber que a "crise" do chamado *Estado de bem-estar social* despontou no chamado *Estado penal* ou *Estado de exceção*.

Um autor atento a essas transformações em caráter global do *crescimento punitivo* é Loïc Wacquant, que analisa o aumento da população carcerária a partir do ideário hegemônico neoliberal. Para o autor, há uma relação entre o alargamento da pobreza mundial e a ampliação do papel *punitivo* do Estado. Mesmo que concentrado quanto a este fenômeno nos EUA e nos países que compõem a União Europeia, os seus dados são reveladores de uma dinâmica também visível na América Latina, desvelando a conexão entre a hegemonia neoliberal e o crescimento da *indústria da segurança*.

Importa mencionar que o crescimento da população carcerária não representa na mesma proporção um aumento da criminalidade. Isto apenas é o indicativo desse processo de intolerância ao pequeno delito que irá, nessas duas últimas décadas de gestão neoliberal, lotar as carceragens.

como prova temos o aumento rápido e contínuo do número de prisioneiros a um ano relacionado com o volume de crimes cometidos durante o ano correspondente: este indicador de 'punibilidade' passa de 21 detentos em 1 mil infrações entre 1975 para 37 em 1 mil em meados dos anos 90 (...). O fato de o crescimento deste indicador ser nitidamente mais forte que o índice de aprisionamento relacionado com o número dos crimes violentos (275% contra 150%) confirma que a maior punibilidade do Estado americano visa primeiramente os pequenos delinqüentes de direito comum. O que mudou neste período não foi a criminalidade, mas a atitude dos poderes públicos em relação às classes pobres, consideradas como o centro irradiador do crime (Wacquant, 2002: 19-20).

No caso chileno, o uso de uma *lei antiterrorista* – cuja legislação remonta ao período da ditadura Pinochet – causa mais perplexidade: trata-se de tipificar as ações de contestação do povo mapuche, que luta pelo reconhecimento do seu território e pela manutenção das reservas naturais expropriadas pelas empresas florestais. O conflito com o *setor privado* é visto como ameaçam a segurança do Estado.

Como lembra-nos Raúl Zarzuri Cortés, o período posterior a derrubada de Pinochet foi marcado por processos de repressão sem a barbárie imposta no período da ditadura: "a exceção é constituída pela perseguição a que se tem visto submetido o povo mapuche, particularmente seus dirigentes, os quais têm sido fustigados, perseguidos e acusados de terroristas" (2008: 112).

Assim, observamos em escala global uma série de recrudescimentos das políticas criminais que atingem de maneira mais visível aos movimentos sociais organizados, em especial os que atuam na reivindicação do acesso democrático

à terra, ao território, à água, às riquezas naturais, enfim, bens cada vez mais cobiçados pelas empresas transnacionais.

O povo mapuche passa, então, a ser visto como *inimigo* do Estado e responde a ações penais por meio de uma legislação do *regime de exceção*. Pode ser que essa repressão aos mapuches tenha inspiração em termos globais – onde após o 11 de setembro há uma série de medidas mais repressivas às organizações sociais em nome da segurança nacional – mas funda-se também como um reflexo das especificidades da história chilena e da própria identidade mapuche – que se construiu historicamente desde *tempos imemoriais* a partir de enfrentamentos seja com o colonizador espanhol, seja posteriormente com o Estado nacional chileno.

Esse processo de sedimentação de uma ordem global que comporta cada vez mais nichos e resulta em maiores "rupturas" com conceitos legal-constitucional vem sendo amplamente analisado pelo filósofo italiano Giorgio Agamben, para quem estaríamos vivendo uma permanência do *Estado de exceção* (2004).

Para Agamben, a crise pós 11 de setembro trouxe para o cotidiano dos governos a implementação permanente do chamado *Estado de exceção*. De um modo geral, os países tributários da tradição canônico-romana possuem em sua Carta Constitucional autorização normativa para a implementação do *Estado de exceção*, que significa uma "suspensão temporária" dos direitos e das garantias do cidadão. Como regra, o *Estado de exceção* se configura como um exercício temporalmente determinado, que só encontra razão de ser diante da ameaça à segurança nacional:

o totalitarismo moderno pode ser definido. Nesse sentido, como a instauração, por meio de estado de exceção, de uma guerra civil legal que permite a eliminação física não só dos adversários políticos, mas também de categorias inteiras de cidadãos que, por qualquer razão, pareçam não integráveis ao sistema político (Agamben, 2004: 13).

Logo, a discussão central está na transformação desse *Estado de exceção* em "novo paradigma" quanto ao funcionamento das instituições jurídicas que visam a normatização do campo social e político. Como consequência, observa-se uma série de *suspensões legais* que vão impondo paulatinamente um Estado totalitário de supressão das garantias e dos direitos.

Nossa hipótese, em respeito ao Chile, é a de que tais nichos do *Estado de exceção* evidenciam-se quando do outro lado na relação com o Estado estão os mapuches. Por sua vez, estes acabam por vivenciar os processos criminais segundo parâmetros simbólicos muito semelhantes aos do período inquisitorial – como veremos mais adiante.

Neste sentido, não é mera coincidência que tenha surgido, após o 11 de setembro de 2001, uma série de trabalhos teóricos defendendo a tese do *direito penal de exceção* ou *direito penal do inimigo*<sup>7</sup> que, em apartada síntese,

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<sup>7</sup> Para mais acerca deste tema, com uma dessas obras que irão reverter os direitos conquistados em termos penais, rompendo com a tradição iluminista que buscou gestar uma racionalidade à pena, ver: Jackobs (2005).

significa dizer que determinados indivíduos que respondem a uma ação penal não gozarão das mesmas "garantias constitucionais" do processo. Visto que as suas ações delituosas representam uma agressão a normatividade, não poderão, portanto, serem beneficiários da norma que infringiram. Trata-se de uma simetria com o conceito de *terrorismo*.

A tese de Günther Jakobs, por exemplo, orienta-se em três pontos centrais: primeiro, torna-se necessário antecipar a punição do inimigo; segundo, é preciso reconhecer a necessidade de se romper com o primado iluminista da proporcionalidade da pena – ao mesmo tempo em que propõe uma relativização e/ou supressão de certas garantias processuais; e, terceiro, a criação de leis severas direcionadas a determinados setores sociais: terroristas, delinquentes organizados, traficantes, criminosos econômicos, dentre outros.

Para Jakobs o "inimigo" é alguém que, ao romper com as regras de determinado Estado, "não pode" ter o mesmo tratamento destinado ao cidadão, sendo desprovido do benefício do conceito de "pessoa". Há distinção, portanto, entre o *cidadão*, que ao cometer um delito será capturado pelo Direito Penal, e o *inimigo* do Estado e da sociedade a ser responsabilizado por outro estatuto punitivo. As perguntas então são: (I) quais são os parâmetros que definem o inimigo do Estado? E (II) quais são as ideologias que compõem tais parâmetros?

Sob essa ótica é que ocorrem os processos criminais contra os mapuches. Além do uso de testemunhas não identificadas, criando limites ao princípio da ampla defesa, os processos têm decretação de *segredo de justiça*. Trata-se de uma "medida de exceção" no mundo jurídico, que é marcado pelo conceito de publicidade de seus atos. No entanto, denota-se uma elevada frequência nos decretos de *segredo de justiça* pelo judiciário chileno quanto aos processos em que os mapuches são réus. Em boa parte destes casos, o processo encontra-se ainda na fase preliminar, ou seja, antes do oferecimento da denúncia. Como resultado, temos prisões cautelares que devido ao *segredo de justiça* levaram certa defensora pública a manifestar-se em audiência: *Esto implica que, en la práctica mis defendidos no tengan defensa, en este caso mis defendidos han tenido menos derechos que cualquier delincuente, e incluso menos que personas acusadas de narcotráfico* (Seguel, 2007:106).

Assim, a argumentação contemporânea de que haveria uma fragilidade do "sistema punitivo" diante do combate às ameaças cotidianas ao *cidadão de bem*, acaba por sedimentar a idéia de *inimigo*, para quem as regras garantidas nos marcos constitucionais não são válidas. *Estes*, não são sujeitos de direito:

Tales no-personas son ideológicamente consideradas en los tiempos presentes no únicamente desde el conocimiento vulgar o popular, sino también identificadas (cuando en verdad no lo son) por las instancias de los sistemas penales, como los estereotipos de la criminalidad considerada como la más grave: tráfico de drogas prohibidas, bandas organizadas para la realización de actos terroristas, conductas sumamente violentas contra la propiedad y/o la vida humana (Bergalli, 2008: 13).

Agamben nos alerta para a premência do *Estado de exceção* na medida em que grandes volumes de grupos e indivíduos são transformados em "inimigos do



Estado", ou seja: serão compreendidos como uma ameaça à segurança nacional. De fato, o que se observa é uma flexibilização, ou melhor, uma absorção da linha divisória que demarca as diferenças entre o que seria a *segurança nacional* – enquanto objeto de proteção por leis especiais – e a *segurança pública* – abrangida pelo estatuto penal ordinário. O conceito de *segurança pública* acaba, como consequência, por perder-se em nome de uma ampliação punitiva.

Bergalli, por sua vez, ressalta o caráter eminentemente «ideológico» nas origens da imagem da "periculosidade", que acaba potencializando a exclusão social de determinados grupos. Nesse aspecto, entender a criminalização vivenciada pelos mapuches revela-nos pistas do processo de ideologização contemporâneo da luta pela terra. O direito penal assume, com perfeição, tal caráter de antagonismo de classe, pois desempenha mais do que qualquer outro ramo do direito a função de controle social. Esta é a razão pela qual se faz necessário melhor compreender a naturalização seletiva das ações entendidas como crime.

Em uma análise que compreende o *poder punitivo* através da crítica do *poder soberano*, Zaffaroni (2007) busca entender como ao longo da história o *poder soberano* gestou a categoria *inimigo*, retirando-lhe qualquer sentido e reservando-lhe a condição de uma "existência eliminável":

O inimigo declarado (*hostis judicatus*) configura o núcleo do tronco dos *dissidentes* ou inimigos abertos do poder de plantão, do qual participarão os inimigos políticos puros de todos os tempos. Trata-se de *inimigos declarados*, não porque declarem ou manifestem sua animosidade, mas sim porque o poder os *declara* como tais: não se declaram a si mesmos, mas antes são declarados pelo poder (Zaffaroni, 2007: 23).

Zaffaroni aponta para a "permanência histórica" da categoria *inimigo*, que visto como um "elemento perigoso", simboliza também a justificativa para a fissura no tratamento do *indivíduo* rumo às contenções estratégicas do *poder soberano*:

na medida em que se trata um ser humano como algo meramente perigoso e, por conseguinte, necessitado de pura contenção, dele é retirado ou negado o seu caráter de pessoa, ainda que certos direitos (por exemplo, fazer testamento, contrair matrimônio, reconhecer filhos etc.) lhe sejam reconhecidos. Não é a quantidade de direitos de que alguém é privado que lhe anula a sua condição de pessoa, mas sim a própria razão em que essa privação de direitos se baseia, isto é, quando alguém é privado de algum direito apenas porque é considerado pura e simplesmente como um *ente perigoso* (Zaffaroni, 2007: 18).

Assim, a "política de combate" ao *inimigo* do Estado passa pelo processo de desumanização do *outro*, pela sua estigmatização e/ou barbarização. Tal "tendência" amplia-se no caso dos mapuches, em especial por se tratar de um povo que busca se estabelecer em contraponto à nação chilena: autonomia do povo mapuche [*wallmapu tañi kizungünewün*], refortalecimento do *mapuzugun*, legitimação do território como forma a reviver a sua cultura, dentre outras questões que necessitariam maior aprofundamento.

O contexto mapuche impõe maiores debates acerca dos conflitos instaurados pela emergência Estado-Nação na América Latina face às políticas daí derivadas para os povos originários. Este passado parece essencial para a compreensão

dos conflitos contemporâneos, sobretudo no que tange aos discursos de criminalização destes últimos por parte do Estado.

Essa dimensão do *ente perigoso* será adotada pela mídia e apropriada pelo governo chileno já desde os primeiros anos após a independência da coroa espanhola. O jornal *El Mercurio*, fundado em 1827 pelo pai do Senador Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna – anteriormente citado pela *bestialidade* que atribuía ao povo mapuche – já nas suas primeiras edições fertilizou o imaginário chileno a respeito dos *bárbaros*.

A partir do ideário de *guerreiro*, marca da própria identidade mapuche, ampliava-se o discurso da periculosidade desde o início do século XIX, o que parece em *voga* tanto nas atuais edições do *El Mercurio* quanto dos outros jornais e na televisão chilena. É este imaginário que compõe seguramente a percepção rebaixada do povo mapuche e que, em certa medida, justifica por parte do Estado moderno chileno uma repressão violenta.

Esta é também a perspectiva de José Bengoa (2009), que ao resgatar o conflito pela recuperação das terras ancestrais mapuches, alerta para o papel desempenhado pela mídia contemporânea na construção discursiva do conflito mapuche associado a outras realidades tidas como um perigo à nação:

El corresponsal del Diario El Mercurio habló de un nuevo Chiapas en el sur de Chile. Los fantasmas recorrieron el imaginario nacional una vez más, y en Santiago tocaron campanas a vuelo, anunciando una nueva "insurrección araucana". Las mismas campanas coloniales que por siglos habían visto venir al enemigo desde el sur.

Embora não se possa afirmar que tal construção não seja isenta de intencionalidade, fica ao menos latente que a referência da mobilização indígena pelo reconhecimento de seu território a Chiapas acaba por delegar ao povo mapuche vínculos *perigosos* para a segurança do Estado. É daí, talvez, que se clarifique à luz das teses de Agamben e Zaffaroni os processos criminais a que lideranças mapuches respondem por terrorismo.

Todavia, ainda fica por aprofundar as permanências da ideologia colonial que atravessam a sociedade e o Estado chilenos, processos que atribuíram valores históricos ao povo mapuche e que parecem ser hoje a essência que legitima a sua criminalização.

### **Os resquícios coloniais e as "linhas abissais"**

Um dos aspectos no processo de criminalização dos mapuches é o uso das imagens de *periculosidade* amplamente divulgadas nos noticiários. Há uma sedimentação no cotidiano de uma valoração negativa dos atributos que acompanham a identidade mapuche. De fato, o uso de termos como *terroristas* e *desordeiros* nos faz pensar o quanto de resquício do pensamento colonial se faz presente hoje ao ponto de justificar, ou mesmo legitimar, os processos de repressão violenta aos mapuches.

Seria esse olhar rebaixador da identidade mapuche um resíduo da lógica colonial? Trata-se de uma reverberação da essência colonial que outrora impôs ao *outro* uma não-existência que justificava a sua eliminação?

Tal perspectiva foi analisada por Tzvetan Todorov em sua obra *A Conquista da América* onde é apresentada uma análise fascinante sobre as modificações dos olhares do colonizador diante do ser-colonizado. Não se tratam de uma transformação insignificante, mas do enunciado de um projeto que estava a nascer: trata-se das expressões próprias da gestão política da coroa espanhola que se reflete no olhar do Colombo, que passa "(...) do assimilacionismo, que implica uma igualdade de princípio, à ideologia escravagista e, portanto, à afirmação da inferioridade dos índios" (Todorov, 2003:64).

Inicialmente, há certa fascinação do Colombo quando este se depara com um modelo de organização tão distinto como o encontrado, como a inexistência da propriedade privada – o que fazia com que frequentemente houvesse o uso compartilhado das mercadorias desde as mais triviais. Uma vez que os limites impostos pela noção da propriedade do lar não integravam a cultura indígena, tal *habitus* será entendido por Colombo como *virtude*, uma demonstração dentre outras de uma índole solidária, ou, no estilo da tradição canônico-romana: um comportamento não avaro. Ele passará, pouco tempo depois, a compreender esse mesmo *habitus* como uma prova cabal de que se tratava do estabelecimento de contato com seres dotados duma índole insidiosa, voltada para a transgressão.

Para Todorov essa "alteração" do olhar do Colombo representa uma incapacidade de percepção do *outro*, cujos modos de vida, os valores e os hábitos serão rebaixados diante do modelo entendido como universal e racional. Essa relação de dominação do *outro*, entendido como um *selvagem*, um *bárbaro*, justificou progressivamente as ações de controle das mais violentas. Tratou-se, desde então, de uma vida com ausência de qualquer significado sob a perspectiva do colonizador.

A decorrência de tal conceituação está em perceber no *outro* a origem da violência, isentando a ação do "eu". O próprio Colombo narra a punição aplicada para o índio que era pego a roubar: "Castigai-os cortando-lhes o nariz e as orelhas, pois são partes do corpo que não se pode esconder" (2003:55). Este cenário torna-se ainda mais complexo ao pensarmos que a "cultura" e o modelo de organização social dos índios, conforme analisou Todorov, não assimilavam as barreiras da propriedade privada. Se por um lado o "civilizado" punia o "bárbaro", este, por sua vez, nem mesmo poderia compreender a essência da sua pena e, deste modo, a violência da ação punitiva torna-se duplamente hedionda. Aos autóctones restava a vivência, de entre outras coisas, do espanto.

Essa dimensão relacional, onde para a construção da própria identidade terá o *outro* sua existência rebaixada, ou mesmo, suprimida, para que a identidade do "eu" se sobreponha, será analisada por Santos (2006) ao cotejar a relação entre Colonizador-colonizado.

Para Boaventura de Sousa Santos o "pensamento abissal" marca-se por uma relação hierarquizada profundamente assimétrica onde o "um", dominante (colonizador), é incapaz de perceber o "outro", dominado (colonizado). Há uma dimensão violenta em tal relação propugnada por Santos, pois revela a necessidade de rebaixamento ou mesmo de eliminação do padrão comportamental tanto daquele entendido como inferior – por parte do dominante – quanto daquele entendido como colonizador – por parte do dominado.

Certamente, é no rebaixamento existencial desse ser-colonizado que o exercício de poder pode ser estabelecido. Não se trata apenas de gerar possibilidades de mão-de-obra, como no caso do sistema escravagista, mas também de propiciar a absorção do ideário do colonizador como sendo o paradigma único a ser adotado por todos os seres viventes.

Em seu texto "Entre Próspero e Caliban", Santos analisa essa relação assimétrica a partir da peça *A Tempestade*, de Shakespeare, e aponta para as impossibilidades do convívio entre perspectivas tão distintas num único espaço: se para Próspero, Caliban era o ser horrendo e repulsivo, cuja característica principal era a indolência e a preguiça; para Caliban, por sua vez, Próspero nada mais era do que um usurpador nato, a quem "a peste vermelha" deveria acometer.

De fato, é de se perguntar o quanto há de verídico na dimensão repulsiva de Caliban, e se esta não seria em verdade o reflexo de um imaginário cultural, estético e social ou ainda o próprio limite da visão de mundo que cerca e limita o colonizador.

Assim, trata-se de estabelecer uma existência condicionada ao *outro* através da visão de mundo que será imposta por aquele que é dominante. Caliban não é visto, ou ao menos entendido em sua integralidade, mas antes é ressignificado a partir do poder que o define, que nomeia aquilo que o colonizador "entende por ser Caliban". A identidade de Caliban será então construída pelos (pré)conceitos que o olhar do colonizador traz na sua relação com a diferença.

A «linha abissal», portanto, pode ser interpretada justamente como resultado do "privilegio" de alguém ou de algum grupo que logre uma situação superior para denominar e definir outros grupos que, enquanto subjugados, perpetuam e fortalecem a própria estrutura de poder na qual foram inseridos.

Essa dimensão do «pensamento abissal», marca do pensamento colonial, como exercício de força e de dominação faz-se presente no período contemporâneo quanto aos processos de estigmatização e, por que não dizer, de *demonização* do povo mapuche. Afinal, como nos fala Boaventura Santos: "se o outro é tão profunda e completamente construído como um objecto desqualificado, não lhe é deixada qualquer possibilidade de se requalificar pela resistência" (Santos, 2006: 220).

Um dos nossos entrevistados no Chile, o Padre Fernando Díaz, professor e teólogo da Universidad Católica de Temuco, apontava para essa perspectiva histórica onde a herança de um antepassado indígena é vista ainda no Chile

como causa justificadora para o atraso econômico. Assim, esse exercício de projeção do passado indígena e *criollo* serve de argumentação do *atraso*, do não-moderno, expressa o quão tênue são as «linhas abissais» analisadas por Santos.

Essa será também a percepção do professor de história e militante da causa mapuche, Bóris Ramírez, para quem a perspectiva colonial se faz presente nos processos criminais:

O racismo é uma coisa bem séria no Chile. Custa muito reconhecer a mestiçagem, e há muita discriminação contra peruanos e equatorianos. É uma contradição porque na escola se usa muito a história dos mapuche como um povo guerreiro que resistiu ao império espanhol, mas, por outro lado, essa imagem fica só no passado. Hoje, os mapuche são apontados como bêbados, vadios e sequer são reconhecidos como cidadãos chilenos, uma vez que qualquer ação deles não é julgada pela lei ordinária, e sim pela Lei de Segurança Nacional (*apud* Tavares, 2009).

### **Estado de exceção e a Lei de Segurança Nacional no Chile**

Analisar o processo que os mapuches estão vivenciando no Chile obriga-nos a refletir o quanto de fato rompeu-se com a dimensão do regime ditatorial de Pinochet no processo de democratização, principalmente quando em causa se encontram movimentos reivindicatórios. E mais, desafia-nos a entender o papel desempenhado pelo judiciário nessa conjuntura de criminalização.

Raúl Cortés (2008) ao analisar esse fenômeno especificamente no Chile fala-nos dos muitos movimentos que estão respondendo ações penais. Ainda que tais ações não respeitem necessariamente a Lei de Segurança Nacional, não deixam de ser reveladoras do tratamento que é dado hoje aos movimentos de reivindicação.

Para o autor, se foi possível se vislumbrar na década de noventa no Chile certa "relação de passividade", o novo milênio trouxe consigo uma ampliação dos movimentos e, em particular, uma ação mais ativa da juventude, alvo de ações de controle, como a legislação que reduziu a idade penal para quatorze anos, e as mobilizações dos mapuches:

Um dado não menos importante nesse processo é que, atualmente o Estado tem que enfrentar, no âmbito do resguardo da ordem – uma das suas funções principais -, um discurso no qual aparece com essa capacidade reduzida. Aparece também como incapaz de dar proteção contra as inseguranças que se apresentam, questão que possibilita a construção de um discurso relacionado com a perda de autoridade por parte do Estado.

Uma pergunta surge de tudo isso: Qual é a forma que o Estado, ou melhor, certo tipo de Estado, tem para recuperar sua legitimidade, sua autoridade? A resposta mais simples é apelar para a proteção, instalando um discurso protetor, que anda de mãos dadas com políticas repressivas mais duras. É o que leva à criminalização de certos setores da população. (Cortés, 2008: 117).

O uso da Lei de Segurança Nacional para criminalizar os mapuches foi objeto de diversos protestos internacionais. Pode-se dizer se tratar de uma medida excessiva para um conflito que expressa a busca pelo reconhecimento do

"direito ancestral à terra", sustentado na Convenção da OIT 169, ratificada em 2008 pelo Chile. A Convenção lhes garante a própria noção de autodeterminação. Assim o que os mapuches querem é a efetivação dos seus direitos no plano cultural, social e político.

Há um reconhecimento por parte dos estudiosos da questão indígena chilena dos atrasos na implementação dos direitos que a Convenção 169 da OIT estabelece. Em grande parte isto se deve aos limites impostos pela *Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena* (CONADI), órgão responsável pela política indígena no Chile, que não reconhece os direitos à autonomia e:

los sistemas de justicia indígena – ni derechos territoriales – tales como aquellos sobre los recursos naturales -. Por lo mismo, sus contenidos están muy por debajo de los estándares establecidos en los instrumentos internacionales que les son aplicables, entre ellos el Convenio 169 (Aylwyn, 2009: 05).<sup>8</sup>

A ratificação por parte do governo chileno da Convenção não se traduziu em políticas concretas para a sua efetivação, em decorrência também dos limites que a Carta Constitucional chilena possui para reconhecer a autodeterminação dos povos originários. Esse conflito de *normas* acabou por adereçar o conflito *político*, pois cientes da importância paradigmática da convenção 169, os mapuches passam a reivindicar a sua concretização.

Ao nos conceder a entrevista, **J.**, apesar da sua juventude, fala com segurança da importância da Convenção para a luta do reconhecimento não só do território, como da cultura mapuche e do quanto a Convenção coloca em debate as políticas assimilacionistas que até então foram adotadas pelos sucessivos governos. Para **J.** essas políticas representam sucessivas tentativas de *apagamento* ou *branqueamento* da história mapuche em detrimento da (re)criação da identidade nacional chilena.

De fato, o governo chileno não só não efetiva a Convenção como irá promover processos que remontam ao período inquisitorial na tipificação dos mapuches em terroristas. Em 2006, a Federação Internacional de Direitos Humanos (FIDH), uma entidade que reúne uma série de Organizações Não Governamentais de defesa dos Direitos Humanos, fundada em 1922, lança seu relatório sobre os processos criminais e a repressão vivida pelo povo mapuche.

Neste relatório fica latente o fato de que esses processos criminais são marcados pela ruptura com o Estado Democrático e de Direito ao estabelecer como regra a "supressão das garantias processuais" dos sistemas acusatórios:

o processo judicial seguido contra os imputados no caso Poluco Pidenco revestiu-se de características similares ao caso do longko na aplicação da legislação antiterrorista chilena: prisão preventiva prolongada; segredo durante a etapa de investigação; e uso extensivo da figura das testemunhas protegidas ou 'sem rosto'. No curso do processo, a defesa denunciou uma série de irregularidades que, em sua opinião, limitaram substantivamente a capacidade processual de seus defendidos. Particularmente denunciou-se que as provas apresentadas durante o julgamento diferem

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<sup>8</sup> Para outras análises acerca da questão indígena e, especificamente, sobre os mapuches e a Convenção 169 da OIT ver: Fajardo, 2009.

substancialmente daquelas apresentadas durante a investigação; a omissão de valoração da prova apresentada pela defesa durante o julgamento sem que fosse desestimada; os pagamentos realizados a algumas das testemunhas protegidas que participaram no julgamento; a falta de imparcialidade do tribunal julgador, que copiou um dos considerandos da sentença de um caso julgado anteriormente pelo mesmo tribunal; e a falta de um recurso adequado de revisão da sentença condenatória 132, entre outros (Cortés, 2008:124).

De fato, a Lei de Segurança Nacional não permite apenas no campo processual a ruptura com direitos. Uma das suas previsões é o uso das forças armadas com o objetivo de retomar a chamada ordem pública. Assim, o que vem ocorrendo no Chile em termos de repressão ao povo mapuche é um atentado aos direitos humanos.

Não são poucas as denúncias de "militarização do conflito" aonde o uso da violência vem sendo adotado como forma de "desmobilizar" o movimento mapuche. Tais atos remontam ao período da ditadura de Pinochet.

Um dos relatos, objeto de denúncia internacional, ocorreu no Dia Internacional da Mulher Indígena em 5 de setembro de 2009, quando policiais invadiram o território Trapilhue Mahuidache, a 15 quilômetros de Temuco, e agrediram e prenderam Inicha Curín, Clorinda y Bernardita Neculmán, Rita Ancao y Mercedes Loncón. Inicha, de 85 anos de idade, foi golpeada e arrastada pelo chão. Agrava o fato quando se sabe que, conforme denúncia do sítio eletrônico de mídia independente, o CMI Brasil:

fueron llevados , también al cuartel maloliente y frio en noches de 0°C , al menos por 24 horas, para ser luego presentados a un igualmente indigno tribunal, los mapuche Renato Marivil, Juan Carlos Huentemil, Segundo Huaiquimil y Gabriel Lemunao. Allí serán formalizados por el delito de "no respetar la ley", aquella ley que es impuesta por la fuerza de los cañones y los mauser desde hace unos ciento veinte años hasta hoy. Los detenidos están heridos por balines y golpes policiales y según relataron testigos, a la anciana se le arrancó parte de su cabello, reeditando una práctica de militares "pacificadores" que parecía olvidada (CMI,2009).

Da repressão não escaparam nem mesmo as crianças mapuches que acabam vivenciando nos acampamentos – frequentemente invadidos pelos *carabineros* – constantes ataques com explosivos. A documentarista Elena Varela, que obteve em 2010 financiamento para realizar um documentário sobre o conflito mapuche, acompanhou diversas operações dos órgãos de segurança. Elena narra a própria detenção de 24 horas, na qual os *carabineiros* lhe tomaram as imagens registradas e todo o material até então acumulado – negaram-lhe inclusive o direito de se comunicar por telefone com o seu advogado.

Os constantes abusos por parte dos órgãos de segurança e a leniência do governo diante dos ataques aos direitos do povo mapuche, fizeram com que 55 presos políticos mapuches entrassem em greve de fome para impedir as suas transferências para presídios em locais distantes das suas famílias e das suas comunidades.

A greve surtiu efeito, evitando tais transferências, mas as garantias processuais e a não tipificação dos mapuches em "terrorismo" ainda hoje é uma incógnita. Em setembro de 2010, o presidente do Chile, Sebastián Piñera assinou um

projeto-lei que modificará a *lei antiterrorista*. No entanto, muitos dirigentes mapuches não viram com animação tais modificações por as entenderem irrisórias e não oferecem garantias de que as mobilizações reivindicatórias mapuches – bem como de outros movimentos sociais – estariam fora do enquadramento legal.

De fato, no início do ano de 2011 Piñera utiliza-se uma vez mais da Lei de Segurança. Ele ameaça com o uso das forças militares o movimento de consumidores contra o aumento do preço do gás. Fica então a sensação, como temia o povo mapuche, de que pouca coisa mudará para o estabelecimento de padrões democráticos no que diz respeito às questões dos povos originários.

## Conclusão

O rumo está tomado no movimento mapuche e o Chile é hoje, mais do que ontem, o palco de novas possibilidades que no decorrer da história poderão tornar-se sinônimo de apenas *mais uma* tentativa, ou que poderão, de forma prática, indicar novas concepções do convívio da diferença e do respeito à vida e à natureza.

O desafio que se coloca contemporaneamente para os chamados Estados-Nação está em serem capazes de oferecer uma plataforma de direitos que assegure aos povos originários o reconhecimento da sua autonomia como reivindicada pela Convenção 169 da OIT. Podemos, assim, nos perguntar tal qual os mapuches se perguntam: "o que é a democracia?" e, conseqüentemente "a quem ela serve?". Talvez a democracia esteja mais próxima ao sistema dito "tradicional" mapuche do que o Estado chileno parece oferecer à diversidade presente no seu território.

Se, por um lado, Matías Catrileo "caiu" face a esta relação assimétrica entre os direitos das elites e dos interesses econômicos das transnacionais, por outro lado, a sua frase "Não somos chilenos, somos Mapuches!" inspira o surgimento de muitos outros jovens militantes cansados de estar a espera de uma solução vinda do próprio Estado, como nos mostra *peñi J*.

Mas a questão que perdura é "como?". Como lograr uma mudança diante de um poder tão tentacular, tão densamente constituído de discursos convincentes às grandes massas [como o do *desenvolvimento econômico* na Araucanía, para legitimar a exploração selvagem dos recursos naturais], tão fragmentador e epidérmico e que, não obstante, preserva um tom senhorial pronunciado na legitimidade de nomear o *outro*, de definir o que ele necessita e como necessita?

É bem verdade que o movimento mapuche – por motivos diversos – encontra-se em um momento de debilidade em termos de organização e meios de atuação. Ainda são poucos os apoios fixos que isentam o movimento de preocupações com infraestrutura; e ao que parece a própria incorporação das linguagens do Estado, sobretudo no aparato jurídico, ainda está por acontecer. Portanto, a inversão dos vetores de força que os mapuches sofrem em decorrência desta linguagem legitimada está longe de ser alcançada.



Mas, como é latente, somente agora uma nova leva de jovens mapuches buscam uma organização do movimento e a recuperação da língua e aspectos culturais que a geração anterior, por *abatimento* ou *convencimento*, deixou muitas vezes de transmitir. Como é sabido, há muito pouco tempo a "vergonha" social da ancestralidade mapuche resultava em inúmeros pedidos judiciais para a alteração do nome mapuche para outro de origem espanhola. O motivo: tentativas desesperadas de escapar do preconceito. Mas não seria este preconceito uma reverberação do *valor* dos indígenas desde o período colonial até a construção de uma identidade nacional chilena voltada aos valores dos então ex-colonizadores?

O fato extraordinário é que deste contexto emana um caráter de força. É justamente de uma geração cansada e empobrecida pela retirada do seu meio mais elementar de subsistência, nos anos 1990, e do esmagamento da sua "cultura", que surge uma revigorada geração seguinte: esta vê na reconstrução dos modos de vida ancestrais a bandeira da sua luta. Muitos jovens mapuches estão estudando o *mapuzugun*, recuperando a sua religiosidade/espiritualidade, elementos estes que muitas vezes não lhes foram passados pelas mesmas motivações que originaram tantas trocas de nomes mapuches. Nosso próprio informante, *J.*, é exemplo desta "retomada". Mas mais do que isso, ele é a própria voz que grita a frase de Matías Catrileo.

Assim, analisar o Chile e os limites do seu processo de democratização faz-nos pensar nos próprios limites da efetivação democrática para a América Latina, cuja tradição autoritária marcou as suas histórias.

Loïc Wacquant acerta quando analisa a passagem a partir da crise do *Estado de bem-estar social* para o chamado *Estado penitência*. No entanto, não podemos deixar de nos interrogar se suas pesquisas se referem às experiências onde o *Estado de bem-estar social* se firmou. Como pensar então nesse processo de crescimento punitivo na América Latina, que como nos lembra o sociólogo Chico de Oliveira, se demarcou historicamente pelo Estado de "mal-estar social"? E mais: como pensar o futuro dos movimentos indígenas que tradicionalmente estabelecem outros paradigmas na sua relação com o território e com os recursos naturais? Como fazer se estas populações e seus saberes [e justamente por que são o que são] encontram-se remanescentes em áreas cada vez mais cobiçadas pelas empresas transnacionais?

Há um *crescimento punitivo* nos países da América Latina, sendo que a título de exemplo outros países como El Salvador e Peru também criaram "leis antiterrorismo" que podem ser aplicadas nos mesmos moldes das leis chilenas. Contudo, nos alerta o Jurista argentino Zaffaroni para a permanência em nossas instituições de segurança pública de práticas subterrâneas, como o uso de torturas para a obtenção de confissões. Parece que no caso mapuche o Estado tenha tanto a legitimidade da violência física quanto da *nominação* – e consequente produção de valores e realidades.

Como pensar então nos processos de democratização quando uma ordem global parece nos impor uma gestão ampliada do cárcere voltado de forma

indiscriminada para a *pobreza* em geral e, em especial, para os grupos constituintes dos movimentos reivindicatórios?

E mais. Como pensar em ordens democráticas se como nos indica Agamben encontramos cotidianamente nichos de *Estado de exceção*? Como agir quando sabemos que determinados grupos sociais marcados desde o período colonial por um rebaixamento existencial serão essencialmente tão vulneráveis diante desse *Estado de exceção*?

Há como recompor uma democracia diante de uma ordem que se estabelece na "exceção cotidiana"?

O que se assiste no Chile é um processo de barbarização imposto pelo Estado, legitimado por uma mídia que oferece um terreno propício à criminalização e ao anestesiar dos sentidos críticos: via-de-regra são televisionadas imagens que colocam os mapuches como versões modernas dos velhos selvagens do passado colonial, como «arruaceiros» e «violentos».

De um modo geral, o pensamento ocidental se estabeleceu na noção de que o inimigo deve ser eliminado. O preço para a construção de uma "identidade nacional" foi o extermínio de uma série de movimentos e culturas múltiplas que, diante de sistemas epistémicos desejosos da sua universalidade, viram-se forçados a recuar para sobreviver.

Os mapuches não querem ceder. E é desta resistência tão amarga aos interesses das elites que podemos extrair novas concepções sobre a democracia, sobre a emancipação e a pluralidades de culturas que nos são diferentes.

Trata-se de uma visão de mundo muito mais abrangente. Talvez devêssemos aprender com a sua dimensão de que as identidades são construídas de forma relacional.

Nesse sentido, encerrar aqui com a poesia de Mia Couto, autor moçambicano também marcado pela colonização, nos desvele, tal qual o povo mapuche o faz, o quanto de dignidade se estabelece na defesa e na resistência de uma identidade:

Preciso ser um outro  
para ser eu mesmo  
Sou grão de rocha  
Sou o vento que a desgasta  
Sou pólen sem insecto  
Sou areia sustentando  
o sexo das árvores

Existo onde me desconheço  
aguardando pelo meu passado  
ansiando a esperança do futuro  
No mundo que combato morro  
no mundo por que luto nasço

*Mia Couto - Identidade*

*Para o peñi J., pelo seu voto de confiança.*

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## **From "indios" to "indígenas": guerrilla perspectives on indigenous peoples and repression in Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua**

**Roy Krøvel**

### **Abstract**

*Subcomandante Marcos and other Zapatistas have on numerous occasions discussed the clash between "Northern" perspectives on revolution and the world, and indigenous reality. Understanding the meaning, for the insurgency, of the indigenous culture of the Zapatista support base has also been a major topic in the writing of many supporters of, and visitors to, the Zapatistas. But such an understanding of the history of the Zapatistas has consequences for our understanding of the conflicts between guerrilla organizations and indigenous peoples in Guatemala and Nicaragua during the 80s and 90s. This article seeks to contribute to our understanding of such issues based on studies of the Zapatistas and similar encounters between guerrilleros and indigenous peoples in Nicaragua and Guatemala. A better understanding of the clash between "Northern" perspectives and indigenous realities is a necessary prerequisite for understanding why some movements fail and others succeed.*

*The relationship between armed groups and indigenous peoples had a powerful effect on the outcomes of the civil wars in the region. The root causes for the problems between indigenous peoples and guerrilla organizations are sought in, among other things, militaristic guerrilla organisations, marked by hierarchical, centralised and inflexible structures which did not facilitate the processes of learning. Learning to understand indigenous peoples and their worldviews would have been necessary to avoid the type of self-destructive behaviour that is described in this article. The experiences from Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico raises some important questions for future research on social movements also elsewhere: Who do the movements represent? What type of communication and learning goes on within the social movement? Are certain groups excluded from fully participating?*

### **Introduction**

Reflecting on the history of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), Subcomandante Marcos concludes a letter thus: "In reality, the only thing we proposed was to change the world; the rest we have improvised. We had our rigid concepts of the world and revolution thoroughly dented in the encounter with the indigenous reality of Chiapas" (Gilly, Subcomandante

Marcos and Ginzburg, 1995).

Much had happened between 1983, when a small group of cadres from Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional (FLN) set out, inspired by the Cuban revolution and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, to organise a guerrilla movement in the Lacandon jungle of Chiapas, Mexico, and 1995, when the letter was published in a book edited by Adolfo Gilly. Gilly, a revolutionary activist and experienced researcher of Latin American revolutionary movements (Gilly, 2010), had invited Subcomandante Marcos to discuss the merits of microhistory, a tradition of studying history that focuses intensely on a small unit of research (a village, a family or a person), in order to understand the Zapatista movement and the mainly indigenous communities of the EZLN. Gilly had hinted that microhistory stresses the importance of culture and the agency of historical actors, and is therefore a potentially fruitful perspective for an understanding of the historical development of the EZLN. Subcomandante Marcos used the occasion to recount part of the movement's history, underlining how much the EZLN had changed – from a classical Cuban inspired guerrilla movement led and dominated by university educated intellectuals from outside Chiapas, to something very different: an army controlled and under the command of elected representatives from the indigenous communities.

Yet, Marcos was reluctant to give up macroperspectives related to universal understandings of liberation and oppression for the analysis of the history of the EZLN. The clash between "Northern" perspectives on revolution and the world, and indigenous reality, is a theme with which Marcos and other Zapatistas have engaged on numerous occasions, for instance in children's stories and in narratives and mythologies of the birth and development of the EZLN in the Lacandon (Marcos, 1999, 2001, 2008; Marcos and Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Mexico), 1997; Marcos and Pacheco, 2004; Marcos and Ponce de Leon, 2001). Understanding the meaning, for the insurgency, of the indigenous culture of the Zapatista support base has also been a major topic in the writing of many supporters of, and visitors to, the Zapatistas (J. Berger, 2006; M. T. Berger, 2001; H. Cleaver, J. Holloway & Pelaez E., 1998; R. Debray, 1996; Galeano, 1996; Holloway, 1998, 2005; Klein, 2001; Monsiváis Aceves, 2001; Saramago, 1999). This article, which seeks to contribute to our understanding of such issues, is based on studies of the Zapatistas and similar encounters between guerrilleros and indigenous peoples in Nicaragua and Guatemala. A better understanding of the clash between "Northern" perspectives and indigenous realities is a necessary prerequisite for an analysis of the possibilities and limitations of guerrilla movement forms of politics and of state repression against social movements and indigenous movements in the region.

As with the Zapatistas, so too the guerrillas in Guatemala and Nicaragua had to come to terms with resistance from indigenous groups and the increasing confidence of a growing indigenous movement. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, prominent former guerrilla leaders such as Daniel Ortega and Rodrigo Asturias have later apologised for human rights abuses committed against indigenous

peoples and other civilians.

The goal of this article is first to introduce to the debate sources which are new and not yet fully exploited. It analyses the writings of the guerrilleros themselves. The second intention is to contribute to a re-reading and re-interpretation of the historical circumstances that led to the relationships between guerrillas and indigenous peoples. To understand the historical development of this relationship it is first necessary to investigate the origins of the guerrilleros. Who were they, and what motivated them? This is important for an understanding of the process of ideology formation. The article will then move on to an analysis of what happened when these guerrilleros encountered the indigenous reality for which they were equipped with certain ideological frames for understanding and interpreting. This will help us understand the historical development of the difficult relationship between guerrilleros and indigenous peoples, so that it becomes possible to learn from the experience.

### **Existing literature on guerrillas and indigenous peoples**

Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* is both a participant's analysis of the Cuban guerrilla campaign and a "textbook" that inspired many Latin Americans to become guerrilleros themselves. Guevara, however, paid little attention to questions such as the study of indigenous peoples, *inter alia* because an understanding of indigenous peoples was not particularly relevant for the Cuban guerrilla (Ernesto Guevara, 1997). Guevara's most important contribution, from a military perspective, was to elevate the guerrilla from a tactic used in some military situations (according to traditional revolutionary literature), to a strategic tool. The guerrilla organisation, beginning with the *foco*, a tiny group of dedicated guerrilleros, could be a substitute for the party, taking the role of vanguard of the revolution (R. Debray, 1980).

Dozens of guerrilla organisations were formed, and took up arms, in Latin America over the next four decades. The majority of guerrilla *comandantes* were students, teachers, priests or of some other middle class profession, most of them coming from urban areas (Glockner Corte, 2008; Krøvel, 2006; Wickham-Crowley, 1993). Many of these first early armed organisations failed, with many of their leaders killed or imprisoned; amongst them Guevara himself who died in an attempt to spread the revolution to Bolivia in 1967 (J. L. Anderson, 1997; Taibo II, 1996). New groups soon emerged however, more varied in their ideologies, ranging from Cuban inspired *focoism* to Maoism, left-leaning populism to Moscow-inspired doctrinaire Marxism, from groups establishing themselves in remote inaccessible areas to the urban guerrillas of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (Laqueur, 1977, 1998). These guerrillas sought different paths according to what they saw as a specific national context (Castañeda, 1994; Ernesto Guevara, Loveman and Davies, 1997; Kruijt, 2008)

From approximately the late 1970s, a global indigenous movement was also growing in strength, and growing more assertive in demanding rights and



autonomy (A. Brysk, 2002). Indigenous peoples increasingly made themselves heard, breaking out of the stereotypical role of victim in need of economic development and modernisation, demanding the right to participate actively in making decisions affecting their communities. Indigenous organisations in Latin America also built global alliances, in many places winning various forms of autonomy (Diaz-Polanco, 1997; Rachel Sieder, 2002; Van Cott, 1994; Warren, 1998). Scholars sought to reconcile the arguments for special rights for indigenous peoples with the principle of universal law by arguing that it was necessary to give indigenous peoples special collective rights to protect their language, religion and culture (Jovanovic, 2005; Kymlicka, 1995, 1989).

Classic Cuban-inspired guerrilla ideology paid little attention to culture in general and to that of indigenous peoples in particular. The focus was on workers and peasants, classes and class struggle. Ernesto Guevara himself did not manage to establish friendly relations with the local peasants in Bolivia. According to Debray, failure to understand the indigenous peasants was one mayor explanation for the failure of the whole Bolivian campaign.

After the revolution in Nicaragua it did not take the Sandinista government long to alienate indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities on the Atlantic Coast, as amply demonstrated by both former Sandinista leaders, for instance Hooker Kain, and leading academics who originally travelled to Nicaragua to support the Sandinistas, as in the case of Gordon and Hale (Gordon, 1998; Hale, 1994; Hooker Kain, 2008).

The academic debate on the relationship between indigenous peoples and guerrillas came to a climax after David Stoll published his account of the situation in indigenous towns in Ixil, Guatemala. According to Stoll, the indigenous people were victims of systematic human rights abuses by both parties to the conflict (Stoll, 1993, 1999). He demonstrated how the indigenous peoples were caught between two armies, and blames the guerrillas for "misleading indigenous groups and making them targets for the army", even though he recognizes that the majority of killings were committed by the state apparatus (Reid, 2006).

After the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994, a large and growing body of literature has emerged debating the nature of the Zapatista organisation and its differences from traditional guerrilla organisation, strategy and politics (M. T. Berger, 2001; H. Cleaver, J. Holloway, and Pelaez E., 1998; Cleaver, 1998; Collier, 2005; R. Debray, 1996; Diaz-Polanco, 2002; Eber, 2003; Holloway, 1998, 2005; Ross, 2006). Others have pointed to the fact that a Cuban-inspired organisation originally established the EZLN in the Lacandon jungle in the early 1980s and doubt that a real transformation of the type described by many has taken place (Bredeveien, 2008; Estrada Saavedra, 2007).

This literature in relation to traditional guerrilla organisation, strategy and politics questioned the claim made by the guerrilla organizations of representing and struggling on behalf of a "people", suggesting that such an articulation of the "people" was a form of ontological and epistemological

reductionism. The complex reality of the region could not be reduced and understood as a struggle for the liberation of a "people", without considering the fact that the states consisted of many peoples, and that the indigenous peoples did not necessarily see themselves as belonging to this particular imagined community: *the people*. Building on this analysis, I argue the failure to understand indigenous perspectives has had serious consequences for the armed insurgencies.

### **Theoretical perspectives**

In an article on African rebel movements, Mkandawire seeks to understand the actions of the rebel movements and their violence (Mkandawire, 2002). According to Mkandawire, "we need to know, on the one hand, the nature of the rebel movements – the thinking, composition, actions and capacities of the leaders of the insurgent movements – and on the other hand, the social structures of the African countryside in which they often operate." Mkandawire concludes that the urban origins of rebel movements were part of the problem, explaining some of the "self-defeating behaviour on the part of armed groups" that caused such "terrible suffering for rural populations".

Wickham-Crowley and Loveman have proposed that a similar urban-rural divide was also present in Latin American guerrilla experiences (Loveman and Guevara, 1997; Wickham-Crowley, 1993). In the rural areas of Chiapas, Guatemala and the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, an additional divide appeared between the urban mestizo elite and indigenous peasants, as described by Marcos, Gilly and others. This was a challenge, not only because the indigenous peoples often only spoke Tojolobal, Tzeltal, Kaqchikel, K'iche', Mam, Misquito, Sumu Mayangnga or other indigenous languages (and little or no Spanish), but also because of real and deep differences in world views.

It might be helpful here to draw on the philosopher Arne Næss, whose model of deep ecology (Næss, 1966, 1973, 1999) has inspired a number of thinkers in developing concepts and philosophies dealing with problems related to pluralism. According to Næss, the richness and diversity of life-forms contribute to the realisation of the values defined in deep ecology, and are also "values in themselves" (Næss and Mysterud, 1999, p. 356). In an exchange of letters with Austrian-born philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend, both Næss and Feyerabend agreed on the importance of learning when confronted with diversity and in particular in the form of indigenous peoples and their systems of knowledge. Feyerabend criticised Western bureaucratic logic which he saw as incapable of understanding indigenous peoples and their systems of knowledge (Feyerabend, 1999). Anyone trying to meet and understand indigenous peoples, therefore, had to accept the fact that you must be able to learn and change in order to be able to understand.

The young and urban guerrilleros were faced with a reality where they had to use what they had, their existing knowledge and experience in order to learn, so

that they could understand the indigenous peoples and their world views. This required the ability to read text, using the discourse from critical literacy, in an active, reflective manner, in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships (Coffey, 2011). For the purposes of critical literacy, text is taken to include songs, novels, conversations, pictures, movies and so on. Critical literacy thus challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development (Shore, 1999). According to Brysk in a seminal work on the indigenous movement in Latin America, such learning can take place when new information combines with existing knowledge and experience to construct new histories, understandings and political identities. Yet in the cases of Guatemala and Nicaragua this process seems not to have occurred, resulting in a monologue as opposed to a dialogue between guerrillas and indigenous communities. Whereas in the case of the EZLN a dialogue does seem to have formed which was manifested in the guerrilleros learning to listen in order to achieve indigenous support for the guerrilla and the armed strategy and recognizing new actors with individual and collective agency (S. Marcos, 1994).

This perspective based on deep ecology and critical literacy will be used to analyse and evaluate the relationship between guerrillas and indigenous communities. Were the indigenous peoples seen as actors with agency? Did the guerrilleros listen to and learn from the indigenous peoples? Were the indigenous peoples consulted as equal partners on questions related to ideology, strategy and tactics of the struggle?

## **Methodology**

I draw from three categories of texts, in addition to drawing on my own interviews (oral histories) and observation. Many of the sources have not yet been used to shed light on the relationship between guerrillas and indigenous peoples. The sources will help us understand how the guerrilleros understood the concept of "people". They will also aid us in understanding what the guerrilleros were thinking about the indigenous peoples and the role the indigenous peoples were supposed to play in the insurgencies.

The first category consists of investigations, diaries and literature written by individual members of the guerrilla organisations before or during the conflicts. Many of these sources were not easily available before the civil wars ended. The second category consists of memoirs and analyses written retrospectively by guerrilleros. The third category consists of publications from the guerrilla organisations during the civil wars in the region. Much of the information published from the early 1960s onwards has been collected by El Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (CeDeMA) in Buenos Aires, greatly facilitating systematic studies of guerrilla discourse.

## **Who were the guerrillas and what motivated them?**

If one starts from the assumption that the urban background of the guerrilla leaders was a cause for later misunderstandings and lack of communication in Africa and Mexico, it is necessary to describe and reflect briefly on the background of the leadership of the Central American organisations. In 1954, a group of reactionary officers, supported by the CIA, succeeded in overthrowing the democratically elected left-leaning president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, forcing many of his supporters into exile. One of those leaving Guatemala was a young Argentine doctor, Ernesto Guevara, who headed north to Mexico, where he later met a group of Cuban exiles. Another was a young poet from Quetzaltenango who travelled south to El Salvador where he soon joined a group of poets and artists, becoming a close friend of the young Salvadorian poet Roque Dalton.

Otto Rene Castillo became a student leader and was granted a scholarship to study in East Germany where much of his best-known poetry was written. Later, returning to Guatemala, he joined the guerrilla (Fuerzas Armadas de Guatemala), assuming responsibility for ideological training in the guerrilla. According to Roque Dalton, Castillo was the first of the guerrilleros to really understand the suffering of the indigenous peoples (Dalton, 1993). He vividly depicts the lives and tragedies of many ordinary Guatemalans, but it is harder to distil his ideology from his poems. He paints a romantic picture of life and joy under the Stalinist regime in East Germany and alludes to the successes of the North Koreans in a way that indicates a rather dogmatic and inflexible modernist worldview (Castillo, 1993, pp. 37,102).

Gaspar Ilom (real name Rodrigo Asturias) was also arrested by the army after joining the guerrilla, but survived. His influences also seem to be the coup against Arbenz and the plight of the poor of Guatemala, but with an additional twist. His father was the novelist and Nobel laureate Miguel Angel Asturias, who was known to sympathise with revolutionary groups, and who also met with representatives of the guerrilla at one stage (Macías, 1997).

Most of the early guerrilla leaders had gained some education, either at university or in the army (Wickham-Crowley, 1993). While they identified with the poor, few of them could be described as particularly poor themselves. One exception to that rule was Carlos Fonseca, founder of FSLN (Nicaragua), the son of a poor single mother from Matagalpa (Zimmermann, 2003) – but even he made it to university before becoming a guerrillero. Many spent years in the student movement before joining the guerrillas, sometimes continuing to work for the student movement while secretly remaining members of the guerrilla, as in the case of Omar Cabezas in Leon, Nicaragua. Cabezas was a student leader for six years before having to go underground (Cabezas, 1985, 1986). It is not my intention here to question the heroic efforts many of these student leaders made to overthrow the dictatorships. But it is necessary to notice that a large majority of the leading ideologues of the guerrilla organizations had to go underground when they still were young university students with little or no experience of engagement with indigenous peoples. This, of course, influenced

the way they and the organizations they built thought about the role of indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities in the revolution.

Many were influenced and motivated by brothers and sisters joining the guerrilla. Both Omar Cabezas and comandante Santiago (Guatemala) lost three brothers or sisters (Cabezas, 1985; Santa Cruz Mendoza, 2004). The Nicaraguan guerrilleros Tellos (real name René Tejada) is another, and a particularity cruel, example. His brother, David Tejada Peralta, was thrown into the Santiago volcano and killed (Cabezas, 1985, p. 91). The FMLN had strong bonds to a broader spectrum of civil society organisations than did their counterparts elsewhere, largely because they had grown out of trade union and church organisations as a consequence of the violent repression of these sectors in the 1970s (Cienfuegos, 1986).

The young urban students who became guerrilla leaders were often radicalised because of personal experiences of repression and loss. They identified their experiences of being victims with those of the poor and often indigenous peasants, without reflecting much on the differences between themselves, belonging to a relatively privileged group, and the indigenous peasants. The backgrounds of those who went on to become leaders and ideologues of the guerrilla organisations played an important role in the development of ideology and made an impact on the later dynamic between guerrillas and indigenous peoples. Most importantly, their youth and inexperience, combined with a relatively privileged urban upbringing, provided little knowledge or experience which they could later draw on to better understand indigenous peoples and learn their world-views, as put forward by Næss, Feyerabend, Gilly, Subcomandante Marcos and others (Feyerabend, 1999; Gilly, et al., 1995; Næss, 1999).

### **Ideology formation**

The process of ideology formation is best understood as involving an affective element of a real and experienced concern for the oppressed and a particular ideological education in which studies in Moscow, Prague, Havana and elsewhere played an important role and influenced national or local narratives on liberation and struggles for freedom (T. Anderson, 1982; Blanco Moreno and Editorial, 1970; Cabezas, 1985; Ortega Saavedra, 1979; Payeras, Harnecker and Simon, 1982; Womack, 1969). Little in this ideological education prepared them for the encounters with the complex realities and the various indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico.

The role played by Cuba in instigating revolt in Latin America has been hotly debated in the academic literature (Castañeda, 1994). The memoirs and diaries investigated for this study clearly demonstrate the importance of Cuba and the Cuban revolutionary experience. In Nicaragua, Carlos Fonseca, Thomas Borge and the other original members of the FSLN were all inspired by the Cuban

revolution. Carlos Fonseca lived and worked in Cuba for lengthy periods of his life. Although he never personally met Ernesto Guevara, his writings undoubtedly had great impact on the initial strategy of FSLN (González Bermejo, 1979). In Cuba he met and held discussions with other guerrilla leaders of Latin America. Guerrilleros from Guatemala and El Salvador were also given a safe haven in Cuba, which continued to provide them with training, expertise and equipment for much of the period investigated here.

The Cuban contact sometimes led to further travel. Many went on to visit or study the socialist societies in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam (Baltodano, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Fonseca, 1964; Zimmermann, 2003).

Gustavo Porras remembers being less than impressed by the dogmatism of the Eastern European states he visited in 1967 (Porras, 2009). Traces of inspiration from these regimes and a particular hierarchical ideology are nonetheless sometimes found in the memoirs and diaries of guerrilleros in the four countries under discussion. Mario Payeras tells how the Guatemalan guerrilleros Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP, the Guerilla Army of the Poor) placed heavy emphasis on political work, always trying to "educate" new recruits and the civilians who cooperated with the guerrilla. The people had to be armed with both weapons and the right ideas, he explained (Payeras, 1989, p. 124). They were teaching no less than "the science" of "making revolution" (Payeras, 1989, p. 125). Omar Cabezas also explains how the Sandinistas worked to recruit and organise in the poor neighbourhoods of Leon. He was reading from the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx. As he was talking and explaining, he could see them sitting there, "sucking it all in" (Cabezas, 1985, p. 53).

The ideologies that developed in this process combine a profound and deep concern for the oppressed with a modernist progressivism which brings together particular voices. Yet there seems to be very little interest in listening to the oppressed. The urban intellectual elite comes across as feeling secure in their superiority. Not listening, and assuming a didactic as opposed to dialogical teaching stance, resembles what Paolo Freire, has criticised as "left sectarianism" (Cooper and White, 2006, p. xvii). Such an authoritarian pedagogical stance, excluding particular voices from a dialogue on ideology and strategy, cuts off the organisations from a potential source of learning and development, as pointed out by Næss and Feyerabend (Feyerabend, 1999; Næss, 1999). This authoritarian pedagogical stand is in stark contrast to the Zapatista experience, as it is described and interpreted by Subcomandante Marcos and others (Gilly, et al., 1995; Marcos and Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Mexico), 1997; Marcos and Ponce de Leon, 2001).

After the initial clashes and the first repression by the government forces, the guerrilla leaders retreated to inaccessible mountains or to the jungle. Some went into exile in Cuba, others sought refuge elsewhere. In many of the memoirs, the leaders became distant figures living mystical lives in faraway places, separated from the people they wanted to free (Cabezas, 1985; Macías, 1997; Santa Cruz Mendoza, 2004). Becoming detached from the daily life of ordinary people was

a logical consequence of the guerrilla doctrine, particularly because the majority of guerrilla commanders in the 60s and early 70s emphasised the need for organising groups of guerrilleros in remote and isolated mountains.

In the remote and isolated mountains the guerrilleros had very few opportunities to interact with their supporters in the cities. They were also often cut off from their local supporters in the rural areas as the regimes organized violent counterinsurgency campaigns. These armed and often isolated groups were to take the lead in the revolutionary struggle, according to Guevara's guerrilla strategy (Guevara et al., 1997). The groups grew gradually more distant from students, trade unions, peasant organisations, radical church groups and so on. The EZLN developed very differently from these organisations, but not because it was very different in ideology from the other organisations. On the contrary, there are many similarities in ideology and strategy between early EZLN and the other armed organisations. However, in contrast to the Central American organisations, the EZLN had decided not to finance military training and operations by committing robberies and kidnappings. In addition, the EZLN did not seek external support; instead it became dependent, for food and supplies, on the communities it sought to liberate. All of this had important consequences for the relationship, which will be discussed in greater depth below, between the urban elite and the indigenous majority in the organisation.

As the first wave of guerrilla insurgencies ebbed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new breed of guerrilla organisation emerged – more diverse, and seeking inspiration from various intellectual sources. Some remained true to the original guerrilla strategy of Guevara (Moran, 1982) while others sought inspiration in the Chinese revolution and prepared for a very long war. Some called for the mobilisation of trade unions and civil society in order to organise general strikes. And others believed that only urban insurrection could lead to the downfall of the regimes (Baltodano, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Kruijt, 2008).

### **Ideology versus reality**

Che Guevara talked a lot about the creation of "a new man" (Debray and Guevara, 1975; Guevara, 1972; Reyes Rodríguez, Pombo, and Braulio, 1979; Rolando, Pombo, and Braulio, 1979), someone completely dedicated to the struggle, hardened and experienced after years of fighting with the guerrilla. But the reality of the guerrilleros was often very different from the ideal. The guerrilleros were surrounded by enemies, constantly in fear of being attacked or ambushed, always nervous of being seen by informers, captured, tortured or killed. Many suffered under the psychological pressure. Omar Cabezas tells of Tellos (René Tejada), whom he met when he first joined the guerrilla. Tellos was obviously deeply depressed, and sometimes broke down in tears when the new guerrilleros did not respond positively to the training he gave them (Cabezas, 1985). He was overwhelmed with rage and disappointment. Tellos was subsequently killed in an ambush. Payeras also tells a similar story. One of the

original members of EGP, Minche, became so depressed and negative that the others felt he was compromising the survival of the whole group. Most of all, they feared that Minche would run off and be caught by the security forces, telling them everything he knew about the guerrilla and its contacts in the villages (Payeras, 1989, p. 56). The small group of guerrilleros took Minche outside the camp and executed him; all the while Minche was trying to convince his comrades of his dedication to the revolution.

These examples illustrate that it is not sufficient here to discuss ideology formation alone – it is also necessary to say how the guerrilleros coped with stress and how they managed affect. The actual interaction between the guerrilleros and indigenous peoples were not only a result of ideology, but must also be understood in relation to the very dangerous and life threatening situations the guerrilleros faced every day. The communication with indigenous peoples depended on knowledge and insight in order to build relations that facilitated trust. While a failure to build trust resulted in mutual suspicion and a downward spiral of mistrust and animosity. The emotional stress and psychological pressure were often made worse by the feeling of loneliness. Many felt homesick. Others found it difficult to connect with the local peasants, at least in the beginning. Cabezas reflected on the difference between himself and the local peasants: "We, from the cities, are more complex, more abstract, more sophisticated, more complicated, regarding both emotions and emotional stress, the way we interpret things," he wrote. (Cabezas, 1985) [my translation]. For the young urban students, the local peasants were "the other", imagined in relationship to their difference from "us". The "other" could walk for hours, knew the mountain or the forests, needed very little food and water and kept quiet for most of the time.

The abyss between the guerrilleros and the indigenous peasants in Mexico, Guatemala and the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua seems to have been even bigger. In the 1960s, a group of Guatemalan guerrilleros woke up one morning and found themselves surrounded by local peasants, who, without much discussion, handed them over to the army (URNG Comandante Rolando Moran, 1997). The guerrilla wanted to liberate the peasants, but the peasants themselves were apparently not so eager to be liberated by the guerrilleros. When the first group of guerrilleros from the EGP entered Guatemala from Mexico, they had not a single civilian supporter in the area, according to Mario Payeras, the leading ideologue of the group at the time and member of the group of guerrilleros entering Guatemala from Mexico (Payeras, et al., 1982). Everything had to be constructed from the bottom up, and it took the guerrilla several years before they had built a structure in the Ixil region. But much was destroyed when one young and promising indigenous cadre, "Fonseca", was captured and broke down under intensive torture. Many were arrested and killed because of what Fonseca told his torturers (Payeras, 1989). Fonseca later succeeded in fleeing from an army base, and decided to return to the guerrilla, although he knew he was risking his life by doing so. Once with his old comrades again, he found little compassion. Fonseca was taken out into the forest and executed.



Failing to establish good relations with the local population is always a grave danger for a group of guerrilleros in the jungle or the mountains. The guerrilleros depend on the locals to acquire or buy food and supplies and they also depend on civilians for information about army movements. The first attempt at establishing a guerrilla *foco* in the Lacandon jungle in Chiapas, Mexico, ended in disaster. In 1968, a small group of journalists organised a *foco*, Ejército Insurgente Mexicano (EIM). Without support from the local population, the guerrilleros lived in total isolation in the jungle, until they were discovered by the army. Most of the young, urban guerrilleros were killed or captured (J. Womack, 1999, p. 199). In Bolivia, in 1967, Che Guevara encountered many of these problems as the local peasants were sceptical when he tried to set up a guerrilla organisation. Guevara had a hard time finding locals willing to sell food and, frustrated, he noted in his diary that the peasant must therefore expect a period of terror from both parties (E. Guevara, Sánchez, and Molina, 2007, p. 118).

In his book on guerrilla warfare, Guevara had warned against all forms of abuse or terror against the locals because the long-term survival and growth of the guerrilla organisation depended on winning the hearts and minds of the population. Use of violence or threats of violence could possibly solve a short-term problem, but would in the long run be detrimental to the objectives of the guerrilla organisation. Nonetheless, in the real world of fear, hunger and desperation, many felt forced to use violence or threats of violence when the locals refused to cooperate, as did Guevara himself when he argued that an "adequate strategy of terror" could at least scare the locals from giving information to the army (Prado Salmón, 1990, p. 93). Violence or threats of violence against the civilian population tended to undermine the relationship the guerrilla organization was trying to build with the locals, leading to suspicion and mistrust.

Another difficult theme was so-called "revolutionary justice". The guerrillas dealt harshly with deserters or traitors, as we have already seen. But they also needed to deal effectively with any signs in the local population of cooperation with the army. "Informers", "collaborators" and "traitors" were dangerous and any sign of cooperation with the enemy was dealt with swiftly, as in the case of the "peace judges" appointed by the Nicaraguan regime. Any local "peace judges" could simply be executed. In the memoirs and diaries, these executions are mostly dealt with as part of the daily routine, with little or no sympathy for the victims.

It is not hard to imagine that such practices could get out of hand. The pressure, fear, hard to verify rumours, confusion of war – all contributed to a climate in which mistakes could have terrible consequences. Comandante Santiago tells how, in 1988, a dangerous situation developed into catastrophe in Guatemala (Santa Cruz Mendoza, 2004, p. 146). A patrol on mission on the outskirts of its base areas found itself under pressure when the army went on the offensive. By accident, they were discovered by a group of villagers in the forest. The guerrilleros wrongly suspected that the villagers were army informers. If

information was indeed given to the army, it would jeopardise the security of the whole patrol. Giving credence to rumours and false information, and fearing for their lives, the guerrilleros executed 21 innocent peasants from El Aguacate.

Such abuse was not limited to isolated cases, but was widespread, especially in Guatemala, but also in Nicaragua during the civil war of the 1980s. Comandante Gaspar Ilom (Rodrigo Asturias) explained his shock in discovering that some members of the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR, Rebel Armed Forces) operated a regime of terror in parts of the Guatemalan countryside. All kinds of abuses and human rights violations were committed by these guerrilleros. In this case, something more than fear and confusion seems to be behind the violence, for such widespread abuse can only be explained by general moral decay. We need more investigation on how the mainly urban and educated group of guerrilla leaders constructed understandings of indigenous peoples as "others", defined as a difference in language, religious practices and culture. We can ascertain that such 'others' did not fit well with the dominant theoretical understanding of class struggle and capitalism. While the abuse of indigenous peoples was normally not comparable to the level of violence described by Mkandawire in Africa, it did, in the long run, amount to self-defeating behaviour as the indigenous peoples turned their backs on the guerrilla organisations (Mkandawire, 2002).

I have now argued that a number of generative mechanisms must be considered when trying to understand the root causes of what I have here called a clash between "Northern" perspectives and indigenous realities. In line with Marcos, I have argued that "rigid concepts of the world" were a root cause for the difficult relationship between guerrilleros and indigenous peoples. These rigid concepts must be interpreted in light of the urban background of the leaders of the guerrilla organizations, the particular processes of ideology formation, the consequences of the guerrilla strategy itself and the affective and psychological mechanisms related to the life and dangers of being a guerrilla soldier. In sum, these mechanisms proved to work against any attempt at establishing good and lasting communication with indigenous groups, thus undermining the ability of the guerrilla organisation to listen and learn from the indigenous peoples.

### **The indigenous peoples move to the forefront of the struggle**

Gaspar Ilom (Rodrigo Asturias) broke with the FAR in the early 1970s and founded Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA) which began military operations in 1978/ 1979 (Asturias and ORPA Equipo de Información, 1984). Ilom and ORPA saw the indigenous population of Guatemala as the key to the success of the revolutionary movement, since the indigenous peoples constitute more than half of the Guatemalan population, and a much larger percentage of the poor. According to Ilom, the revolutionary organisation must also fight all forms of racism (Ilom, 1989). The indigenous peoples were now seen as exploited labourers and peasants, in addition to being

victims of discrimination because of their language and ethnic identity. Payeras now also explained that the indigenous peoples had moved to the forefront of the strategy of the newly formed EGP (Payeras, 1991). EGP was also formed by disenchanted former members of the FAR, for example Julio César Macías (Macías, 1997).

This focus on discrimination, ethnicity and identity distinguishes these new organisations from the guerrillas of the 1960s. In the many declarations and statements made public by the guerrilla organisations in the 1960s, these themes were mostly absent and the only references to indigenous peoples or "indios" were in relation to the violence of the Spanish colonisers and sometimes the big landowners – but this was always when discussing the past. Regarding the Atlantic coast area of Nicaragua, for instance, where most of the indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities live, the FSLN promised to "re-integrate" the area into the "life of the nation" (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, 1961). But in fact many leaders and others from the local communities did not seek to be re-incorporated. They had fond collective memories of a time before being "occupied" by General Cabezas and forcefully annexed by Nicaragua (Freeman, 1988; Gordon, 1998; J. Hodgson, 1987; Hodgson, 2006; Llanes, 1993; Sujo Wilson, 1998). The Sandinistas were not unconcerned with issues of race, for example promising a plan to benefit the coastal area, with the aim of ending discrimination against "Miskitos, Sumos, Zambos and Negros" (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, 1961). But in the day to day struggle of the FSLN, the ethnic minorities continued to play a minimal role. This was possibly the reason why the FSLN had very few supporters on the Atlantic coast.

The EGP set out to organise armed revolution among the indigenous peoples in the densely populated highlands of Guatemala, but when they entered from Chiapas, Mexico, they came without any form of support or network in those areas. In fact, indigenous peoples and their situation play a minor role in the memoirs of Macías (Macías, 1997). Much is centred on the military campaign and the organisation itself. Payeras has written extensively on military strategy and political organising as well as issues concerning the local population (Payeras, 1987, 1991), and in one article he deals specifically with the relationship between guerrilla and indigenous peoples (Payeras, 1983) acknowledging that they are exploited by the capitalist system and the regime and discriminated against by non-indigenous Guatemalans. This double oppression will only be overcome if the revolutionary forces win, according to Payeras. Joining the guerrilla is therefore the only viable solution for the indigenous peoples. Reading these and other memoirs, one is tempted to believe that the newfound interest in indigenous peoples was largely due to military concerns rather than any deeper ideological conviction. There is little evidence in the diaries and communiqués from the guerrilleros of any real attempt or willingness to enter into a dialogue with the indigenous peoples in an effort to learn and possibly have "rigid concepts" challenged by "the indigenous reality", as it later was expressed by subcomandante Marcos (Gilly et al., 1995). The first generation of guerrilleros had become isolated in remote and inaccessible areas, cut off from the daily life of ordinary Guatemalans. Macías, Payeras, Moran,

Asturias and others realised that the guerrilla could only win if they succeeded in gaining a foothold in more populous regions such as the highlands.

The Sandinistas did succeed in establishing a firm base in the few indigenous neighbourhoods on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, particularly in Subtiava and Masaya. This was not something completely new, since in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Sandino and his army had established themselves in the Rio Coco region – a region traditionally dominated by Miskito and Sumu/Mayangna communities. Organising in Subtiava, the indigenous neighbourhood of Leon, Nicaragua, Cabezas "discovered" that the "Subtiavans" had indigenous roots, and took advantage of this when recruiting new members and supporters (Cabezas, 1985, p. 56) although there appears to have been little reflection on the meaning of these roots – ethnic identity was chiefly something the guerrilla used to its own ends, at least judged by what guerrilleros tell us in diaries and communiqués. The Sandinistas picked up a few elements from indigenous history and mythology and decided to blend their stories of Sandino and his struggle with that of the aboriginal hero Adiac. In the version of the Sandinistas, Sandino and Adiac are fused, emerging as one. Nonetheless, the Sandinistas always read Sandino through the lens of the Communist Manifesto (Cabezas, 1985, p. 54) This does not mean that the indigenous men and women on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua were voiceless victims of Sandinista manipulation.

When the FSLN launched its final offensive, it appealed to "the nation of workers", including "Indians" and "workers, peasants, students and all patriotic and honourable Nicaraguans" (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, 1978). But after winning power the Sandinista leaders engaged in a long workshop in Managua, hammering out a programme for the new revolutionary government. The result was a carefully worded document wrapped in a Marxist Leninist discourse of scientific socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat (Ramírez, 1999). Much later, many of the then Sandinista leaders acknowledged that they did not understand the realities of the indigenous peoples and the ethnic minorities on the Atlantic coast. In addition, the theoretical framework did not contemplate that Nicaragua was a multi-ethnic society, with the result that the Sandinistas were ill-equipped to handle the cultural diversity on the Atlantic coast (Gordon, 1998). While many Sandinistas felt sympathy for the indigenous peoples, they also tended to see indigenous cultures as "backward". In their view, the coastal area needed modernisation, a programme to make all the peoples of Nicaragua Nicaraguans. Being Nicaraguan was closely linked to being Mestizo in the collective imagination of most Nicaraguans (Freeman, 1988; M. Gonzales; Miguel Gonzales, 2001; Gordon, 1998; Hale, 1994; Hooker, 2005). Many saw the process of transforming Mestizos ("Mestizaje") as key to constructing a truly national identity in Nicaragua. In this context, being different, wanting to be recognised as a different people or nation was not easily understood by the majority of Nicaraguans.

The guerrilla organisations saw the indigenous peoples, first and foremost, as a group that could potentially support the revolutionary organisation and the revolutionary struggle. They were free to join the revolutionary forces, but had

no agency in setting the goals and visions for that revolution. The indigenous peoples evoked compassion in the guerrillas, but in the revolutionary literature produced in these countries at this time they were primarily seen as peasants, not as social actors and the subjects of history.

For social movement scholars and activists this analysis raises important questions. First, social movements are often organized around claims of rights or justice for a group or community, in this cases "the people" or "the nation". Activists and scholars need to evaluate such claims carefully. Who is this "people" or "nation"? Are there processes of exclusion from these groups? Are there groups with justified claims to be different from the proposed notions of "nation" or "people"? Second, activists and scholars must carefully and critically consider claims of being the representatives of such groups and communities.

### **Struggle for autonomy, from Nicaragua to Chiapas**

The Zapatistas in Chiapas are different from the guerrillas in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua for many reasons, but some similarities also stand out. First, the EZLN was formed by an organisation heavily influenced by Guevara. EZLN was formed in the Lacandon as a traditional *foco*, in many ways similar to the FMLN in the FSLN in the 1960s and the EGP in the late 1970s. But in the Lacandon the cadres met with indigenous peoples with their own tradition for organising, a tradition which had at least three roots. First, many local organisations grew as a consequence of outside pressure – as when neighbouring villages gathered to fight cattle farmers and demand more land (the fight for more land clashed with government's intentions of creating national reserves, removing small farmers from the jungle). Second, the local organisations received support from a number of national bodies, for instance the Línea Proletaria, Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata (OCEZ) and La Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC). Especially Línea Proletaria played an important role in developing local traditions for organising in the Lacandon (J. Womack, 1999; J. Womack, Jr., 1998).

Línea Proletaria was a Maoist organisation, but in contrast to some others which mixed Marxism with calls for indigenous resistance, for example in Peru, Línea Proletaria was in no hurry to lead the masses into conflict and revolutionary war (Orive, 1977). According to Línea Proletaria, "the masses" could themselves "create history" if they were empowered to make their own decisions (Orive, 1977, pp. 1-12). Línea Proletaria therefore argued against leading the masses "like fathers" because leadership from above does not teach anyone how good ideas are born (Orive, 1977). Third, the Catholic Church led by the bishop of San Cristobal de las Casas, Samuel Ruíz, set out in the 1960s to fight poverty and the exclusion of the indigenous peoples (Santiago, 1999; J. Womack, Jr., 1998). Ruíz created a network of religious leaders in villages, making sure that many promising young men received education. He was inspired by the movement of change affecting the Catholic Church, especially

after the conference of Latin American bishops in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968. The bishops condemned poverty and institutionalised violence, and called for a will to freedom. The bishop of San Cristobal de las Casas organised a congress of "Indios" in 1974, inviting 1250 delegates from 327 villages and the resulting document continued to play a vital role in local organising for many years, calling for profound changes in Mexican society (Ruiz, 1994).

Other factors also contributed to constructing an environment for the development of the EZLN very different from the guerrillas in Guatemala and Nicaragua. After winning the trust of the local organisations, the EZLN grew rapidly, reaching a total of several thousand guerrilleros in a few years (Tello Diaz, 2001). The region where EZLN grew most rapidly, las Cañadas, was virtually outside government control, facilitating not only covert military training, but also semi-open political organisation. The EZLN put together several large congresses in las Cañadas, some with several hundred participants (Tello Diaz, 2001). The local conditions in las Cañadas allowed the development of an organisation very different from those of Central America, making discussion and participation possible in a way unthinkable in Nicaragua in the 1960s and Guatemala in the 1970s. The decision to go to war was apparently made at a meeting in a small village, Prado, in January 1993, almost a year before the fighting actually began (Tello Diaz, 2001). The final decision was made only after a long process of consultation, and apparently against the will of many of the educated cadres from the cities. Much is still unclear about this process, but according to the Zapatistas themselves and former Zapatistas like subcomandante Daniel (Tello Diaz, 2001), it seems that a majority of indigenous members of the EZLN voted in favour of going to war while many of the urban and educated cadres protested by leaving the organization after the decision was taken.

The first Zapatista declaration nonetheless contained no reference to the indigenous identity of the insurgents although the insurgents referred to their identities as peasant, landless, exploited and Mexican (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, Monsiváis and Poniatowska, 1994). Later, especially after the failed peace negotiations with the Mexican government in 1995, indigenous identity and ethnic rights came to the forefront of the struggle (Krøvel, 2006; Pablos, 1996). The Zapatistas invited 358 Mexican and international advisors to the negotiations, firmly framing the struggle within the paradigm of the growing global indigenous movement (Aubry and Mattiace, 2002; A. Brysk, 2002).

A closer study of some Zapatista texts reveals some similarities with the Sandinistas of Nicaragua (Subcomandante Marcos, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Subcomandante Marcos, Saramago, and Leon, 2001). The military leader, subcomandante Marcos, tells the story of "Votán Zapata", a figure combining indigenous mythology and elements from the life of revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata (de Vos, 2002, 2003; Michel, 2001). The story resembles the story told by the young Sandinistas to motivate the poor neighbourhoods of Leon in the early 1970s, combining elements from the life of Sandino with elements from the oral histories of Adiac, a leader much venerated by the

indigenous peoples in Nicaragua (Cabezas, 1985, p. 53). It would be wrong, though, to equate the mechanical modernism and lack of connectedness of the early Sandinistas with the Zapatistas of Chiapas. On a number of occasions, indigenous leaders have spoken for the Zapatistas, for example comandante Ramona, and comandante Esther, who spoke in the Mexican Congress in 2001. The vast majority of the Zapatistas belonged to the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, and had voice and vote in defining goals and methods for the organisation. The organisation listened and learned, and it changed and developed as a consequence of the encounter with the indigenous reality of Chiapas (Gilly, et al., 1995; Marcos, 1999, 2001, 2008). The changes are not only visible in the ideology of the EZLN, as noted by many visitors to Zapatistas (John Berger, 1999; García Márquez, 2001), but also in the organizational structures of the EZLN, which today are very different from anything seen in revolutionary movements before. The Zapatistas have developed institutions and procedures for participatory and collective decision making processes at the levels of the village, the municipality and the region, reflecting the ideological developments as a consequence of the encounters with the indigenous reality of Chiapas (Henck, 2007).

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have put the complex and complicated relationship between guerrillas and indigenous peoples in context. Inspired by the Cuban experience, many came to the conclusion that guerrilla warfare was the best strategy for the acquisition of power. This led to militaristic organisations, marked by hierarchical, centralised and inflexible structures which did not facilitate processes of learning and dialogue. I have sought to suggest that a greater emphasis on dialogical learning and co-operative organisation in the context of seeking to understand indigenous peoples and their worldviews could have contributed to the avoidance of the types of tendencies to self-destructive behaviour (Mkandawire, 2002) which I have analysed in this article.

There is a great need for more investigation into the armed organisations' abilities to learn and grow from the encounters with indigenous peoples, and how this affected the outcomes of their struggles. Moreover, the Zapatista experience demonstrates that a different type of encounter was, and remains possible, given the right circumstances

I believe further research into the relationship between guerrilla organisations, indigenous peoples and repression will enrich our understanding of the history of social movements in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico. But I also believe that what we already know of the experiences discussed in this article raises some important questions for future research on social movements in Latin America and beyond: Who do the movements represent? What type of communication and learning goes on within the social movement? Are certain groups excluded from fully participating? These questions challenge some of the

traditional categories and perspectives associated with Marxist analysis, by instead focusing on the lived experiences of the participants in these movements and the relationships with society which they develop.

They also raise a number of other questions such as: how are participants changed by their experiences?; how do social agents outside the guerrilla interpret and relate to the movement?; how are particular tactics or strategies shaped by misunderstandings, lack of openness or even fixed categories such as the idea of the "new man" which invisibilise emotions such as fear, sadness and compassion? By addressing these complexities, we develop a greater sensitivity to the subaltern experience of revolutionary struggles, which can enrich our understanding of the realities and challenges which confront a movement aspiring towards national liberation.

The experiences from Nicaragua, Guatemala and Chiapas indicate that such questions need to be investigated in order to understand why some movements fail, and others succeed, in their struggles.

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## **British Tuition Fee Protest, November 9, 2010, London<sup>1</sup>**

**Musab Younis**

The 2010 decision by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat governing coalition in Britain to allow universities to virtually triple tuition fees was part of a package of measures designed to cut the government's higher education budget almost in half (from £7.1bn to £4.2bn) in just four years. The decision sparked what has widely been seen as one of the largest and most active social movements seen in Britain in some years – described by one commentator as “a grassroots social movement the breadth of which some feel we have not seen since the late 1960s”.<sup>2</sup>

The movement, composed overwhelmingly of school, college, and university students, emerged effectively overnight after the results of the Browne Review, commissioned by the previous Labour government to consider the future direction of higher education funding in Britain, were published on 12 October 2010. The review, which was chaired by Lord Browne of Madingley, former chief executive of BP, provided a blueprint for the neoliberal transformation of higher education in Britain.<sup>3</sup> As Cambridge professor Stefan Collini remarked, its central position was that “we should no longer think of higher education as the provision of a public good” that is “largely financed by public funds” but instead “as a lightly regulated market in which consumer demand, in the form of student choice, is sovereign in determining what is offered by service providers (i.e. universities).” The report's recommendation to completely eliminate the annual block grant currently made by the government to universities to underwrite their teaching is, noted Collini, “more than simply a ‘cut’, even a draconian one” because “it signals a redefinition of higher education and the retreat of the state from financial responsibility for it” – higher education effectively transformed from a public good to a marketised private product.<sup>4</sup>

Mass meetings were held in colleges and universities immediately after the results of the review were published, leading to the formation of dozens of autonomous groups across the country. A wave of spontaneous action followed: dozens of universities went under occupation, and a mass demonstration was held in London that drew up to 52,000 people. During the demonstration the

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<sup>1</sup> This event analysis draws mainly on secondary data from British newspaper reports, with reference to some academic studies published between 1971 and 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Kingsley, “The new age of student protest”, *The Guardian*, 29 November 2010.

<sup>3</sup> The other members of the review panel were: Sir Michael Barber, advisor to a former Labour minister; Diane Coyle, a former Treasury economist; David Eastwood and Julia King, university vice chancellors; Rajay Naik, a Big Lottery Fund board member; and Peter Sands, a banker.

<sup>4</sup> Stefan Collini, “Browne's Gamble”, *London Review of Books*, 32/21, 4 November 2010.

Millbank tower in London, which houses the headquarters of the Conservative Party, was occupied, setting the protest apart from the general tendency of British protests to conform to assigned routes and avoid direct action.

Initially condemned by institutional leaders, including the president of the National Union of Students (NUS) and the general secretary of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU), the new commitment to non-violent direct action received vocal and widespread support amongst grassroots members of the broader movement. As a result, many of those who had opposed the method of protest were quickly forced to backtrack – the NUS President famously apologising for what he called his “spineless” lack of support for university occupations. Further demonstrations were held in London on 24 and 30 November, drawing large crowds and punitive police responses. This took the form of a renewed police commitment to the open-air imprisonment of protesters known as “kettling”. As the day of the scheduled vote on education reform in the House of Commons approached, students prepared for another mass demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament in central London. The vote, which passed, and the demonstration, both took place on December 9.

### **December 9: “I didn’t see anything in their eyes”**

On the day of the tuition fee vote in Parliament, an estimated 50,000 people, including many schoolchildren, took part in two demonstrations that had been organised in central London: one by the NUS; the second (substantially larger) by the University of London Union (ULU) and the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC). The larger protest marched from Bloomsbury towards Parliament, where the Metropolitan police had already stationed lines of riot police, blocking access to the building. At around 2pm, protesters pushed down barriers and entered Parliament Square, the public square opposite the Houses of Parliament, with “the centre of Parliament Square taken over in a matter of moments.”<sup>5</sup> By 2.32pm, the Guardian reported that the “entire police line has just switched to riot gear” and, at 2.52pm, that the protesters were becoming “increasing [*sic*] frustrated at having nowhere to go.” The kettle had already begun: by around half past three, the Metropolitan police officially confirmed that “containment” was in place.

In keeping with a now wearily familiar pattern, which is well understood by the police, the atmosphere of a substantially calm protest was transformed by the “containment” which lasted all day – most were unable to leave for eight hours or more – and by the behaviour of the police. The journalist Shiv Malik reported at 4.30pm that he had been knocked down by “a baton strike” that fell “directly onto the crown of my head” – “I felt a big whacking thud and I heard it reverberating inside my head.” He “asked a police officer” if he “was bleeding”, but the reply was: “Keep moving, keep moving”; at this point Malik realised

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<sup>5</sup> *The Guardian*, “Student protests – as they happened”, 9 December 2010.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/blog/2010/dec/09/student-protests-live-coverage?INTCMP=SRCH>

"there was blood everywhere" and "asked another police officer, who was wearing a police medic badge, if he could help me" but was told "to move away" and "go to another exit", by which point "blood was streaming down the back of my head." Malik was eventually assisted by student protesters and had to walk a substantial distance to catch a cab to hospital.<sup>6</sup>

This treatment of protesters and even journalists – imprisonment, police violence, and subsequent refusal of medical attention – became so commonplace throughout the day that there was little discussion of it, especially in the British press, which virtually censored reports such as these. A minor exception was one regional page on the BBC website – the small "Sheffield and South Yorkshire" page – which flatly contradicted, in unusual detail, the BBC's main position on the demonstration. The page consists of an account by a 17-year-old girl who had been on the protest and is worth quoting in some detail. "Still shaken up, with tremors in her voice," the girl described "angry clashes" with her and her friends "caught between the violence and police." With no escape route, trapped in the kettle, they were pushed towards the police, who "saw us coming towards them, these teenage girls who wanted to go home"; the police "didn't show any mercy whatsoever" but "threw around my friends who were just 17 year old slim girls", "beating" them "with batons"; "They didn't show any sympathy in their voice and I didn't see anything in their eyes."

Her mother, who spoke to her on the phone at this point, said: "She was crying down the phone, I could hear girls screaming and crying in the background. It was the most horrible, scary thing I've heard." She called the Metropolitan Police who advised that the girls should go to the front line again and ask to be let out; the girls proceeded to do this, but "after begging in tears to be let out" they were "halted by another" police line; by this point "traumatised" and "crying" – "We were begging to, please, just let us go home" – they were "pushed forward a second time", pleading with the police "'please don't hurt us, just don't hurt us, we want to go home", when she "was pushed into a ditch by a police officer" and "turned around to see a group of my friends on the floor getting beaten by police officers"; another friend "who didn't manage to escape" "was thrown to the floor by the neck" and "beaten on the floor by three police officers until he was throwing up blood" at which point "they just threw him aside", "didn't give him any medical attention" and "moved on" to the next protester.<sup>7</sup>

It is an interesting exercise to check the British press coverage of the protest and note how many times experiences such as these were reported – as compared, for example, to the experiences of members of the royal family. It is also worth scanning the press coverage for a single mention of what was obvious to anyone at the protest: that these police strategies were systematic, deliberate, and

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<sup>6</sup> *The Guardian*, "Student protests – as they happened", 9 December 2010.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/blog/2010/dec/09/student-protests-live-coverage?INTCMP=SRCH>

<sup>7</sup> BBC, "Barnsley girl's account of violence at fees protest", 10 December 2010.

applied with the full knowledge that they endangered the safety and lives of protesters, including young children.

### **The squeeze of “containment”**

The tactics of the British police, who have benefitted from a decade of repressive legislation that is probably unparalleled in British history, had by December 9 been carefully developed to the point where they put an amusing perspective on the notion of a right to protest or free assembly. Open-air imprisonment, or kettling, has long been a favourite tactic. It has the double effect of frustrating protesters, precipitating attempts to leave that can be quickly painted as “violent clashes” caused by “anarchist protesters”, as well as substantially raising the costs in time, comfort and safety for those planning to attend protests. It dissuades many from even attempting to attend. These effects are so obvious and widely noted that it takes a significant departure from rationality to assume that they are not the intentions of the police when the tactics are planned.

Kettling has been controversially supported by the British courts when it has been challenged, such as in *Austin v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis*, as breaching Article 5 of the European Convention of Human Rights. (Court cases, including one started after the December 9 protest, are ongoing). A significant number of legal academics and experts regard the tactic as illegal because it directly breaches the rights to liberty and lawful detention. More recent police tactics developed in specific response to the student movement include “squeezing” the kettle, which involves charging into crowds of protesters, including with horses, containing people into spaces to the extent where any movement becomes difficult.

As was noted in the days following December 9, protesters had been “forced ... into such a tight ‘kettle’ on Westminster Bridge that they were in danger of being seriously crushed or pushed into the freezing River Thames”, with a senior doctor “who set up a field hospital in Parliament Square” noting that the police “had us so closely packed, I couldn't move my feet or hands an inch”; a situation that they remained in “for hours”, with people “having real difficulty breathing” – “the most disturbing thing I've ever seen,” remarked the doctor, who “repeatedly” “tried to speak to officers” and was inevitably ignored: “I'm surprised that no one died there.”<sup>8</sup> Video evidence of the same tactic being employed at a different police line on the same protest led to the police being condemned by some of their own advisers, including a the chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority's civil liberties panel. The panel said the footage was “appalling” and “ghastly”; another panel member commenting that the incident was the “most disturbing so far in a sequence that gets more risky and

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<sup>8</sup> *The Guardian*, “Kettle tactics risk Hillsborough-style tragedy – doctor”. 19 December 2010

threatening with each repeat": "The use of horses in such a situation is astonishing."<sup>9</sup>

As well as adopting tactics that seriously endangered the safety of protesters, the police (as seen with Shiv Malik above) showed a marked lack of interest in assisting people who had been injured. In the most prominent case, Alfie Meadows, a 20-year-old student who required emergency brain surgery after being hit on the head by a police truncheon, was taken in an ambulance to the nearest hospital only to be told, according to his mother, that it "had been given over to police injuries" and was "asked to take Alfie to another hospital"; they were moved into a different room because the police were "finding it upsetting to see protesters in the hospital".<sup>10</sup> But despite condemnations such as those by the Metropolitan Police Authority's civil liberties panel, revealingly rare in the press, the response of the British government has been to condemn the student protesters and suggest that the admirable restraint the police have shown in their handling of violent dissent has perhaps been stretched too far.

### **Post-protest crackdown**

On 26 November, after the mass "Millbank" demonstration, the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Paul Stephenson stated that "the game has changed"; the police "are going to be much more cautious" and "will be putting far more assets in place."<sup>11</sup> Stephenson's remarks were misleading: the tactics the police employed during the subsequent protests were not especially new, but a continuation of a package of repressive tactics developed during the previous government. Similarly, the manner in which the police have subsequently moved to criminalise protesters is familiar – at least to those who have been paying attention.

At a series of demonstrations held outside the Israeli Embassy in London in December 2008 and January 2009, protesting Israel's attack on Palestinians in Gaza and British complicity, protesters were met with predictable aggression from police. After the demonstrations 119 people were arrested for offences under "violent disorder" legislation. Most were arrested months after the protest using police intelligence from Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT), many in dawn raids on their homes in which entire families were handcuffed.<sup>12</sup> After being

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<sup>9</sup> *The Guardian*, "Kettling video 'appalling', police watchdog panel chair says", 22 December 2010

<sup>10</sup> A subsequent "internal investigation" by the Metropolitan police stated that the mother's claim had been "disproved", without providing alternative evidence, and issued a press statement that was obediently reported by the national media. This fits neatly into a pattern of systematic distortion and self-exoneration that has become a trademark of the Metropolitan police.

<sup>11</sup> BBC, "Met Police commissioner predicts 'disorder' on streets", 25 November 2010

<sup>12</sup> <http://gazademosupport.org.uk/about-2/about/>

pressured by presiding judges and their own defences to plead guilty to violent disorder charges, overwhelmingly resulting from harmless acts like throwing an empty bottle towards a gate, the young defendants suddenly found themselves facing sentences of eighteen months or two years in prison. A group formed to support the protesters noted at the time that: "Thousands of British people feel that they no longer have the option of attending a political demonstration without being targeted by the police."<sup>13</sup> The Metropolitan police were much later forced to pay a substantial sum to two brothers after they won a civil claim following police assault at the demonstration (their initial complaint to the police had, of course, been quickly dismissed).<sup>14</sup> Inevitably, most of the police violence at the demonstration remained unchallenged. Barely any of the young people who were targeted during and after were in a position to engage with a complicated and biased complaints system, let alone file civil claims, when their families, in some cases, could barely afford to visit them in prison.

Adapting their tactics for the growing student movement, the Metropolitan police after the 10 November Millbank protest began issuing to the press photographs of protesters whom they wished to "trace" in connection with "violence."<sup>15</sup> This decision, most likely devised by (or in conjunction with) the £6.8m-a-year Metropolitan Police Department for Public Affairs, effectively criminalises at a stroke dozens of people who have not been charged in connection with any crime. For a police force obsessed with public relations, and heavily funded to ensure its own version of events becomes the mainstream narrative, staged coups such as these have as much to do with shaping the public perception of the social movement as they do with policing it. After the December 9 protest, the police again issued a series of photographs over a number of days and the press compliantly ran the images, often on front pages.

The press tends to avoid reporting police operations as systematic or linked to a broader economic policy, but it does sometimes report particular incidents, which are usually implied to be isolated cases regardless of how often they are repeated. One of these events is worth noting as indicative of current police behaviour. On 7 December – two days before the major tuition fee protest – a 12-year-old boy, Nicky Wishart, organised a protest to take place outside Prime Minister David Cameron's constituency office to "highlight the plight" of Wishart's "youth centre, which is due to close in March next year due to budget cuts." (Wishart lives in Cameron's Oxfordshire constituency.) In response, "the school was contacted by anti-terrorist officers" and the boy was "taken out of his English class" and "interviewed by a Thames Valley officer at the school in the presence of his head of year"; the officer told him "that if any public disorder took place at the event he would be held responsible and arrested": "we will arrest people and if anything happens you will get arrested because you are the

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<sup>13</sup> <http://gazademosupport.org.uk/about-2/about/>

<sup>14</sup> *The Guardian*, "Met pays £25,000 to twins for injuries at Gaza demo", 12 July 2010.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, "Student protests: police issue pictures in hunt for rioters", 17 November 2010.

organiser." Wishart was told he would be arrested "even if [he] didn't turn up", and that "armed officers will be there so if anything out of line happens ...". The boy's mother, who lives "10 minutes down the road", was not present for the interview.<sup>16</sup>

It is currently unclear how many are to be charged in connection with the 9 December protests or how severe the charges will be but the Gaza protest cases, and a catalogue of recent police actions, set troubling precedents.

### **Repression and redistribution**

The repression of the student movement is in direct response to its early success in presenting a serious and dynamic opposition to the British government's expressed plans for public spending cuts that will transform the nature of social provision in Britain. The concomitant development of repression, especially that which is first directed at particular groups before being extended, and neoliberalisation, is a theme which extends back to the 1970s.

The post-1979 Conservative attack on the welfare state, which has been amply documented elsewhere, included early cuts to the higher education budget that look meek in comparison to those currently proposed.<sup>17</sup> But while the government which she led enacted the cuts, Margaret Thatcher personally endowed a £2m chair in "enterprise studies" at Cambridge: the aim was "to promote a wider understanding of the principles of free enterprise, with reference to political and economic freedom and market economy, under the rule of law."<sup>18</sup>

And the message was reinforced elsewhere, as public spending was not so much cut (it stayed almost constant) as redirected toward more deserving sectors of society. Privatisation offered the opportunity to undersell public assets through complicated schemes: it was later estimated that at least £10bn, and probably much more, was transferred from public to private hands in this way.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, according to a detailed 1988 study, the social housing that "serves the most vulnerable and marginal groups in society" was systematically undermined, a move which was paralleled "by the growth of an underclass of economically and socially excluded households" that transformed the public housing sector to a US-style system of mass social segregation. The "considerable success" that direct state provision had achieved in reducing the connections between low income and poor quality housing was thus substantially reversed, in a pattern that was to become familiar as attacks on

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<sup>16</sup> *The Guardian*, "Schoolboy warned by police over picket plan at David Cameron's office", 10 December 2010.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=410485>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/1997-8/weekly/5726/12.html>

<sup>19</sup> BBC, "Privatisation 'needs overhaul' ", September 3 1998.

public provision continued (Forrest and Murie 1988: 11 - 13). All this took place as wealth was redistributed, with state supervision, towards the top income percentiles. In 1989, a Labour politician observed that "an extraordinary transfer of resources, from poor to rich, has taken place."<sup>20</sup> The politician was Gordon Brown, under whose tutelage the "extraordinary transfer of resources" continued with renewed vigour. By 2009 Britain was a more unequal country than at any time since modern records began in the early 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Developments took place in tandem: as fuel poverty more than doubled in the mid-2000s, energy companies were able to post record profits, with British Gas seeing its profits rise 98 percent in the first half of 2010.<sup>22</sup>

The growth of black and Asian populations in Britain, a result of postwar labour shortages and a complex imperial history, enabled the development of state repression that mirrored in interesting ways the techniques that had been developed in the colonies to deal with the rise of agency amongst populations in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. By 1982 it was possible for a number of authors to claim that: "the presence of black people in Britain has become constructed ideologically as a national problem, thereby rendering them subject to specific and intense forms of control and repression" (Solomos et al. 1982: 21). Widespread puzzlement was expressed as young people took to the streets in 1980 and 1981 in riots across a series of British cities, even while a decade of reports had been warning of an imminent reaction to police and state provocation. As a police officer had explained to a journalist in 1971: "When these people have their heads full of pot and alcohol, spurred on by the thumping beat of these reggae records, they are not humans any more, and only those who don't like themselves would set out to treat them as humans" (Humphry and John 1971). The same year, National Opinion Polls reported the results of a major survey into race relations: "It is somewhat dismaying to see the extent to which coloured people are critical of the police" (quoted in Hall et al. 1978: 45).

It can be surprising to recall that there was discussion of the "parallel growth of repressive state structures and new racisms" and even "the construction of an authoritarian state in Britain" (Solomos et al. 1982: 9) as early as 1982, because the pre-1997 period is now commonly seen as a virtual liberal paradise. Consider some of the "illiberal laws" highlighted by a major politician in 2006 as in need of repeal: Part 2 of the Extradition Act 2003, which allows for extradition to the US without prima facie evidence; the new conditions created on public assemblies in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003; new trespass laws and restrictions on protest outside Parliament in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005; the control orders legislation in the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 that allows for virtual house arrest without charge or trial;

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<sup>20</sup> John Newsinger, "Brown's Journey from Reformism to Neoliberalism", *International Socialism*, 2 July 2007.

<sup>21</sup> *The Guardian*, "UK's income gap widest since 60s", 8 May 2009.

<sup>22</sup> *The Guardian*, "British Gas sees profits rise 98% in first half of year", 28 July 2010.



and so on. New Labour's record was thus described as: "a frenzied approach to law-making, thousands of new offences, an illiberal belief in heavy-handed regulation, an obsession with controlling the minutiae of everyday life"<sup>23</sup>.

The politician who blasted Labour's record of social control here was, of course, Nick Clegg, under whose deputy premiership the current "appalling" and "ghastly" police response to protest takes place. By 2009, a three-year study published by the conservative International Commission of Jurists found that fear over terrorism was used to undermine human rights law and introduce repressive measures of social control that were illegal and counter-productive,<sup>24</sup> while in the same year a United Nations report criticised the UK for violating international bans on torture by participating in the illegal US "renditions" programme.<sup>25</sup> All this barely constitutes a footnote to Britain's involvement in international torture and domestic repression, a record which is by now truly impressive.

While the British press have been tellingly incapable of presenting alternatives to the public sector cuts – though detailed alternatives, of course, exist<sup>26</sup> – it has been impossible to ignore the growing influence of the new student movement, which grew weekly in effectiveness as the police response became predictably more severe. It is yet too early to tell whether this crucial year will represent the victory of an emergent British social movement, or the successful implementation of a unique austerity programme forced onto a recalcitrant population.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Independent*, "Blair's 'frenzied law making': a new offence for every day spent in office", 16 August 2006

<sup>24</sup> BBC, "Anti-terror tactics 'weaken law' ", 16 February 2009.

<sup>25</sup> See BBC, "UN criticises UK 'rendition role' ", 10 March 2009; *The Independent*, "Terrorist threat 'exploited to curb civil liberties' ", 17 February 2009.

<sup>26</sup> For just one of many examples, see Unison's Alternative Budget, not reported in the press: <http://falseeconomy.org.uk/files/unison-budget.pdf>.

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## About the author

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## **Campanha “Não partam a minha casa”**

**Dino Jimbi**

A situação da habitação em África tem gerado muita controvérsia, principalmente, desde que os países desse continente atingiram a independência.

Em Angola, o direito a uma habitação condigna tarda em ser realizado. Os dados oficiais revelam que mais de 70 por cento da população do país - que atinge, actualmente, cerca de 18 milhões de habitantes - não possui habitação condigna.

Por altura das eleições legislativas realizadas em Setembro de 2008, o Governo de Angola prometeu a construção de 1 milhão de focos habitacionais em todo o país, até 2012. Neste momento, parece-nos uma promessa de difícil concretização. Chega-se mesmo a duvidar de que, até 2012, sejam construídas metade das casas inicialmente prometidas.

Desde 2008, têm-se destruído mais casas do que se têm construído. Milhares de pessoas têm vindo a ser desalojadas em todo o país, principalmente, nas províncias de Luanda, Huila e Benguela, onde se verificou, de forma catastrófica, a destruição de milhares de casas.

As casas construídas no quadro dos projectos de habitação social têm um valor mínimo de 60 mil dólares norte-americanos. Desta forma, estas casas acabam por só beneficiar aqueles que já têm rendimentos. As famílias com rendimento muito baixo - a maioria - nunca vão conseguir pagar este valor. Por muitos anos que passem. Para já não falar da questão da corrupção e do nepotismo, vírus que impede o desenvolvimento de Angola mas, que, infelizmente, está em todos os sectores.

É neste contexto que surge a Campanha “Não partam a minha casa”, que faz parte do Projecto Habitação desenvolvido pela OMUNGA. Esta campanha tem como objectivos promover o respeito, a protecção e a realização do direito a uma habitação adequada nos municípios do Lobito e de Benguela, criando também, material, modelos metodológicos e boas práticas para a defesa deste direito.

A campanha “Não partam a minha casa” teve início com a organização de uma manifestação contra as demolições e os desalojamentos forçados. Esta manifestação estava programada para o dia 25 de Março de 2010, mas, sem justificação convincente, foi proibida pelo governo provincial de Benguela. Depois de muita insistência e do envio de muitas cartas manifestando discordância com a proibição do direito de reunião e de manifestação, direito esse, previsto na Constituição de Angola, foi possível realizar a marcha no dia 10 de Abril de 2010.

Uma outra actividade de grande relevo para a campanha foi a realização da Conferência Nacional Contra as demolições e os desalojamentos forçados que envolveu comunidades de Benguela, Luanda, Huila, Kuanza Sul e Lunda Sul. Participaram também algumas organizações estrangeiras, nomeadamente, do Brasil e a No-Vox, de França. A conferência foi realizada pela OMUNGA, de 29 a 31 de Julho, em parceria com a ACC, APDCH e SOS-HABITAT. Teve o apoio da fundação CEAR, OSISA, OXFAM-NOVIB e da WORLD LEARNING.

Também no âmbito desta campanha foi realizado um documentário de denúncia com o mesmo nome. O documentário foi filmado nas províncias de Benguela, Luanda e Huila, províncias nas quais se registaram mais destruições de casas. Este documentário está a ser distribuído de forma gratuita. A estratégia adoptada foi a de usar o filme para ser projectado nas várias comunidades, em encontros, conferências, etc.

Neste momento, está também em curso a distribuição de mil camisolas com mensagens relativas à campanha, em todo o país e no exterior. Está igualmente em curso a produção e distribuição de autocolantes, bem como a produção de *outdoors* para dar mais visibilidade à campanha.

Várias comunidades do país e organizações nacionais e internacionais têm sido envolvidas na campanha. Tem-se também usado como estratégia a publicação de material de informação para dar mais visibilidade à problemática da habitação em Angola e à existência da campanha que surgiu com o intuito de acabar com as práticas das demolições e dos desalojamentos forçados em Angola, particularmente, em Benguela, sem ter o cuidado de, previamente, criar condições de realojamento das vítimas.

A campanha tem tido um grande impacto, tanto na província como por todo o país. Algumas comunidades que tinham sido ameaçadas de desalojamento forçado sem indemnização, como, por exemplo, a Feira do Lobito, a Cabaia, o prédio 74 na Restinga do Lobito, têm hoje a esperança de que essa ameaça não se venha a concretizar.

Para a promoção e o desenvolvimento desta campanha têm-se revelado fundamentais a realização de debates e de manifestações pacíficas, a produção e distribuição de material de informação e a publicação de cartas abertas.

O laranja foi a cor escolhida para cor oficial da campanha.

### **Perfil do autor**

**Dino Jimbi** is 26 years old. He was born and raised in the province of Benguela, in Angola. He is a journalist and human rights activist and has been working for the past six years for OMUNGA, a human rights NGO based in Lobito, Angola. He is currently working on projects related to housing rights.

## **G20 mobilizing in Toronto and community organizing: opportunities created and lessons learned**

**Mac Scott**

This action note is written based on demonstrations and actions organized in Toronto in June of 2010, to protest and disrupt the meetings of the G20 that were happening at the time. More specifically, this note attempts to explore the following questions: how can radical anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchy<sup>1</sup> community organizations form lasting coalitions? Is it possible to use large scale mobilizations to assist in achieving this goal? And if so how?

I am active in the Toronto anti-poverty (and anti-capitalist) organization, "Ontario Coalition Against Poverty" (OCAP) and the migrant justice organization "No One Is Illegal" (NOII). I call myself an anarcho-communist, but there may be some who disagree as to whether I fit those politics.

### **Background**

The G20<sup>2</sup> had its meeting in Toronto on June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> while the G8<sup>3</sup> met 5 hours north of Toronto in Huntsville on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Local activists in Toronto came together, some to protest the policies of these organizations, and some to protest their very existence. A week of protest events was organized under the umbrella of the Toronto "Community Mobilization Network" (TCMN), a network emphasizing community-based organizing, anti-capitalist politics, and embracing a diversity of tactics<sup>4</sup>. The week of protest began with an anti-poverty demonstration on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> of June: a demonstration on sexuality and gender justice on the Tuesday (featuring our unloved Prime Minister in drag, dry humping a leather daddy); a demonstration for environmental justice on the Wednesday; an Indigenous Sovereignty demo on the Thursday<sup>5</sup>; a community-

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<sup>1</sup> I will use radical to define groups with an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal politic. It often occurs in North American organizing that radical is used on the basis of tactics. I think this is an error, though I recognize that a variety of tactics including those defined as "radical" may be necessary to defeat capitalism, imperialism and patriarchy.

<sup>2</sup> Representatives of the 20 wealthiest nations in the world, formed well prior to the economic collapse, but having gained much more prominence since that collapse.

<sup>3</sup> Likewise, leaders of the top 8 wealthiest nations.

<sup>4</sup> A policy whereby activist groups agree to respectfully discuss tactical differences and to support each other despite these differences; choosing to avoid discussing these differences in the media or to the police.

<sup>5</sup> The colonial creation named Canada features a large number of indigenous nations who are in contention with the Canadian state: many never had their sovereignty extinguished, others had

led demonstration on the Friday June the 25<sup>th</sup> that demanded migrant justice, the liberation of the poor, an end to racist and police violence, cuts to social services, and linked these and other issues important to base communities in Toronto, to the austerity policies of the G20 and G8; a large permitted demonstration was organized by unions on the Saturday, with a breakout march that challenged the security fence erected around the meeting; and the week ended on the Sunday with a number of smaller actions including a bike block, an anti-prison demonstration and a civil disobedience demonstration.

### **The context**

The real organizing for this week began only six months before the June mobilization. In particular, the Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> action that I will focus on began to be organized in March. The organizing reflected the context of left organizing in the city – there were long standing radical groups doing anti-poverty (anti-capitalist work); migrant justice work (anti-imperialist work); radical disability rights work; loose networks of radicals doing queer liberation work and feminist (anti-patriarchal work); and loose networks of environmental justice organizers and a very active Palestinian solidarity movement, headed by the “Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid” (CAIA). Prior to the G20, these organizations had worked together informally, supporting each other’s actions, campaigns, and disagreeing with each other at times<sup>6</sup>. When the organizing for the G-20 began, these groups started to work more closely.

Around the same time, an anti-capitalist assembly called the “Worker’s Assembly” had formed and the June 25<sup>th</sup> organizing officially happened out of this body. While this body has performed a useful and important role in Toronto for building analysis and some campaign work, especially around the funding and accessibility of public transit, before the G20, it was still very new and working out its role in the Toronto Left.

The organizing was also rooted in the history of large scale summit actions in North America<sup>7</sup>. These actions, often using a militant range of tactics, and

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their sovereignty extinguished under threat of violence or under fraud or both, and where there are legal treaties they have been broken and ignored.

<sup>6</sup> Coalition for June 25<sup>th</sup> was the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, No One Is Illegal, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, the Gender Justice Folks, DAMN 2025, Environmental Justice folks, with peripheral involvement from Justicia for Migrant Workers and the South Asian Women’s Rights Organization. Post G-20 people doing harm reduction work and HIV/Aids work became more involved, and the Environmental Justice folks formed Environmental Justice Toronto.

<sup>7</sup> So called since they tended to be based around large scale summits. The most well known would be the actions and protests against the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle which shut down these meetings in 1999. There were many other such protests following Seattle, including a huge series of demonstrations and direct actions when the North American Free Trade organization met in Quebec City a few years after (probably the main “summit action” in Canada).

involving alliances between disparate movements, began to develop after the 1999 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization. Often people will include European and Global South Mobilizations in this wave, but I think there are particular features of the wave in Canada and the US. This wave included protests against various World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings, conventions of the key political parties in the United States, and in Canada, protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas Meeting in Quebec City (2001) along with a G8 meeting in Kanaskis Alberta (2002).

There were key debates that emerged out of these mobilizations (a major one being around diversity of tactics<sup>8</sup>, but this debate is not the subject of this action note). More central to this action note is the debate that emerged about whether or not it is useful for community-based radical organizations to become involved in organizing for such large scale mobilizations. This discussion was connected (in an essential way) to a concern about the overwhelmingly whiteness of the mobilizations, along with the overwhelmingly middle-classness of the mobilizations<sup>9</sup>, and more importantly to the cost to community-based organizations of such mobilizations (whether in terms of the cost to send members to these actions, or the cost of the repercussions on local community-based groups after these mobilizations - in terms of burn-out of organizers, and in terms of state repression).

### **What happened?**

These debates greatly influenced the organizing for the G20 and in many ways led directly to the politics of the TCMN, and to a coalition of community based organizations (the same aforementioned) taking on a key day: the June 25<sup>th</sup> action. In the lead up to the organizing both the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and No One Is Illegal (NOII) debated as to whether it was even a good idea to get involved to begin with, because of the concerns identified above. Somewhat as a result of these worries, the first coalition formed to organize the G20 protests fell apart<sup>10</sup>. We also debated whether or not it was a good idea to become very involved, specifically taking key leadership roles in the coalition, and for some organizations this is what happened. This put huge strains on our organizations.

To organize effectively in this context, we needed to work with groups we had never worked with before. For example, OCAP worked with environmentalists

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<sup>8</sup> The debate being as to whether the actions should prescribe which tactics would be acceptable in the actions, or embrace "a diversity of tactics" i.e. the idea that many different tactical approaches can be used beside each other, respecting each other even when disagreeing.

<sup>9</sup> Also the often male dominated leadership, the invisibility of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Transsexual/Two Spirited/Queer activists, and the many barriers to the involvement of disabled organizers and activists.

<sup>10</sup> Formed in the spring of 2009.



who later formed "Environmental Justice! Toronto". This was, to my knowledge, the first time OCAP had ever worked with an environmental group. Our organizations also got caught up in serious and hard debates with anti-capitalist groups organized around disruptive action during the summit (which ended up scheduled for the Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup>). This was very hard and often focussed on a divisive discussion of who was truly anti-capitalist (and built on an unfair distrust of these groups by the community organizations). Our historic divisions and prejudices (on all sides) played out in these discussions.

Despite this, somehow it all held together and by and large there was strong solidarity throughout the week and in particular during the June 25<sup>th</sup> action. This is not to say that there weren't any problems: it is still to be resolved whether June 25<sup>th</sup> was completely successful. The demonstration, which was intended to march to the fence around the meetings, making a number of symbolic stops at local sites symbolic of state oppression (such as a local welfare office, a transit stop inaccessible to people with physical disabilities, police headquarters, etc.) was seriously curtailed by a large and militarized police presence<sup>11</sup>. Although the final action of the protest did happen, a tent city of poor and homeless people took place in a park in the city's east end (an area long home to poor communities who have been increasingly policed out of the area along with being forced out by gentrification and the closing of services), many of the other actions/stops had to be abandoned, and the march did not get anywhere near the fence.

After the Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> action, there was severe state repression. Arrests began of organizers on the Saturday morning, followed by police violence and mass arrests ending up with over 1,100 arrests by the time the police stopped. Most of the most serious charges were directed towards the community organizations in Toronto. These charges of conspiracy mostly targeted at young organizers in allied organizations or in radical organizations (often community based) from outside Toronto such as "AW@L" (an organization doing very important anti-war and indigenous solidarity work) or the anarchist organization "South Ontario Anarchist Resistance".

In the aftermath of the week of protest, the support work for those charged continues. Even though this support and the legal defence has drained resources, and taken an emotional toll, it has actually brought different communities and organizations closer together (i.e. OCAP ended up doing solid support work at the courts). The coalition that organized the June 25<sup>th</sup> demonstration continues to work together. Although some fear and burn out prevailed at first, we have organized two militant demonstrations together versus the new right wing mayor in Toronto, Rob Ford.

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<sup>11</sup> 1 billion dollars was spent on the summit in total. It was the largest police operation (and arrest) in Canadian history involving a joint mobilization of federal, provincial and city police along with imported cops from across the country. New weapons including a sonic cannon, arwins (guns firing teargas and rubber projectiles), were introduced and a huge intelligence-stroke-sting covert operation was organized involving the deep planting of police officers amongst the organizing groups.

During this work, sometimes the tensions re-emerge. We are still learning how to work together across boundaries based on identity, based on the communities we work in, based on tactical differences and so on. And the repression continues, police go harder than ever before on actions, people are held overnight for things they would have been released for prior to the G20 demonstrations, police use much larger numbers for demonstrations including the new toys they acquired during the G20 protests (they had snipers on roof tops for a recent police brutality demonstration on March 15<sup>th</sup>).

However, the police also look worse than ever before. There have been three enquiries into the policing of the G20 protests, the Ontario Ombudsperson slammed aspects of the G20 policing as the worst civil liberties crisis in Canadian history and the main Toronto paper, the "Toronto Star" broke a series of photos showing that the police had covered up the identities of officers who had broken an activist's arm.

Almost a year later, the left is operating in much more of a right wing context. In the city election last fall, a fairly far-right mayor took office, and as I write this action note, the conservative (xenophobic, anti-poor, anti-woman, anti-queer) party is poised to win a federal election. At the provincial level, the so-called Liberal Party continues to wring its hands while cutting welfare cheques.

So what is my conclusion? At the risk of sounding flaky, I think movements are like relationships. For example our little anti-capitalist coalition is rocky, we fight each other and probably always will. Despite this (or perhaps because of it) we learn more and are more effective working together. We have made it through a bad time and if in some ways now it's harder we know we can make it through some rough shit. The coalition of grassroots community organizations that formed for the June 25<sup>th</sup> action still holds, and is still avowedly and publically anti-capitalist. I also think the thing I have got out of this experience is that learning how to work together, in particular learning new ways to talk and to disagree, is in many ways key to building revolution. I think we have learned some of how to do this through the G20 protests, and now we need to keep doing it.

In the end, as we build, we remember the old and true saying: they are many, but we are many, many more.

Fight to win!

### **About the author**

**Mac Scott** is an anarchist paralegal who likes to drink beer and hang out with his family. He's a member of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. He can be contacted at [smack AT tao.ca](mailto:smack AT tao.ca).

## **“I’m in the news today, oh boy”: responding to smear tactics and media bullying**

**Aileen O’Carroll, Alessio Lunghi and Laurence Cox**

It is quite common for activists to be smeared and pursued by the media. Often this follows from deliberate leaks of personal information by police to crime journalists, who depend on them for their stories. It is important for to remember that this is **bullying**; it is a technique used by the powerful to silence opposition.

Your reactions and responses will be similar to those who have experienced other types of bullying, such as that which happens in the school yard or the workplace. “Bullying” can sound like something small that we should not be affected by in comparison with the seriousness of the issues we are working on. However, it can be very destructive personally and psychologically. It is a serious violation of one’s sense of self, and can trigger reactions associated with our past experiences of violence, intimidation and abuse.

It is important to remember that this is not your fault.

It is important to recognise what is happening to you as *bullying*.

It is important to realize that you are not alone. That this has happened to activists in the past and will happen again in the future.

Happily however, unlike other types of bullying, usually this type of bullying media attention **does not last long**. The media move on to other stories. The media’s role is ultimately to produce sensationalist reports with the aim of increasing the size of their audience. Journalists play a role in this and produce articles that reinforce the opinions of their readership whilst also promoting the views and interests of the owners of the media outlet. That is not to say that people will believe everything that’s written in the media; most people are generally skeptical about the truth of the media, and often will forget stories soon after they have read them.

### **Bullying techniques used by the media**

#### **1. They might attempt to belittle your political beliefs:**

- They may quote things you have done or said out of context.
- They may try to use your family background or work history to undermine your political beliefs.

- They may make inflated claims of your influence and standing in the movement. You may be described as a "leader" or a "ring-leader" or even a mastermind!
- They may invent or make up details about your background.

Criticisms and allegations, which are ostensibly about you and which sometimes contain a grain (but only a grain) of truth, are **not** about you. Do not be fooled by that grain of truth into believing the criticisms and allegations have any validity - they do not. The purpose of criticism is political; it is an attempt by the powerful to take control of a situation back. Remember they are acting in this way because they feel threatened.

## **2. They might attempt to undermine your sense of self:**

- They may try to ridicule or mock you, try to damage your reputation using gossip or rumours.
- Women in particular may face criticism of your looks, they may take unflattering photographs, criticise your sexual behaviour, your sexual orientation or relationship status; if you have children you may be depicted as a "bad mother".

## **3. They might attempt to invade your privacy:**

- They may come to your house or follow you.
- They may take photographs of you without your permission.
- They may ring your friends, family, or workplace for quotes or photographs. For some reason they often want baby photographs.
- They may attempt to intimidate you or use aggressive language.

## **4. Their articles may try to threaten you in other ways:**

- If you are employed, they may suggest that you should not be employed to do your current job.
- If you are not a citizen, they may suggest that you should not be allowed to remain in the country.

It is important to remember that these threats are almost always ineffective in themselves - but what they do is to provoke a sense of fear and insecurity by falsely linking your political views to other things. (In many countries it would be illegal for an employer to dismiss you over your political beliefs, for example.)

## **Emotions that you may feel**

All this might make you feel vulnerable, angry, worried, useless, threatened, powerless, lonely, excluded, anxious about going outside, ashamed, embarrassed, guilty, afraid, or exposed.

These are normal reactions, but they are also tactics of control. Guilt and fear are how all abusers control and silence their victims: the victim comes to believe the lies that the abuser tells about them, or is afraid that others will believe them.

## **What can you do for yourself?**

Don't try and tackle this bullying alone. Draw on your support networks, friends, family, and comrades.

**Answering the allegations:** Don't respond to the media on their terms. If you are being doorstepped, close the door. If they ring you, say "no comment". Often it is best not to respond at all. If you feel impelled to respond, give yourself time to think about it, or talk to a friend. Often bullies and journalists are seeking to provoke a response: your emotion sells their newspapers, and helps them to make "their" story run and run.

If you do decide to respond, discuss the best way to do it with your friends and fellow activists. Respond on your terms in your own time. Make your own film or recording of any interaction. Talk to the sections of the media that have been sympathetic or trustworthy, and not to those that have been bullying you. Remember, you do not have to talk to the media directly, instead you can release press statements to your own independent media.

If you are being followed or intimidated, take out your phone and film or photograph them back.

**Be aware that we are all social animals.** Often we are influenced by we see and hear in the media. You may internalise some of the criticisms made of you. Your friends may believe some of the 'hidden truths' told about you.

**Talk:** Find a friend who you can talk to, talk about the media are doing, and how it is making you feel. If this is a time of intense media attention, try and debrief at least once a day.

**Write:** Keep a journal, a logbook or a write a list. Try and work out how the media is attempting to bully you, how that is affecting you, and reassure yourself that the media stories are not true; use positive self-talk techniques.

**Contact:** family members and friends and tell them what is happening. Ask them not to comment or respond to journalists. If you are worried about your employer, and you feel they may be understanding, also tell them what is happening.

**Look after yourself:** If you have relaxation strategies, use them. Try meditation, swimming, exercise, reading, gardening, walking your dog. Cats make excellent pet therapists.

Treat yourself! If there are things you enjoy, go and do them: movies, gigs, hanging out with friends. If you have trouble sleeping or repetitive thoughts, go and see your doctor or a counsellor.

**Research:** Look for online resources. Find anti-bullying material for adults, or resources for people dealing with sexual harassment and stalkers, etc.

Three good starting points for activists are Marina Bernal's *Self-care and self-defence manual for feminist activists*, online at <http://files.creaworld.org/files/self-care-brochure.pdf> (14 megabytes so a slow download); Jane Barry and Jelena Dordevic's booklet about how women human rights defenders cope, online at <http://www.urgentactionfund.org/assets/files/WtPoftheRevolution/UAF-Book%201-WEB.pdf>; and the Activist Trauma Support material at <http://www.activist-trauma.net>.

When it is over, be on hand to help other activists who find themselves in the same situation. If you can, write an account or share your experience with others. We grow stronger by learning from each other.

### **For family and friends**

If a friend or family member is at the receiving end of a smear campaign your support is vital. They will need reassurance. They will need someone to listen. They will need distraction. Be aware of the emotions they may be feeling (outlined above). Remember, that although we often we deal with stress by humour, teasing is not a supportive or appropriate response to someone who is in a vulnerable position. Recognise that it is stressful to be the target of a media campaign. Be a good friend.

### **About the authors**

**Aileen O'Carroll** was a spokesperson for the Dublin Grassroots Network during the May Day protests in Dublin in 2004. A tabloid wrote an article titled "Anarchist organiser by night, teaches our children by day". She taught first year sociology university students at the time. She was also chased through through Dublin streets by a hostile and physically aggressive RTE *Prime Time* journalist, soundman and filmcrew. Eventually she was forced to hide in the Ladies' Room of a local pub. She continues to work both as a sociologist with an interest in working time, social movements and life history research, an activist and a trade-unionist. Her email is [aaocarroll AT gmail.com](mailto:aaocarroll@gmail.com).

**Alessio Lunghi** was first named as a key organiser in the run up to Mayday 2001 in the *London Evening Standard*, *Daily Mail*, *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* newspapers. This culminated with a front page expose a year later on May 2nd, 2002 again in the *London Evening Standard* - distributed to over 1 million people. Over an 8 year period, the most recent being in the lead up to the G20 demonstrations in London in 2009, alleged associations ranged from links to the PKK, Black Bloc and Italian anarchist groups. There have also been similar exposures in the *Irish Daily Mirror* and *Daily Star* in 2004 in the lead up to Dublin Mayday as well as newspapers in Italy namely *Corriera Della Sera*, *Il Sole 24 Ore* and *la Repubblica*, and in Scotland in the run up to the G8 demonstrations in 2005.

**Laurence Cox** has been involved in activist media work for a long time in a wide range of different contexts. He has occasionally come under fire from journalists and hate groups and has also supported friends targetted by media and Internet smears. A Buddhist meditation teacher, he has published research on personal sustainability for activists. His email is laurence.cox AT nuim.ie.

## **Globalisation and abstraction in the Bhopal survivors' movement**

**Eurig Scandrett and Suroopa Mukherjee**

### **Abstract**

*In the context of globalisation, the internationalisation of social movements has become a focus of research and theorisation. In particular there is a suggestion that new forms of internationalisation have emerged in response to globalised economic and technological developments. The movement of survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster has been cited as a "new/old breed of transnational social movement" whose internationalisation has been facilitated by the anti-toxics movement. Here it is argued that the dynamics of this movement are more complex than has been recounted, and that association with the international anti-toxics movement should be regarded as one form amongst several, of generalisation from the experience of local campaigning. By focusing on the divisions within the movement, the diversity of generalisations may be more properly understood. Raymond Williams' conception of militant particularism, as expounded by David Harvey, is a useful theoretical tool for interpreting the various forms of abstraction which the movement has developed. It is argued that not only does this approach provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of this and potentially other social movements, it is also valuable for movement activists to make sense of otherwise negative experiences of division, and thereby reduce the risk of such divisions being exploited.*

### **Introduction**

In a special issue of the journal *Global Social Policy* published on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bhopal gas disaster, Stephen Zavestoski (2009) locates the international mobilisation of the Bhopal justice campaign in the changing fortunes of the global anti-toxics movement, as well as, ironically, in the global reach of the chemical industry itself:

the forces of globalization that facilitated the global expansion of the petrochemical industry are accompanied by counterforces in the form of social movement challenges to environmental hazards introduced by the industry... When the activities of multinational corporations transform material conditions of existence, whether through the spread of chemical hazards or otherwise, civil society responses take aim at a multinational target that necessitates transnational organizing. (Zavestoski 2009 p. 402)

This is a welcome contribution to the analysis of social movement studies, not least because of its emphasis on the dialectical relationships between social movement mobilisation and material conditions. However, because of his



interest in internationalisation, as Zavestoski himself acknowledges, his analysis is based only on a section of the Bhopal survivors' movement most focussed on international collaboration, the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB). In fact, the ICJB coalition of Bhopal-based groups and their international supporters represent only part of the Bhopal gas survivors' movement, which is divided between three or four rival campaigning groups. The local divisions are a result of a complex history of ideological and personal disagreements and are commonly interpreted as a source of weakness in the movement. The central argument of this paper is however that the factions have privileged contrasting abstractions from their militant particularist praxis, only one of which takes the form of environmental justice / anti-toxics internationalism. Despite the weaknesses which division inevitably brings, there is strength in the diversity of abstractions which enables the struggle to be fought on multiple fronts, with combinations of alliances which would be scarcely possible in a unified movement.

This paper draws on research conducted over the period 2007-2009 during which interviews were conducted with survivor-activists associated with the three principal campaigning groups in Bhopal: referred to here as the Women Workers' Campaign, the ICJB and the Pensioners' Front (Bhopal Survivors' Movement Study, 2009). The largest of the survivor groups is *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan* (Bhopal Gas Affected Women Workers' Campaign ("Women Workers' Campaign")), a traditionally organised mass movement which, despite its name, mobilises both men and women, and is led by Abdul Jabbar Khan.

The ICJB affiliated groups at the time of the research comprised the Stationery Workers' trade union *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh* ("Stationery Union"); a community based off-shoot of the Women Workers' Campaign *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangharsh Morcha* (Bhopal Gas Affected Women and Men's Struggle Front) and the solidarity group Bhopal Group for Information and Action (BGIA) - of which a key activist is Satinath Sarangi – and an additional affiliate which emerged during our research, Children Against Dow Carbide.

The smaller *Gas Peedit Neerashit Pension Bhogi Sangharsh Morcha* (Gas Affected Destitute Pension-Entitled People's Struggle Front ("Pensioners' Front")) is led by Balkrishna Namdeo and mobilises economically inactive older and disabled people. We will also refer to the solidarity group *Bhopal Gas Peedit Sangharsh Sahayog Samiti* (SSS) a largely solidarity group affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), although a limitation in our research is that we failed to get past the local leadership to interview survivors active in this group.

Research was based on the pedagogical methodology of Paulo Freire (1972) designed to maximise analytical dialogue between researchers and survivor-activists, without presumption of literacy. Interviews were video recorded and copies of interviews on CD were given to interviewees who were invited to provide additional comment. In many cases follow-up interviews were carried

out in order for researchers and activists jointly to interrogate emerging themes at a deeper level. Objects such as photographs were often used as both memory-aids and "codifications", encouraging critical interpretation of events. A total of 38 individuals were interviewed in Hindi (except for two who were interviewed in English) and four group discussions were conducted, including two which included structured feedback by researchers on emergent themes (Bhopal Survivors Movement Study 2009, Mukherjee et al 2011).

### **Historical development of the movement**

Local mobilisation of the Bhopal movement over the period since the 1984 disaster has occurred through several phases (Saranghi 1998, Bhopal Survivors Movement Study 2009, Mukherjee 2010, Mukherjee et al 2011). In the aftermath of the devastation, survivors, many of them sick, most of whom were multiply bereaved, took to the streets in an expression of unfocussed fury. In the days that followed, the immediate pressing need of providing relief, access to clean water, basic foodstuffs, medical attention and documentation of deaths, illnesses and loss of livestock and livelihood attracted volunteers from throughout India, many of whom brought considerable mobilisation experience through their political or religious affiliations. The principal organisation which was formed from these outsider volunteers was the *Zehreeli Gas Kand Sangharsh Morcha* ("*Zehreeli*"), led by a socialist Alok Pratap Singh, which formed local neighbourhood committees in the gas affected areas for the provision of necessities, gathering information and mobilising protests in support of demands. This, male dominated, outsider-led organisation effectively mobilised in the first few months after the disaster, although the broad range of ideologies which the *Zehreeli* encompassed, combined with sustained state repression, led to conflict, expulsions and disintegration within the space of a year.

The period during which it operated in 1985 was a turbulent time in Indian politics. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by Sikh separatists only two months before the gas leak, there were widespread anti-Sikh riots and a growing Maoist armed struggle (Naxalism) in tribal areas. At the same time, in Bhopal, American ambulance-chasing lawyers infiltrated the community, and Union Carbide, the US multinational company which established and controlled the Bhopal factory through its Indian subsidiary, was subverting legal and humanitarian processes in a bid to extricate itself from responsibility. Thus, despite widespread solidarity expressed throughout the globe, the *Zehreeli* was ambivalent about foreign involvement and reluctant to accept funds from overseas which might be used against them and provide an excuse for state repression.

After the disintegration of the *Zehreeli*, several factions continued, with a mixture of relationships with the state, local survivors, international supporters and Indian political parties. However, the next wave of mobilisation occurred

independently of this process, within the economic rehabilitation work-sheds established by the state and social entrepreneurs. These training workshops in tailoring, embroidery and stationery manufacturing were aimed at women survivors who had, prior to the disaster, largely been employed in domestic and home-based work such as beedi (local cigarette) rolling and piece-work tailoring. Whilst male manual labourers were in many cases incapacitated by the effect of the gas, wages earned by women could be expected to be spent on the family. However, these work-sheds had no accountability to local people, had poor working conditions and were oppressive, short term and endemically corrupt. The women experienced the exploitation of the labour process and started learning the tools of resistance: collective organisation, unionisation (in India it is possible to register an independent trade union at a single workplace), industrial confrontation and Gandhian techniques of direct action.

One of these unions (Women Workers' Campaign) expanded to include workers from several work-sheds, neighbourhood committees and other survivors in the gas affected communities. The Women Workers' Campaign thus became a broad front for male and female survivors, focused on economic demands of wages, employment conditions, compensation and other, more general issues. Another union (*Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh* (Stationery Union)) remained independent and became part of the ICJB some 15 years later.

In addition, a pre-existing welfare and campaign group for economically inactive people, *Neerashit Pension Bhogi Sangharsh Morcha* (Destitute Pension-Entitled People's Struggle Front) took up the cause of the gas affected elderly and disabled under the leadership of a local activist Balkrishna Namdeo, adding *Gas Peedit* (Gas Affected) to their name. These unions and campaign groups of survivors with indigenous leadership became the principal organisational structures for mobilising local people in the gas affected areas, often in alliance with small remnants of the *Zehreeli*.

One such remnant is the Bhopal Group for Information and Action (BGIA), led by Satinath (Sathyu) Sarangi, who has been considerably influential in the internationalisation of the movement. Sarangi has had a key role in forming the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal and in mobilising supporters and funds in the USA and Europe for projects in Bhopal.

### **Militant particularism and divergent abstraction**

The divergent praxes of these sections of the movement, it is argued, constitute contrasting processes of abstraction from a militant particularism in relation to the political opportunities afforded by the global structuring of capital as well as the internal relations of the movement itself. Raymond Williams' concept of militant particularism has been built on by David Harvey to explain how "[i]deals forged out of the affirmative experience of solidarities in one place get

generalised and universalised as a working model of a new form of society that will benefit all of humanity" (Harvey 1996 p. 32). However, he also draws attention to difficulties in this process:

The move from tangible solidarities understood as patterns of social life organised in affective and knowable communities to a more abstract set of conceptions that would have universal purchase involves a move from one level of abstraction – attached to place – to another level of abstraction capable of reaching out across space. And in that move, something was bound to be lost ... The shift from one conceptual world, from one level of abstraction to another, can threaten the common purpose and values that ground the militant particularism achieved in particular places (Harvey 1996 p. 33)

The higher level abstractions which can be achieved, whilst made possible by the material conditions in which the militant particularism arises, is not narrowly determined but can take a variety of forms. It is argued here that what we are seeing in the Bhopal Survivors' movement is a divergence in the forms of abstraction between sectors of the movement. This is illustrated by describing three forms of abstraction from the Bhopal movement's material conditions: environmental justice, which privileges the condition of being polluted; class struggle which emphasises the poverty of the gas victims; and gender, which highlights the fact that survivor activists are overwhelmingly female. ICJB has developed an environmental abstraction, whereas the Women Workers' Campaign has adopted a class analysis. Despite the emergence of a gendered critique amongst survivor activists and feminist commentators, gender has not emerged as an abstraction from the militant particularism of any sections of the movement.

### **Environmental justice**

In environmental abstraction, the primary collective experience of the survivors is the impact of pollution. The natural allies of survivors are those who are suffering in other pollution impacted communities in India or across the world, and the organisations who are campaigning against pollution. ICJB consists of the local survivors' groups and a network of Indian intellectuals, international supporters and groups such as Students for Bhopal in the USA, many of whom are linked into global anti-toxics and environmental movements. The Campaign has allied itself at various times with Greenpeace International and India's Centre for Science and Environment, each of which has conducted monitoring for pollutants.

The campaign prioritises detoxification and health care in a post-pollution situation, emphasising chemical-free environments and health-care critical of the power of the pharmaceutical industry. There is a strong focus on the ongoing pollution and water contamination from the site of the former factory – and indeed the pollution from the factory prior to the gas leak. A central campaign target is to pressurise Dow Chemical company to clean up the site to internationally high standards, and to mobilise communities wherever Dow attempts to build chemical hubs or deliver Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives in India. ICJB has also been relatively successful at constructing an

identity of *pani peedit*, or "water affected" so that recent arrivals and young people who were not exposed to the gas but have been exposed to contaminated water and other pollutants can join *gas peedit* as victims of the disaster

The process of environmental abstraction from militant particularism is illustrated by an interview extract from Rasheeda Bee, leader of the Stationery Union and an articulate and critical strategist, although uneducated and non-literate:

There were many people who were falling sick beside the Union Carbide walls and all around it. Why were they falling sick? Most of the women who I knew were from these areas where people were facing new problems. I met up with Sathyu and he told me about the contamination of the water. And after the [Greenpeace] reports in 1999 it was found for a fact that the water was indeed toxic. In one of the hand pumps black water started gushing out and every one went to see.

Greenpeace came in 2000 and it was after this that we in the Stationery [Union] joined hands with Sathyu. After hearing about the contaminated water, and from what I had learned over the years, I started to realise that this is about saving the world. What happened in Bhopal has already happened, but we need to join forces to stop it from happening again anywhere else in the world. I also came to know about the law that says the polluter must pay, which strengthened us all the more because we now knew that we had the law on our side... Then in 2004 the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal was formed.

There had been a conference in Japan in 1996 which some people from Bhopal had gone to. There had been a mercury leak from a factory in Japan and many people were affected and children were being born deformed. People had been fighting for justice for 40 years... We saw the situation there and the state of people. It was due to high amounts of mercury, which is also the case here in Bhopal. This meant that we could face the same problems that they have in Japan if we didn't do something about it and stand up against injustice.

Then in 2002 I went to South Africa for a conference regarding environment and its safety – the World Summit on Sustainable Development. There too I saw and heard more about Dow's atrocities... (Bhopal Survivors' Movement Study 2009 p. 113)

The particular abstraction from experience through contact with international environmental NGOs, pollution impacted communities and international conferences on sustainable development has contributed to an environmental justice framing of the ICJB.

In 2004 Rasheeda Bee and her fellow leader of the Stationery Union, Champa Devi Shukla, were jointly awarded the Goldman prize "for excellence in protecting the environment". For this, major international award for environmental campaigning to go to poor women, trade union leaders, one of whom is illiterate (and in the context of increasing communal divisions in India, one Muslim and one Hindu), was of major significance to international environmentalism and to the ICJB's reputation as an environmental justice movement. However its receipt amongst the other organisations in Bhopal was divisive, leading to public mockery, accusations of corruption and a split within the Stationery Union. In the context of Bhopal, the distinctiveness of Rasheeda Bee and Champa Devi Shukla is not their skills and commitment as leaders of a survivors' union (of which there are others in Bhopal) but rather their

willingness to court an international support base of environmentalists. For many in this non-literate culture of personal loyalty, this amounted to betrayal.

### **Class struggle**

The Women Workers' Campaign by contrast emphasises the class dimension of oppression. The campaign focus is largely on economic issues: compensation and economic rehabilitation: its primary campaign is for "five times compensation" and the organisation runs an economic rehabilitation training project, *Swabhimaan Kendra*, with state funding. Self-reliance is highly regarded to ensure that the interests of the survivors remain central to the movement and not distorted by the interests of funders or international organisations with their own agendas. The Women Workers' Campaign refers to the principled position taken by *Zehreeli* to refuse international support on the grounds that it leaves the group open to accusations of foreign political interference, and for the Women Workers' Campaign leader, Abdul Jabbar, this also has a class dimension:

For the first 10 years of the movement it seemed like a good idea to involve intellectuals just as they were active in the NBA [*Narmada Bachao Andolan* – Save the Narmada [river, against dams] movement]. Now such people think very lowly of the Bhopal gas movement, they think it's a nuisance. They never have it in them to struggle. I feel that they could not connect to the problems of the common man because their experience was all book based... During the British rule most of the intellectuals were in important positions in the system and they were the main hindrance to the freedom movement. It has been the same with the French revolution and the Russian revolution. The intellectuals are always with the rulers. So I would say that the uneducated people who do not possess 'literary' knowledge are the ones who can bring justice, much more than the educated... The poor will have to fight their own battle because the injustice has been done to them. I believe that all the major movements around the world have been led by the poor. The rich have only got in the way. (Bhopal Survivors' Movement Study p. 78-79)

The Women Workers' Campaign responds therefore to material conditions primarily through class-based struggles. The reference point of many of the movement's leaders is the *Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha*, led, before his assassination in 1992, by Miners' union leader Shankar Guha Niyogi whom Jabbar describes as his guru. On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gas disaster, the Women Workers' Campaign hosted a gathering of peoples' movements affiliated to the *Jan Vikas Andolan* (Peoples' Development Movement), which originates in the *Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha*, incorporating tribal, peasant and workers' movements from across India, whilst most international supporters and media focused on the activities of the ICJB.

This is absolutely not to say that environmental issues are of no interest to the Women Workers' Campaign, but environmental concerns are regarded as local problems, not abstracted to the same degree as other, especially class related issues. Here is Mohini Devi, a leader in Women Workers' Campaign and trainer in *Swabhimaan Kendra* discussing how her trade union involvement led to environmental awareness:

Issues picked up by the women were never restricted to workplace issues, they were open to the problems that people face over all. So their voices were raised for everything from medical health care, economic rehabilitation, compensation, environmental, social etc or for that matter the continuing rise in prices. For every problem, if you look at it on a larger level, there is a problem that relates all other humans not just the ones suffering in that place and time. This is why our solidarity went out to other campaigns also and likewise got the same back from them.

I have learnt the importance of the environment and the meaning of the term.

Environment is what surrounds us and it is very important for a person to know what his/her environment is. The *sangathan* has also raised a lot of environmental issues like the misuse of the big and small lakes in Bhopal. The Hindus (for idol immersion) and Muslims (tazia) use it for their religious rites and we have raised the issue of pollution due to these activities many times. This does not mean that I am a disbeliever but this is of course not acceptable even for me as a person who believes in God. Similarly on a larger scale when forests are cut in the Himalayas its impact will be felt throughout India. I am not aware about the global environmental issues but I know that large dams are causing huge impacts on the environment. (Bhopal Survivors' Movement Study 2009 p. 72)

For Mohini Devi and the Women Workers' Campaign, environmental issues are an extension of her experience of militant particularism, rather than an abstraction as is the case for Rasheeda Bee and ICJB.

## Gender order

One striking feature of the movement is its gender dynamics, which illustrate an issue where particularist practices have imperfectly generalised, leading to emancipatory practices within the context of a local patriarchal gender regime, whilst rejecting the universalist abstraction of feminism. The *Zehreeli* mostly comprised male activists whereas the union-based groups of the second phase of mobilisation were female. All current groups, in their different ways, have key male leaders, whilst the secondary levels of leadership and the vast majority of the rank and file are female.

Suroopa Mukherjee, in her oral history of the women survivors of the Bhopal disaster (Mukherjee 2010), makes the case for seeing the women as the double victims of Bhopal, oppressed both by the gas leak and by the patriarchal response to it. She argues that women have been the core to the movement, having made a transition from repressed and silenced wives and daughters, to being the leaders and tacticians in the unions and campaign groups which make up the movement. She claims that the Bhopal survivors' movement is essentially a women's movement, largely led by and made up of women, practicing their politics through female media: "dancing bodies" and telling stories. Praxis for women is carnal, visceral and passionate, which counters the cerebral, moralising, conceptual praxis of their opponents in the form of economic company functionaries, bureaucratic legislators and technocratic medics. The experience of poison in the women's bodies in its disruption of menstrual cycles and gynaecological functions, abnormal births and dependent children, becomes reflected in the bodily practices of protest.

Sadhna Karnik, one of the few female activists in *Zehreeli* and current local organiser of the CPI(M) affiliated SSS, criticises this impression of a women's movement. She argues that whilst the women are numerically strong and there are competent female leaders, they are only able to act within parameters set by the men. A system of patronage ensures that a few men retain the power, and women who step outside their allotted roles are treated viciously. Women attain greater freedom within the movement than they previously did in the family or the workplace, but their roles are still circumscribed by men in the leadership of the movement organisations. Disputes between men lead to splits and rivalries, with women expressing loyalty to this or that male leader. As Karnik explains:

Bhopal has not been a platform for particular women's issues, or their political and general demands, so the mobilisation of large numbers of women victims following their male leaders in various organisations does not mean that Bhopal is a women's movement. (Bhopal Survivors' Movement Study 2009 p. 170)

In 1984, North Bhopal was a socially conservative, patriarchal and gender segregated society. Many women, from both the Muslim and Hindu communities, lived in a degree of purdah, had no contact with men outwith their immediate family, and conducted both domestic and paid work in the home. Female literacy in Madhya Pradesh in 1981 was under 20% (Census of India 1981), and unlikely to be much higher in Bhopal at the time of the disaster in 1984. In such a context it is perhaps not surprising that a largely female movement should have male leadership.

For many women activists, the experience of being politicised through the movement has been liberating, albeit within the context of a resilient patriarchy. Mukherjee (2010) documents multiple experiences of women's empowerment through the praxis of the movement. From an experience of purdah, women have become activists and leaders in an international movement, speaking on stages across the world. In daily practices, women make decisions which would previously have required male approval. In many cases husbands and fathers are dead or have abandoned their womenfolk, but in others, women have evicted or divorced uncooperative men. Religious practices (removal of burqa, inter-caste and inter-communal food sharing etc) are being redefined outside the edicts of male religious leaders, whose support has been notably absent from the movement. For the ICJB activists, there has been regular contact with North American and European women, often educated feminists willing to share their analysis.

However, our interviews on marriage demonstrate the complexity of this. Women activists, empowered by their engagement in the movement, express their aspirations to sustain caste and religious endogamy in marriage, practices which, as Uma Chakravarti (2003) has argued are the foundations of Indian patriarchy. These strong women aspire for their daughters to be empowered, yet regard the degree of empowerment which these daughters achieve to be entirely in the hands of the daughter's husband and his family. Moreover, these same women select their future son-in-laws on the basis of caste integrity and economic status, not on their enlightened attitudes to women. Whilst the daily gender regime in the movement, and consequently in the community, is



certainly being renegotiated through the militant particularism of a highly gendered political practice, there seems to be no evidence that this is being generalised in any of the groups through commitments to any form of feminist universalism which might serve to critique the patriarchal gender order.

### **Discursive encounter**

In social movement theory, the different forms of abstraction adopted or not by these groups might be understood as frame alignment, in which ICJB is internationalising through framing itself as an environmental movement whereas Women Workers' Campaign is framing itself as a poor people's movement. Frame theory however, largely lacks the complex dynamics of relations between material conditions and political opportunities. Amita Baviskar (2005) introduces the useful concept of discursive encounter:

The politics of naming movements as "environmental" or otherwise ... emerges from a discursive encounter between different groups within the movement and their supporters. The multiple contending meanings that different groups bring to the terrain of struggle are negotiated and new understandings created in an ongoing process of dialogue between unequally situated actors. (Baviskar 2005 p. 164)

The mechanisms of achieving these discursive encounters require, not just selection of allies and negotiation over acceptance by parties outwith the movement, but also internal communication and knowledge exchange which ensures a degree of adherence from the movement membership. The forms of communication within ICJB and Women Workers' Campaign differ in this respect.

With ICJB, knowledge exchange must occur between Bhopal-based, Hindi speaking, non-literate survivor-activists and international, English speaking, internet using and metropolitan intellectual activists. In Bhopal, a core group of leaders and activists meet weekly and communicate news and decisions at a weekly mass meeting at which, during our research, typically between 50 and 150 people would attend. These meetings involve motivational speeches and also serve to gather information from the neighbourhoods, provide some individual welfare support, and to mobilise for actions. Some of the activists who attend these meetings take information back to the neighbourhoods and further outreach work is conducted by paid and voluntary mobilising cadres. Communication relies on oral traditions of public rhetoric and storytelling..

None of the Bhopalis involved in ICJB speaks English, whereas the Indian intellectuals and international supporters communicate in English, primarily through email and other electronic forms of communication. Translation between the two forms of communication is dependent on Sarangi and a very few other educated, Bhopal-based activists, mostly incomers. The Bhopal groups and Indian and international supporters meet annually in Bhopal, a collective, participatory meeting with ongoing informal translation between English and Hindi. At other times, the translation between the English

language, literate-culture, electronic communicating wing of the movement and the Hindi language, non-literate culture, verbal communicating survivors' groups is mediated by a few activists.

The robustness of this structure is evident in its capacity to mobilise effectively. The interaction occurs within the meaning-making frame of environmental justice, drawing on both technical and local knowledge. Indian Right to Information legislation has been used to access technical data, for example on pesticide residues in groundwater, analysed with the help of US anti-toxics specialists, and this has been combined with local experience of contaminated drinking water and chemical induced ill health. This also has implications for the supporter base of the ICJB whose material conditions are reflected in the environmental justice frame. The Campaign has been successful at mobilising *pani peedit* (water affected) and younger people from across all caste and religious groups, including people with no direct experience of the gas leak but with a greater access to education than the older generation.

Unlike ICJB's emphasis on participatory decision making amongst small groups of activists, the Women Workers' Campaign employs a more traditional, leadership-led, paternalistic structure. Its leader, Abdul Jabbar Khan is literate and school educated but not a graduate, and has limited knowledge of English and computer skills. Jabbar places significant importance in solving individual survivors' welfare problems and commands considerable respect and trust which he draws on in mobilising for actions. The level of leadership below Jabbar is primarily made up of fiercely loyal women. In his dealings with legal and administrative issues, Jabbar acts as a trusted advocate of his supporters' interests, and there is less of a requirement for translation of technical information into popular forms. The Women Workers' Campaign has moreover developed alliances of solidarity with trade union, peasant, land rights and tribal movements through *Jan Vikas Andolan* (Peoples' Development Movement).

The Women Workers' Campaign remains the largest organisation mobilising Bhopal survivors, using weekly mass meetings of several hundred people and (unpaid) outreach to mobilise supporters but has cultivated no international support and precious few Indian intellectuals. The group is proud of its independence, relying on multiple small subscriptions from its members rather than international funds. Several of its leaders are employed as trainers or administrators in the economic rehabilitation project *Swabhimaan Kendra*. On the basis of our surveys at rallies and public meetings, the Women Workers' Campaign supporter base has a higher proportion of Muslims and the lower status Hindu castes classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Neither Women Workers' Campaign, nor ICJB include a large number of dalit survivors, who are found disproportionately in the third major group, the Pensioners' Front. There is a largely paternalistic relationship between the leader Balkrishna Namdeo and the, almost entirely uneducated, older women who make up its membership. Addressing welfare issues related to pension provision and other forms of state support such as Below Poverty Line (BPL)

rations is a major part of Namdeo's work, and its campaign focus is therefore oriented towards state welfare.

In addition to the ICJB's environmental internationalism and the Women Worker's Campaign's class-based internationalism, a third form of internationalism of a more vanguardist nature is that employed by the *Bhopal Gas Peedit Sangharsh Sahayog Samiti* (SSS), which is made up of an alliance of CPI(M) affiliated and Left associated groups including Delhi Science Forum and the Railway Workers Union. This latter affiliate appears to be a locus of Bhopal-based mobilising since the proximity of the Union Carbide factory to the main railway station has led to a high incidence of gas impacted people amongst rail employees and their families living in adjacent Railway Colony.

Internationalisation in the case of SSS seems to be based on existing fraternal relations between communist parties and operates at high level, involving party cadres rather than survivors. Survivors are, nonetheless, mobilised in relation to nationally coordinated programmes.

## Conclusion

The two quotations above from Rasheeda Bee and Abdul Jabbar Khan illustrate the focus of the framing of the two major organisations. For Rasheeda Bee, who remains a leader of a small trade union, the form of abstraction which has developed from her experience of local struggle is that of environmentalism: "After hearing about the contaminated water, and from what I had learned over the years, I started to realize that this is about saving the world", whereas for Jabbar the abstraction is one of class: "the uneducated people ... are the ones who can bring justice... The poor will have to fight their own battle because the injustice has been done to them. I believe that all the major movements around the world have been led by the poor." Although cautious about building links directly with international supporters, Jabbar is an internationalist, building a movement through class solidarity.

During a particular period of history, during which neoliberal policies in India accelerated, ICJB moved towards a successful international environmentalist abstraction and moved away from the economic aspects of militant particularism of the workplace struggle in Bhopal, whereas Women Workers' Campaign sacrificed a rapid internationalism in the interests of maintaining class-based militant particularism and building with other subaltern class-based movements.

ICJB is internationalising through discursive encounter with educated professionals committed to environmentalism (anti-toxics activists), which is made possible by key leaders in Bhopal abstracting from their local struggle through an environmentalist discourse. This frame also provides an identity, *pani peedit*, for Bhopalis who were not directly gas affected but are still victims of the polluting activities of the factory and therefore legitimate comrades in the

struggle. The Women Workers' Campaign by contrast is focusing on its militant particularism, material economic conditions and building class solidarity, and sustaining a high level of supporter base, especially amongst underemployed and low paid working class adults. The Pensioners' Front's supporter base is the economically inactive, incapacitated and low caste poor, those dependent on meagre state rations and beggars with no means of support, and employs a discourse state welfare.

As Zavestoski (2009) suggests, there has certainly been a globalisation of the Bhopal survivors' movement through the global anti-toxics and environmental movements, and in relation to the increasing global reach of the chemical industry. Such organisation has occurred against a background of cautiousness, if not resistance to internationalisation, through a carefully negotiated settlement between a small alliance of survivors' and Bhopal-based groups, and an international network of supporters and solidarity groups. This is, however, only one form of abstraction from the experience of local militancy of the survivors, which can be contrasted with a class-based abstraction of the biggest of the survivors' groups.

Other forms of generalised abstraction also appear to be present – institutional communism and social welfare – but with more limited support. As a largely female movement with significant female leadership, it may be expected that abstraction through feminist universalism might be potentially significant, although this appears not to be the case. By contrast, female militancy finds some expression in renegotiations within the gender regime of the movement, with some impact on family life, but without significantly challenging the forms through which patriarchy is practiced.

This is an important distinction in terms of understanding social movement dynamics. Whilst social movements which emerge from local militancy can and do develop abstracted analysis through analytical learning and knowledge generation (Choudry and Kapoor 2010) as well as "discursive encounters" with other communities and wider movements Baviskar (2003) – joining hands in order to join the dots (Nilsen 2008) – this can take a range of forms.

Baviskar (2003) has identified the varying classification of movements on the basis of the discursive encounters which they have with more powerful groups. Learning within these movements then may take divergent paths and selecting certain forms of abstraction can constrain opportunities for others (Scandrett et al 2010). The institutional selection from potential forms of generalised abstraction can have major impact on the praxis of the movement, not least because sections of the movement may identify with different generalisations. In the Bhopal survivors' movement, different abstractions have led to divisions and opportunities for emancipatory gendered praxis have been missed. However, the divergent abstractions has extended the reach and longevity of the movement with the opportunities for a broad, if unstable alliance across multiple sectors of struggle.

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## **Collaborative governance and a strategic approach to facilitating change: lessons learned from forest agreements in South East Queensland and the Great Bear Rainforest**

**George R. Sranko**

### **Abstract**

*Successful agents of change can leverage their impact by understanding how change is institutionalized and by designing policy solutions in collaboration with one-time adversaries. Collaborative outcomes can pose a threat to traditional agencies and institutions by legitimating new, radical ideas outside the cognitive boundaries of the existing policy sphere.*

*This article presents a comparative analysis of two case studies, the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA) in Australia and the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement (GBRA) in British Columbia, Canada, as examples of integrated policy solutions achieved through collaborative efforts after years of intractable conflict. In these cases, collaborative governance signifies an enhancement in public policymaking and administration not by replacing, but integrating competitive and collaborative decision-making.*

*Even though state actors are often reluctant to yield control, the case studies demonstrate that collaborative coalitions empowered by public consent can legitimately compel governments and powerful interests to renegotiate contested policies and institutions. This article provides a new analytic framework for assessing and explaining the dynamics of policy change in a collaborative context. Activists are encouraged to use this framework in developing strategic approaches to facilitating change.*

### **Collaborative governance and activism**

Activists are playing increasingly prominent roles in facilitating significant changes in official policy; including the renegotiation of resource regimes and the development of integrated solutions for economic and ecological sustainability. In fact, civil society in general is exerting a strong influence on the continuing redefinition of liberal democracy.

How do we determine the success or failure of a particular social or environmental movement? In liberal democracies the political system is the ultimate determinant of success or failure, as reflected in official policies and

institutions. When policies and institutions change to reflect the goals and aims of a particular movement, we have tangible evidence that activists and supporters have indeed contributed to meaningful change.

This article explores the relation between policy change and collaborative governance in the context of seemingly intractable conflicts and successfully renegotiated resource regimes.

*Collaborative governance*, to paraphrase Culpepper (2002), is the availability of institutions that promote interaction among governmental and non-governmental actors, without state actors monopolizing problem definition, goal-setting, or methods of implementation.

*Resource regimes*, to paraphrase Kissling-Näf and Varone (2000), are social institutions with a regulative component, including formal property and use rights, and a policy component, consisting of resource-specific use and/or protection policies, designed to meet specific goals and objectives.<sup>1</sup> This definition explicitly recognizes resource regimes as social constructs and resource use as a blend of social decisions with rules and institutions subject to re-evaluation and renegotiation as society's values and priorities change and diversify. Attempts to renegotiate rules governing unsustainable resource practices are consistently opposed by powerful interests since social institutions and practices become ingrained and are seen as authoritative and "natural" given long-standing social relations of power and capital (Lipschutz and Mayer 1996: 22).

How does collaboration arise in real-world conflicts? What can activists and practitioners learn from such dynamics to become more effective agents of the changes they seek? A better understanding of this relationship is critical for at least two reasons: first, the role of activism and public participation in modern governance is highly contentious; and second, there are unresolved questions about collaborative processes and outcomes being replicable in other contexts.

This article examines such questions in relation to two strategic land-use planning initiatives that have proven noteworthy both in terms of collaborative processes and innovative policy outcomes; the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA) in Australia and the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement (GBRA) in British Columbia, Canada. These agreements formally recognize the renegotiation of resource allocations on a regional basis, institutionalizing integrated ecological and economic policy solutions after years of intractable, value-driven conflict.

In both of these cases, rival environmental and development coalitions undertook collaborative processes after years of open conflict, in response to

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<sup>1</sup> "Property rights are the social institutions that define or delimit the range of privileges granted to individuals to specific assets... By allocating decision-making authority, they also determine who are the economic actors in a system..." (Libecap 1989: 1, quoted in Lipschutz and Mayer 1996: 36).



government incapacity and institutional failure and managed to achieve consensus based on mutual interests. As a result, government agencies discovered themselves in the “shadow of collaboration” compelled to respond and integrate innovative policy solutions under intense political pressure. This notion is based on, and analogous to, the “shadow of hierarchy” (Scharpf 1993) under which reluctant adversaries are compelled to cooperate in response to pressure by the state authority.<sup>2</sup>

### **A note on conflict**

Contrary to common attitudes about conflict being almost exclusively negative, Dryzek (1996: 481-2) views an oppositional civil society as a vital impetus for democratization and, counter intuitively, he argues, a degree of exclusion by the state can lead to a more robust democracy. He contends that an “examination of the history of democratization indicates that pressures for greater democracy almost always emanate from oppositional civil society, rarely or never from the state itself” (1996: 476).

Some degree of conflict can improve the quality of solutions reached during social interaction, particularly when combined with, or setting the stage for, some level of cooperation.

## **Case Studies**

### **Case Selection and Methodology**

The two case studies were chosen because of their public prominence, relevance to the topic, and because each has been extensively documented. The units of analysis are the policy subsystems and geographical regions associated with the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA) in Queensland, Australia and the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement (GBRA) in British Columbia, Canada.

In contrast to typical policy processes resulting in incremental adjustments, both the SEQFA and GBRA agreements signified radical shifts in policy goals from those focused on commodity production and integrated resource management (IRM) to ecological and economic sustainability frameworks. The result in each case is a common-pool resource regime in which all concerned, including activists and the wider community, are invested by virtue of their participation in the renegotiation process (Lipschutz and Mayer 1996).

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<sup>2</sup> In the “shadow of hierarchy” the “credible threat of state agents is more likely to force non-cooperative actors into successful negotiations” (Viehöver 2000: 280); in the “shadow of collaboration” societal actors and the threat of public opinion can force non-cooperative, including state, actors into negotiation.

In addition, the governance frameworks that encompass the transformative processes and institutional and policy changes achieved in the SEQ and GBR are examples of collaborative governance.

### **Case study: South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA)**

The story of the SEQFA is one of competing coalitions successfully breaking out of structured conflict over the native forests of South East Queensland, Australia to collaborate in renegotiating the resource regime. The key to the success of this renegotiation was the agreement to make a complete transition from harvesting native-forests to cutting plantation-based timber by 2025

In September 1999, the government of Queensland, key conservation groups, and the Queensland Timber Board (QTB) entered into a written agreement that changed the course of natural resource management policy in the state. The SEQ Forest Agreement<sup>3</sup> represents the successful resolution of complex social and environmental issues, in particular, the allocation and tenure of approximately 689,000 hectares of public native forest with high conservation value as well as high suitability for commercial forestry.

Confrontations over the native forests grew intractable in the 1990s as forest industry sought to increase production at the same time as conservation groups mobilized to protect biodiversity and prevent further loss of irreplaceable habitat. The forces at work in the policy domain included economic adjustment, civic engagement, and a strengthening biodiversity and sustainability discourse. This is also the story of government incapacity and institutional failure in establishing a policy context capable of integrating the level of innovation needed to resolve the impasse. With much of the conduct of the SEQFA and the context of the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) policy process already well-described by Brown (2001, 2002), McDonald (1999), and Clarke (2000), this article focuses primarily on the discursive practices and collaborative processes involved in achieving integrated, sustainable policy solutions.

The SEQ region encompasses about 6.1 million hectares in the South Eastern corner of Queensland, with about 45 per cent covered in forest. About 55 per cent of the native vegetation has been cleared for urban development and agriculture. In the early 2000s, the forest industry in Queensland contributed approximately \$1.7 billion to the state economy and directly employed around 17,000 people (Queensland 2004).

In Australia, ongoing conflict over the remnant forests has kept the conservation of native forest ecosystems on the political agenda for several decades. In 1992, the National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) was signed by

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<sup>3</sup> *South East Queensland Forests Stakeholder/Government Agreement* signed by Premier Beattie and lead representatives of the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society, the Queensland Conservation Council, The Wilderness Society, and the Queensland Timber Board, 16 September 1999 (Queensland 1999; also see Beattie 1999a).

the Australian States<sup>4</sup> and the Commonwealth to provide an intergovernmental policy framework for the management of forests. Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are the means by which the principles and objectives of the NFPS are to be implemented. RFAs are 20-year agreements between the Commonwealth and State governments designed to resolve the conflicts over forest management by providing a balance between environmental, social, economic and heritage values.

By the late 1990s, the Queensland forest industry faced severe challenges, the main issue being certainty of access to timber. The yield for sawlogs on public forest land declined by 50 per cent from the 1970s to 2000 while the total cut from native forests and plantations increased during that time. The industry had been making a quiet transition from native forests to plantations, consistent with national trends, while so intent on maintaining access to native forests that they almost lost sight of the growing importance of plantation resources (Brown 2002: 22).

In early 1997, an RFA "scoping" agreement was signed between Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Queensland Premier Peter Beattie, identifying the boundaries, broad objectives, and the legal and policy obligations of both governments. A scientific bioregional assessment confirmed the difficulty of achieving both a comprehensive forest reserve to protect biodiversity *and* a native forest logging industry. The RFA process became highly politicized as the federal government pursued its political agenda of a forest industry based on continued logging of native forests in perpetuity<sup>5</sup> and chose to intervene in the process, as it had with RFAs in other states. Commonwealth and Queensland government officials took control of the process and excluded the scientific reference panel from meetings as forest management options were developed.

By late-1998, the structural deficits of the formal Commonwealth-State RFA process had become apparent to key stakeholders, as well as many knowledgeable observers and concerned public, with a growing realization that the status quo was simply unacceptable. Conservationists, the timber industry and key State agencies became increasingly dissatisfied with the command-and-control Commonwealth approach and the incapacity of the RFA process to accommodate innovative solutions. In July 1999, in the face of intractable conflict, Queensland Premier Beattie stepped in to play the role of policy broker, committing State government resources to supporting the process with or without Commonwealth government support. As a result, competing coalitions undertook direct negotiations outside the RFA framework; a move welcomed by the Premier and affiliates within State government who were determined to end the politically damaging conflict, and viewed with alarm by the "conservative" faction within the Commonwealth and State governments and forest industry.

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<sup>4</sup> Except for Tasmania, which signed in 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The Howard government's view at the time was that an RFA must provide for "resource security for a sustainable native hardwood timber industry in perpetuity" (Tuckey 2000).

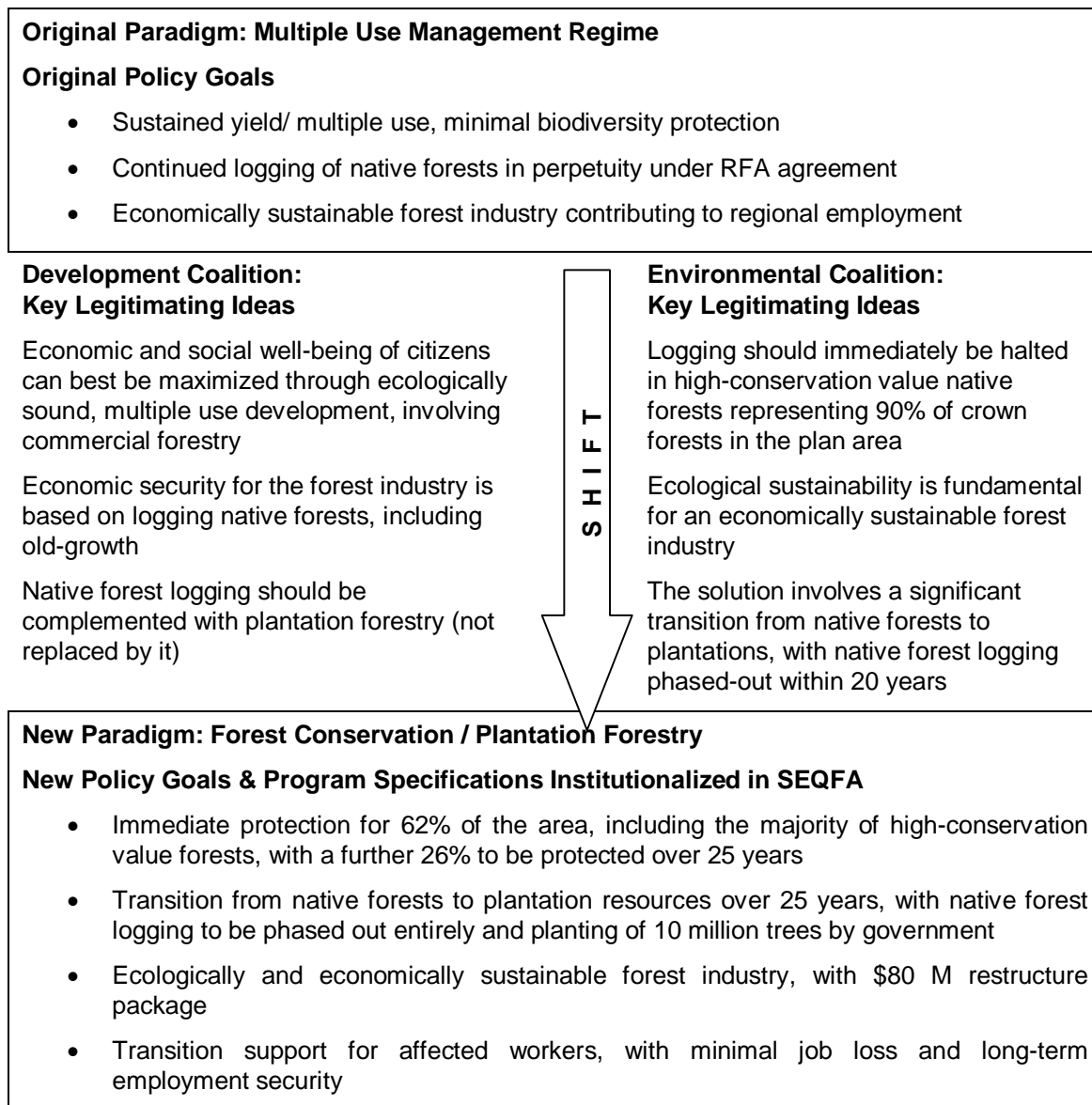
Contrary to the expected outcome for an RFA – a typical compromise solution carving a contentious area into various conservation and development zones – the SEQ stakeholders chose to think outside of the “spatial” box and opted for an innovative transitional solution that introduced a temporal element to the policy discourse. The collaborative coalition successfully developed a shared vision for new outcomes, devised the technical solutions necessary for implementation, and communicated the new direction to a diversity of stakeholders in such a way as to gain their support. Recalcitrant State government officials and agencies found themselves compelled to support the new vision (in the shadow of collaboration), even though the Commonwealth continued to attempt containment of the discourse within the old RFA/ multiple use framework.

On 16 September 1999, the Queensland government, QTB and key conservation groups signed the SEQ stakeholder forest agreement (Queensland 1999). Stepping outside of the constraints of the RFA process, the stakeholder solution comes close to meeting the national reserve criteria (JANIS 1997) by immediately protecting 425,000 ha (62% of the area) of the high conservation value forests, with continued logging on 184,000 ha (26%) to be phased-out over 25 years, and future management options to be decided on 80,000 ha (12%).

The key concept underlying the success of the agreement was the provision for the timber industry to make a complete transition from native-forests to a plantation-based resource by 2025. This innovative, integrated solution addresses the interests and objectives of both environmental and development coalitions, in contrast to the typical RFA approach advocated by the Commonwealth and implemented in the other States.

Figure 1 depicts the discursive shifts that occurred in this policy subsystem by comparing two sets of interdependent factors: 1, the original policy goals and the new policy goals institutionalized through the SEQFA, and 2, the key legitimating ideas prominent in the parallel discourses of the two competing coalitions prior to the consensus discourse that emerged. The figure also shows the original alignment between the multiple use policy goals and the dominant discourse of the development coalition, and the subsequent alignment between the collaborative discourse, integrating the ecological sustainability ideas of the environmental coalition, and the new collaborative policy goals.

**Figure 1: SEQ Policy Regime - Paradigm Shift in Ideas and Policy Goals**



As further evidence of the successful institutionalization of the SEQFA process, in October 2001 the Queensland Government used it to model the Statewide Forests Process over the rest of the state (Queensland, 2009, also see ARCS, nd). For example, in 2002 the Queensland Government committed to exclude logging from 1 million hectares of state forests in the Western Hardwoods region, and is in the process of establishing a total of 20,000 hectares of hardwood plantation as a replacement resource for the crown native hardwoods in SEQ and the Western Hardwoods region. Timber Queensland argues that the SEQFA approach has delivered one of Australia's best examples of achieving resource security for the hardwood processing industry. Furthermore, they

indicate that the "key elements of this success have been to engage directly and reach agreement with the conservation movement and the State government about future forest management." (Burgess, n.d.)

### **Case Study: The Great Bear Rainforest Agreement (GBRA)**

In April 2001, an internationally recognized consensus agreement for sustainable management of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR) on the west coast of British Columbia (Canada) was signed by forest companies, environmental groups, First Nations and the provincial government, after years of intractable conflict. In March 2006 the GBR agreements were formalized by the BC Government and First Nations, setting the stage for protection of 2 million ha and ecosystem based harvesting throughout the remainder of the region (British Columbia, 2006).

The forest land use policy regime in British Columbia, including that of the GBR (Central Coast) region has been extensively researched and analyzed by numerous scholars including Hoberg (2001), Magnusson and Shaw (2003), Salazar and Alper (2000), Shaw (2004), Stanbury (2000), Wilson (1998, 2001) and Winn (2001). Given the comprehensive nature of the literature, this account focuses on the discursive practices of the competing coalitions, the collaborative processes, and government's response to stakeholder consensus.

The story of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement (GBRA) is one of institutional inadequacy in response to economic adjustment, domestic and international civic engagement, market pressures, and a strengthening biodiversity and sustainability discourse. Conflict escalated to intractable levels in this region in the 1990s as forest industry and the BC government continued to operate under an established industrial forestry paradigm that privileged development over conservation, while environmental groups successfully mobilized public support for the protection of globally significant old growth forests.

The very visible and highly publicized face-off between environmentalists and the entrenched development coalition in Clayoquot Sound on Vancouver Island set the stage for BC forest policy discourse in the 1990s. During the summer of 1993, over 9,000 protesters from all walks of life joined blockades to protest against plans to clearcut old-growth forests in the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history. Nearly nine hundred environmental supporters were arrested and charged, and most were found guilty of violating the B.C. Supreme Court injunction supporting the right of forest companies to continue cutting old-growth. Two key lessons emerged from the Clayoquot Sound conflict that would have a profound impact on the GBR negotiations; 1. the effectiveness of market-based campaigns in changing an established incentive structure, and, 2. the ability of actors to develop collaborative solutions in spite of seemingly irreconcilable differences.

Clayoquot Sound signified a fundamental shift in the efficacy of environmentalism in B.C., representing a turning point in the ability of the

environmental coalition to thrust its problem-solution narrative not only into the sovereign political space, but also onto the global political stage.

During the late 1990s, the Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) process became the B.C. government's primary institutional strategy for minimizing land-use conflict and the primary mechanism for forest land-use planning in the province. In July 1996, the Central Coast Land and Coastal Resource Management Plan (CCLCRMP)<sup>6</sup> was initiated to deliver recommendations on the use and management of Crown lands in the GBR region, including land-use zones and protected areas (British Columbia 1996).

Government took the position that it could not halt resource development in the GBR completely during the planning process because this would result in serious social and economic disruption for communities inside and outside the region. The only viable solution, environmentalists argued, was a moratorium on logging in all sensitive watersheds until all parties could agree on a comprehensive land use strategy for the region. Eventually frustrated with the "talk and log" tactics of the forest companies and the provincial government and the lack of results from public opinion campaigns, the environmental coalition shifted venues by: 1) strengthening connections with international environmental advocacy networks, and 2) renewing commitments to market action in the USA and Europe aimed at targeting large consumers of BC's old growth.

Efforts to politicize the "chain of consumption" proved effective, particularly since the boycott threats alone were enough to convince most companies to change their purchasing behavior out of fears of consumer protest and loss of market share (Shaw 2004: 379). The stakes for forest companies operating on the BC coast were immense, with many hundreds of millions of dollars in sales in jeopardy unless forest companies could broker a deal with environmental groups to end the conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

By 1999, BC forest companies were losing millions of dollars in contracts because of the market boycotts in the US and Europe. International public relations campaigns by industry and government were proving ineffective and the development coalition could no longer control policy outcomes in its favor. At the same time, the formal LRMP process was "having difficulty reaching

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<sup>6</sup> Originally referred to as the Central Coast LRMP (CCLRMP), government renamed the process to integrate the coastal component.

<sup>7</sup> For example, in 1998, B&Q, the largest home improvement chain in the UK, decided to phase-out purchases of BC hemlock. In total, three European companies cancelled contracts worth about \$7.5 million. In 1999, IKEA, with annual sales worldwide of \$8 billion, announced that it would completely phase out old growth wood products by 2001. During 1999 and 2000 the three largest home improvement retailers in the USA – Home Depot, Lowe's and Menards – all announced that they would stop purchasing products from old growth forests, to be followed shortly by others, including Wickes Inc, HomeBase Inc., and Centex Corp (Stanbury 2000: 197). In addition, sales of over \$600 million per year in Germany alone were in jeopardy prior to signing of the GBRA.

agreement and achieving tangible outcomes for all of the different groups involved" (CFCI n.d.).

A number of forest companies decided that the only option, given mounting economic losses, entailed direct negotiations with the environmental groups outside of the formal government decision-making framework. In 1999, four large forest companies holding tenures in the GBR began to meet and formed a negotiating group called the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI),<sup>8</sup> opening the policy domain to new ideas. Their goal was to work together with environmental groups to develop "a conservation plan for forests on the Central and North Coast of British Columbia that will be credible both locally and globally" [CFCI, 2001].

The relationship between the BC government and CFCI was strained, since government faced the problem that the CFCI and environmental groups represented only two of the interests involved. Aboriginal 'First Nations' had invested much effort in government-to-government treaty negotiations linked to the formal LRMP planning process and refused to participate in an informal process without such links. Government was firm in its position that the responsibility for land use decisions rested with the government of British Columbia and First Nations. Meanwhile the formal LRMP process designed to include all of the stakeholders in the region had made little progress after three years, largely because it had not adequately addressed the problem of First Nations land claims. Above all, government was not open at the time to truly creative solutions, largely because of the structural inertia and "path dependence" of past policy choices and its insistence on Integrated Resource Management as the solution (which increasingly became a legitimacy trap; see Wilson 1998).

In spite of many setbacks, CFCI companies and environmental groups formalized their discussions by establishing the Joint Solutions Project (JSP) to explore ways to end the market-based conflict over the forests in the GBR by collaborating on integrative solutions and developing a new vision for forest management on the coast. Active participation by the First Nations in the Turning Point process coordinated by the David Suzuki Foundation (Greenpeace 2001), shifted the discussions to a new level where the provincial government had no option but to engage with the CFCI/JSP/Turning Point collaborative.

In July 2000, a "standstill" agreement was forged between forest companies and environmental groups, whereby environmental groups agreed to halt their market campaigns in return for a promise from Weyerhaeuser and Western Forest Products not to log in 30 sensitive watersheds. The draft agreement was

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<sup>8</sup> The make-up of CFCI varied over time with some forest companies joining and then dropping out. At the time of signing the GBRA there were five companies represented: Canadian Forest Products, International Forest Products (Interfor), NorskeCanada, Western Forest Products, and Weyerhaeuser (CFCI n.d.).



presented to government as a realistic solution to resolving the conflict. The initial response from government, particularly the forests ministry, was disbelief concerning the amount of potential protected area on the map.

Government officials generally held the view that the formal multi-stakeholder LRMP planning process had been hijacked by the narrow special interests of the environmental groups who had successfully coerced forest companies into negotiation through economic extortion. Because of the shift in incentive structure represented by the new economic realities, the forest companies involved were committed to achieving and implementing an agreement, almost regardless of government's position. In their view, there was simply no other choice; they would stop logging if necessary, since they could not continue to operate at a financial loss. At the same time, government also began to recognize the need to bring the "outsiders" back to the LRMP table, or at least appear to do so. The most difficult challenge was to integrate the draft agreement and its radical solutions with the interests and demands of other participants in the Central Coast LCRMP process. In the end, government was forced to revise provincial statutes to accommodate the conditions of the logging moratorium.

Much of the resulting GBR framework agreement built on the principles and processes created and articulated by the JSP, in consultation with a wide range of individuals and organizations. The April 4 2001 GBRA announcement by the provincial government represents a consensus agreement among all the parties involved at the CCLCRMP table.<sup>9</sup> It was in the best interests of all parties involved to demonstrate support for the consensus agreement, even though the outcome was distasteful to some. Government sought to increase its credibility by proclaiming leadership in negotiating a truce and members of the JSP needed the legitimacy of government endorsement "to counter accusations that their process had been undemocratic and unrepresentative" (Shaw 2004: 382). In the end, self-interests became aligned with mutual interests.

In February 2006, the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements were formalized and announced by the B.C. government and First Nations; including plans to protect two million hectares (5 million acres) and to phase-in Ecosystem-Based Management<sup>10</sup> throughout the region by March 2009 (British Columbia, 2006).

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<sup>9</sup> "In order to receive support for the agreement from the IWA and Truck Loggers Association, on April 18th the government increased the transition fund commitment by \$25 million [to \$35 million in total], subject to matching funds being provided by forest companies or other parties" (Morishita and Hoberg 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) is defined as: "An adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics and processes of whole ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained and human well-being can be improved." For more information see *The Ecosystem-Based Management Handbook* by the Coast Information Team: <http://www.citbc.org/c-ebm-hdbk-fin-22mar04.pdf>. Also see "Definition of 'Full Implementation of Ecosystem Based Management ('EBM') by March 31, 2009" at

In 2007, \$120 million was dedicated for conservation management and economic diversification for First Nations in the GBR. At the time of writing (November 2010) government has legally protected 2.1 million hectares (33 per cent of the GBR) from logging. New regulations, based on Ecosystem Based Management, ensure that 50 percent of the natural level of old growth forest will be maintained over the entire region. Outside of the protected areas over 700,000 hectares (1,700,000 acres) of rainforest is off-limits to logging (British Columbia, 2009; also see Coast Sustainability Trust, 2007).

This analysis shows that new actors became engaged in the GBR policy arena in the form of environmental groups (FAN, CRN, RAN), transnational ENGOs such as Greenpeace Germany and Greenpeace UK, and, importantly, the new cross-coalition collaborative alliances such as the CFCI and JSP. The new ideas introduced by transnational knowledge networks proved particularly influential in the discursive shift that occurred with the GBRA (Bernstein and Cashore 2000). These involved ideas related to "leverage politics,"<sup>11</sup> including market-based tactics and strategies involving boycott campaigns and threats of economic reprisals, as well as ideas involving innovations in civic engagement, consensual discourse and collaborative strategies (for example, see Dodge 2001 and Webster 2002).

An important transition in the discursive shift occurred in 2000 when participants in the JSP collaborative coalition achieved a draft consensus agreement on a set of principled ideas after having struggled to develop a solution that integrated shared ecological and economic interests and values.

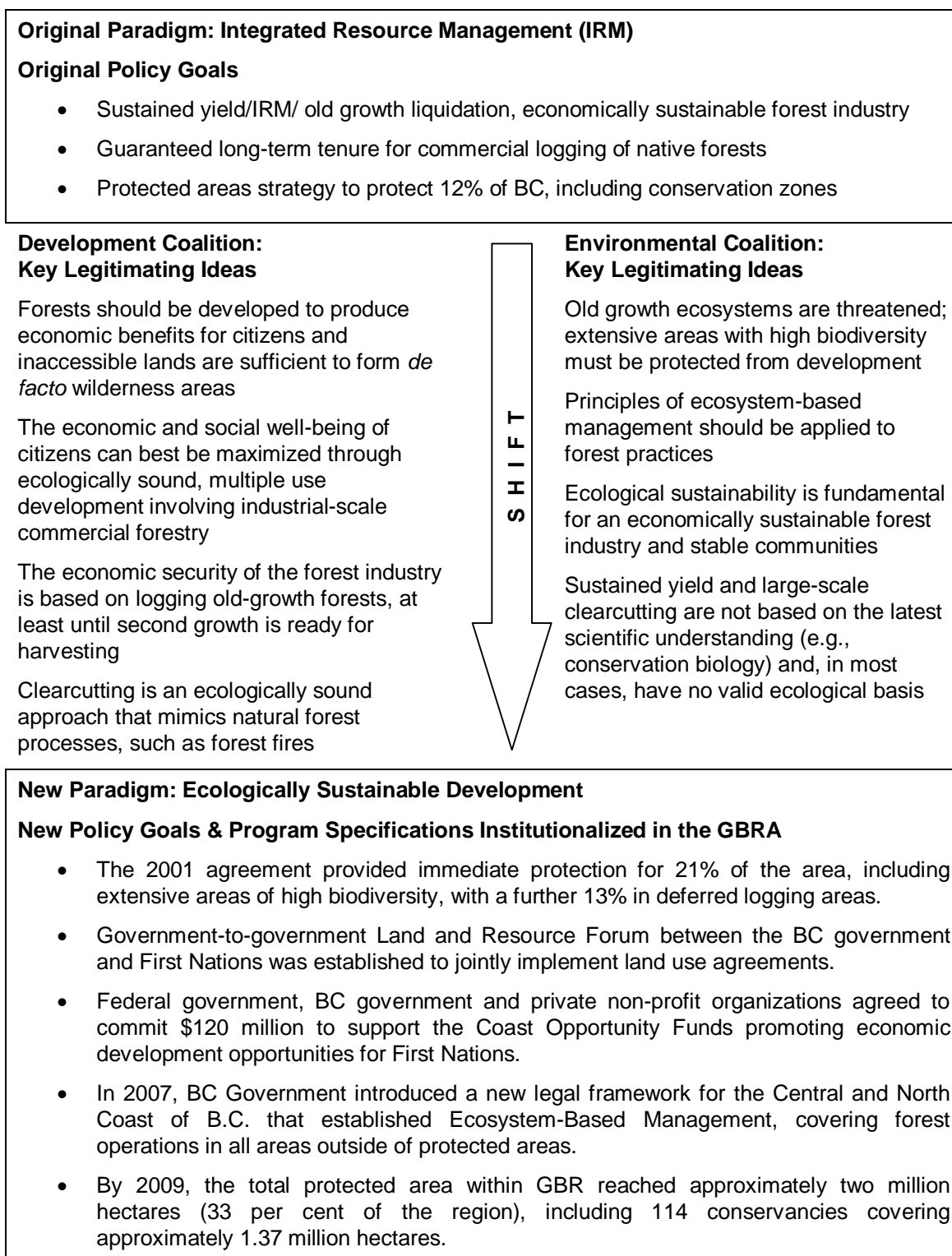
Figure 2 depicts the discursive shifts that occurred in this policy subsystem.

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[http://archive.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central\\_north\\_coast/docs/Full\\_Implementation\\_\(Final%20July%2010%202007\).pdf](http://archive.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central_north_coast/docs/Full_Implementation_(Final%20July%2010%202007).pdf)

<sup>11</sup> See Keck and Sikkink (1998: 23 - 4): "In order to bring about policy change, networks need to pressure and persuade more powerful actors. To gain influence the networks seek leverage... By leveraging more powerful institutions, weak groups gain influence far beyond their ability to influence state practices directly."

**Figure 2: GBR Policy Regime - Paradigm Shift in Ideas and Policy Goals**



Lertzman et al. (1996: 147) demonstrate that the paradigm shift in BC forest policy was based on the recognition that “commodity production under increasingly stringent Integrated Resource Management constraints is both inefficient as a way of allocating land between competing uses and ineffective in sustaining the full range of ecological services...” Consequently the policy goals within the GBR shifted from commodity production within an IRM framework towards those aimed at maintaining healthy forest ecosystems and sustainable communities using an ecosystem-based management approach for logging along with an extensive system of reserves and protected areas.

### **Policy dynamics of the case studies**

A change in policy is confirmed by the institutionalization of policy decisions through statutes, regulations, agreements, and policy statements that carry the force of state. Anything less fails to indicate firm choices by government (Bernstein and Cashore 2000: 70). Detailed analysis indicates that the SEQFA and the GBRA served to institutionalize new commitments made by state and non-state actors. In both cases, substantial public and private resources have been dedicated to facilitating implementation, indicating that paradigmatic policy change has indeed occurred in both regimes.

### **How does policy change occur?**

Policy change typically unfolds according to two key determinants: 1. how contested ideas are framed, and, 2. the discursive competence of respective actors (see below for a brief discussion of this term).

In a stable policy context, there is enough overlap between competing frames for incremental policy change to occur. Incremental policy change involves “non-innovative changes at the margin of existing policies utilizing existing policy processes, institutions and regimes” (Howlett 2001: 313). In extremely difficult policy disputes, such as those profiled in the case studies, mutually exclusive principles and values can appear irreconcilable. Such conflicts can challenge the political culture, institutions, and governance capacity of a system to the point of impasse.

In such cases, progress becomes dependent upon an adequate reframing of the problems and solutions and the emergence of a new dominant policy frame or paradigm. As demonstrated by the case studies, paradigmatic policy change involves new policies which represent a sharp break from the past in terms of how policies were developed, overall policy goals, the dominant problem-solution frame, and the policy instruments chosen (Howlett and Ramesh 1995: 193).

## **How can activists influence political agendas?**

Change agents of all stripes are coming to realize that modern political agendas are tied less to formal elected office and more to matters of political entrepreneurship and *discursive competence*. This refers to the ability of actors to employ discourse for political gain; with authority arising more from the ability to frame and present information effectively than from professional or bureaucratic credentials.

*Policy discourse* is one key to understanding how relatively minor actors can influence real change. This term refers "to the interactions of individuals, interest groups, social movements, and institutions through which problematic situations are converted to policy problems, agendas are set, decisions are made, and actions are taken" (Rein and Schön 1993: 145).

To better understand the dynamics of policy change, it is imperative to distinguish between levels of policy discourse and to recognize differences between:

- A) conflicts involving higher-level *principles* and deeply held core *values*, and,
- B) those involving technical, *causal* arguments.

Goldstein and Keohane (1993: 11) make the distinction between "ideas that develop or justify value commitments" (principled ideas) and those that "simply provide guidance as to how to achieve preferred objectives" (causal ideas).

For example, consider the discourse that might revolve around timber harvesting in a typical resource management conflict. At the causal level the discussions and negotiations would focus on technical aspects such as the appropriate size of cut-blocks (e.g., 5 ha vs. 10 ha) or the most suitable routes and standards for access roads. At the level of principles and values, however, the discourse would enter into more fundamental considerations; for example, what values and principles govern acceptable use for an area given specific climatic, ecological, and biophysical circumstances? Is resource extraction appropriate for a particular area? If so, who should benefit and to what degree? Discourse at the technical-causal level most often remains silent on such key issues because the *status quo is implicit and remains unquestioned*.

This distinction between levels of discourse offers a key entry point for activists seeking to understand the dynamics of a policy sphere they are attempting to impact. If a particular social/environmental movement is to succeed, it becomes imperative that activists become versed in these distinctions and seek to gain discursive competence.

## **Potential power of collaborative solutions**

Collaboration is fundamentally about two or more parties working together to "affect the future of an issue of shared interests" (Daniels and Walker 2001: 57).

The distinctions between “self-interest” and “mutual/ shared interest” and the notion of a “mutually beneficial outcome” provide keys to understanding the motivations of competitive actors in a conflict situation. Collaborative approaches in policy domains are not driven by altruistic tendencies or simple “good will” but by people’s awareness that their interests are interdependent. “Otherwise, they would pursue their interests outside the collaborative process. They hope to achieve something together that they cannot achieve alone” (Booher and Innes 2001: 17).

Collaborative efforts can create concerns when they arise as alternative processes running parallel to officially sanctioned government initiatives that provide clear procedural and substantive decision-making guidelines. Direct deliberations and consensus agreements between dominant actors outside of formal institutions raise legitimate questions about issues of accountability, representation, and access (see Burrows 2000; Freeman 1997; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000).

Correspondingly, public accountability can be less than adequate where corporatist bureaucracies maintain tight control of decision-making and implementation in the policy-making process, where regulatory agencies are captive to private interests, or where minimal legislative or judicial oversight exists. In such systems, collaborative initiatives can increase transparency, access and accountability (Freeman 1997), supporting the argument “that the institutionalization of participation rights in land-use planning offers a more effective and non-discriminatory means of resolving environmental conflicts than the strategic pursuit of sectional interests” (Mason 1999: 126). Both the GBRA and SEQFA case studies reveal strikingly similar patterns, with attempts by respective government authorities to constrain the political discourse inside the cognitive boundaries of the prevailing sustained yield/IRM paradigm.

Daniels and Walker (2001: 58) make a distinction between two dominant strategic orientations: “collaborative/integrative” and “competitive/distributive” (see also Fisher et al 1997; Lewicki et al 2001). A competitive strategy is employed where disputants perceive a limited resource and anticipate gaining as much of it as possible for themselves. Each party assumes a position and employs “positional bargaining” to exert power and control in seeking to achieve its preferred outcome. A collaborative strategy arises when parties perceive the potential for an integrative solution and generate alternative solutions using creative problem solving techniques; in which case the fundamental structure of the response offers the potential for all sides to substantially achieve their objectives.

In both case studies, a transformation occurred when incentive structures shifted to the extent that rational economic calculus made it evident to industry that the benefits of cooperation exceeded the costs of non-cooperation. At this stage progressive elements within the development coalition sought to collaborate directly with individuals in the environmental coalition, outside of formal government planning frameworks. Both sides realized it was in their best interests to cooperate in order to develop mutually beneficial outcomes,

rather than exacerbating the conflict by continuing to focus on self-interests alone. The emergence of *autonomous* collaborative efforts in the SEQ and GBR, outside of formal government processes, clearly signaled acknowledgment of changes in incentive structures by actors within both policy domains. In both cases, government was compelled to acknowledge the validity of the consensus agreements and to formally recognize the changes through official policy.

While recognizing the importance of the background trends (including changes in market conditions, ecological crises and internationalization)<sup>12</sup> the contention here is that the pre-eminent factor motivating policy change in both cases was the change in incentive structure associated with a paradigm shift in the prevailing discourse. Once the paradigm shift gained public resonance, against the background of changing trends, a series of focusing events served to expand the issue and heighten salience. In both cases, this was effectively facilitated by the discursive competence and strategic practices of activists within the environmental movement.

### **Framework for integrating competitive and collaborative policy processes**

Activists who are conversant with new and emerging approaches to governance will be in a better position to take advantage of increasing public awareness and shifting paradigms at key opportunities.

In "new governance" there is growing recognition of a shift in public management from *command and control* to *negotiation and persuasion* as the preferred management approach (for example, see Salamon 2002). Competitive decision-making is often associated with "command and control" or adversarial styles of public administration. In a collaborative style of governance, negotiation based on mutual-interest complements and potentially supersedes competitive decision-making based on self-interest alone.

In Figure 3 below, four contrasting patterns of policy change are depicted in the context of collaborative governance.<sup>13</sup> Using the framework diagram, various policy scenarios can be associated with relevant quadrants, based on:

(a) the level of policy discourse associated with the key legitimating arguments of the parties involved (along the continuum of causal-to-principled beliefs – and associated policy targets), and

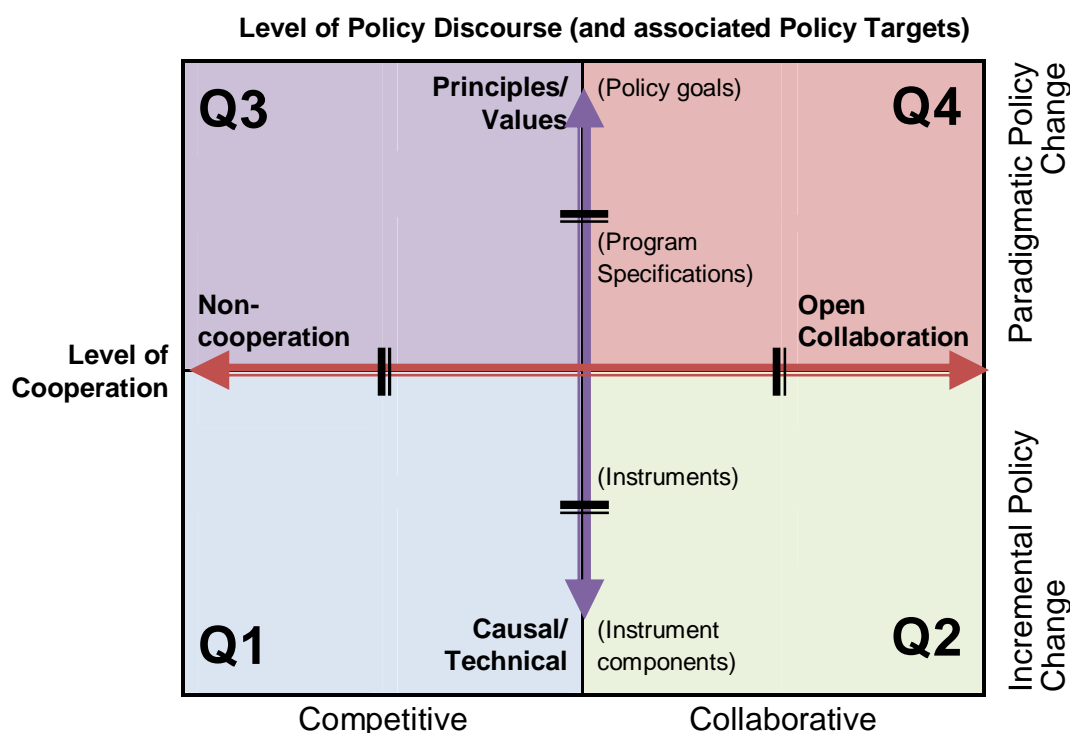
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<sup>12</sup> See Howlett (2001: 317-23) for a discussion of background trends and their likely effect on environmental policy outcomes in Canada. He identifies four key trends: internationalization of environmental politics; ecological crises; post-staples economic adjustment; and political and cultural change. These trends are also likely to be key influences in the Australian context.

<sup>13</sup> A number of highly respected typologies of public participation already exist and the intent is not to attempt to replicate or supersede them. The typology developed here is focused on explicating the relation between collaborative processes and policy change. For examples of typologies of public participation see Arnstein (1969), Renn et al. (1993), and Thomas (1993).

(b) the level of cooperation between parties (from non-cooperation to open collaboration).

**Figure 3: Typology of Policy Change by Levels of Cooperation and Discourse**



The salient characteristics of these four patterns of policy change are summarized below:

**Q1 Competitive Incremental:** characterized by a command and control approach (rigid, prescriptive) in a competitive mode (self-interest versus pursuit of mutual interests); good at problem identification, but not as good for advancing solutions; status quo bias (Dorcey and McDaniels 2001: 278); rules are considered bargains; government officials are on the inside, stakeholders are on the outside; the primary goal for stakeholders is to win; e.g., certain consensus-based models;<sup>14</sup> the RFA process in Australia.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> There is a distinction between consensus-seeking processes characterised by a competitive orientation with adversaries in pursuit of self-interests (Q1/Q3), versus collaborative consensus-seeking processes with participants engaged in pursuit of mutual interests (Q2/Q4). Processes can begin as competitive consensus-seeking processes and evolve towards collaborative processes if participants establish sufficient common ground and develop mutual trust and



These processes typically result in instrument level changes in policy. However, complex, intractable conflicts most often remain unresolved. The prevailing discourse is at the technical, causal level. If key legitimating ideas of the dominant discourse lose scientific credibility or public legitimacy, the resulting paradigm shift could influence policy choice at the level of policy goals/programs (shifting the process to Q3 or Q4).

**Q2 Collaborative Incremental:** could be characterized as the “multi-stakeholder” emergent shared-agreement approach, e.g. LRMP process in BC (see Duffy et al. 1998; Wilson 2001).

Processes in this quadrant are suitable for resolving complex conflicts in contested policy situations *within* established institutional frameworks, by facilitating negotiated settlements (usually reflecting the *status quo*, however, there can be room for creativity and innovation) at the level of technical discourse over policy instruments (in contrast to principles/values discourse and programs/ policy goals in Q4). Often involves multi-stakeholder negotiation and decision-making characterized as consensus seeking (in contrast to position-based negotiations). Collaborative institutional arrangements (Q2 & Q4) can shift a degree of responsibility from government to multiple stakeholders.

The main differences between Q2 and Q4 include the level of policy discourse, associated policy targets, and the eventual degree of policy change. Discourse in the Q2 dynamic occurs at the technical, causal level and processes within this quadrant often result in relatively long periods of stability, because stakeholder buy-in is often substantial. If, however, the prevailing discourse shifts to the level of values/principles/policy goals, and government attempts to constrain the unfolding process to Q2, it is likely that a conflict will become even more contentious and potentially intractable.

**Q3 Competitive paradigmatic:** government retains management control; legitimacy rests with statutory authority; accountability is focused on individuals and institutions; the *status quo* bias is usually mitigated by social and political pressure; e.g., the shift in forest policy from the sustained yield paradigm to the IRM paradigm (Wilson 1998); the Fraser Island Inquiry in Queensland (see Neumann 1992).

These processes can engender significant change; typically, however, they result in relatively narrow solutions mandated by government. Conflicts may be resolved to a sufficient degree to achieve a period of relative stability, especially if policies favor powerful actors within the dominant coalition. However, long-term resolution of complex social and environmental conflicts is difficult in Q3

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respect. And the reverse can also occur, if established trust is adversely impacted (Lewicki and Robinson 1998; Lewicki et al. 1999).

<sup>15</sup> The typical RFA process includes stakeholder consultation (not collaboration) in the assessment phase and then reverts to a command-and-control process of scenario development and implementation (see Dargavel 1998: 29).

because of the competitive / adversarial orientation. Lack of participatory mechanisms can easily challenge the legitimacy of such processes.

**Q4 Collaborative paradigmatic:** involves collaborative approaches in pursuit of mutual interests; community-based management; multi-stakeholder processes involving consensus principles; policy discourse at the level of values/principles/goals, in Q4 legitimacy shifts to become more citizen-centered; power sharing becomes the norm; and government recognizes the need to adopt a facilitative network management role (Howlett 2001); e.g., SEQFA, GBRA.

Q4 processes are characterized by dramatic change involving new policy goals and/or new programs. In this quadrant, societal actors are deeply involved in the collaborative deliberations and policy choices that become institutionalized (with new ideas being more easily introduced in comparison to the other quadrants). The success of activists in compelling paradigmatic policy change is dependent upon the introduction of innovative ideas, especially at the level of principled beliefs, discursive competence and the forging of shared interests with competing actors.

Q4 dynamics are suitable for managing complex (often seemingly intractable) conflicts featuring indirect management of self-steering networks and collaborative coalitions, where the policy subsystem is open to creative, innovative solutions delivering on new policy goals that may entail significant institutional and legislative reform. The principal role for government is network management: encouraging a shared belief system about cooperation (intersubjective knowledge), facilitating collaboration, and helping to establish a "means to reach discourse closure" (Webler 1995: 74).

### **Recognizing the strategic value of both competition AND collaboration**

The suggested framework provides activists with a practical tool for recognizing the appropriate circumstances and timing for taking a collaborative vs competitive stance, and vice versa.

In Quadrants 1, 2, and 3, government policy brokers and established decision makers retain power and control over policy goals. Quadrant 4 represents a shift to collaborative policy-making at a "higher" level of discourse aimed at resolving complex issues, with government compelled to adopt a "network management" approach (Howlett 2001). Policy brokers within government are often resistant to making a shift to Quadrant 4 because of loss of power and control, while progressive elements within government often perceive a new vector of forces pointing towards a shift in public values. Given the expanding spectrum of values in modern society, government agencies will increasingly find themselves compelled to proactively engage in facilitating collaborative processes, providing policy entrepreneurs and activists with natural points of access for introducing new and innovative ideas.

The integrated competitive/collaborative typology presented here remedies the tendency of many proponents of collaboration to advocate total abandonment of competition (and conflict) in favor of cooperation when, in actuality, a healthy system of democratic governance is reliant on a dynamic tension between the two.<sup>16</sup> It is important to remember that deliberative approaches represent an enrichment of representative democracy rather than a replacement (Munton 2003: 111).

In this regard, social and environmental movements may be able to achieve greater success by maintaining both 'competitive' and 'collaborative' factions working together in concert. If such an approach is undertaken it becomes vital to develop an overarching strategic framework that clearly identifies common goals for the entire movement.

### **Practical implications for activists**

Activists can use this typology to associate specific levels of policy discourse with particular modes of policy change. Here are some key points based on the analysis of the case studies and the suggested framework:

- Incremental change is associated with policy discourse at the level of *causal/technical ideas*.
- Ideas at the level of *principled beliefs and norms* define the very core of a prevailing paradigm.
- A prevailing paradigm is usually unassailable to reform coalitions because the principled beliefs of reformers are blocked from entering the policy discourse.
- If a reform coalition *succeeds* in penetrating the policy discourse with principled ideas aimed at revising/ renegotiating core policy goals, paradigmatic policy change can occur.
- Consequently, the reform coalition's key legitimating ideas come to play a prominent role in the emerging consensus.

As demonstrated in the case studies, government agencies and dominant coalitions often attempt to shift or constrain the prevailing discourse from the level of values/principled beliefs to that of causal beliefs and technical considerations (Keeley and Scoones 2003; Renn et al 1995: 357). It becomes evident that activists can increase their effectiveness as agents of change when they learn to identify and introduce new principled beliefs to the policy sphere that resonate with public perceptions.

In practical terms, activists involved in an unsatisfactory or intractable policy dynamic can adopt a strategic orientation by:

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<sup>16</sup> For example, Dryzek (1996) argues convincingly that a flourishing democratic society is largely dependent on the presence of an oppositional civil society which is "actually facilitated by a passively exclusive state." Dryzek considers corporatism to be the main contemporary form of such a state.

- A) Assessing their current situation in terms of the quadrants described, thereby gaining a better understanding of the dynamics involved, and,
- B) developing a strategy to progress towards a quadrant that offers the potential to enact change at the level of new policy goals and institutional reform.

In general, individuals and groups can improve the potential for instituting sustainable, long-term policy changes that reflect their views and ideas, by:

1. Highlighting relevant principles and values in communicating key ideas that are new to the policy sphere (the higher the public resonance the better), and,
2. Resisting almost certain attempts by entrenched interests to the limit the policy discourse to technicalities and causal arguments, and,
3. Seeking cooperative advantage as incentive structures change and opportunities arise, by forming informal and/or formal coalitions with one-time adversaries (thereby introducing a "new" mix of people).

## **Conclusion**

Long-term solutions to intractable conflicts are elusive, particularly in value-driven disputes. Successful agents of change can leverage their impact through discursive competence and by designing solutions that identify appropriate policy goals primed for insertion in the policy sphere. As we have seen from this research, solutions gain increased tractability when they are designed in collaboration with one-time adversaries. Even though state actors are often reluctant to yield significant control, collaborative participants with innovative solutions can play a powerful role in institutional redesign or transformation.

There are no easy solutions to the quandaries we all face with respect to maintaining the legitimacy of a representative democracy while maximizing the benefits of participatory governance, especially given the dangers of powerful players hijacking the public interest. Nevertheless, in hindsight it becomes apparent that even relatively innovative policy and planning initiatives, such as Australia's RFA process and British Columbia's CORE "shared decision-making" model and LRMP processes, have proven inadequate for integrating recently legitimated values. This is largely because politicians and policy-makers in both cases attempted to contain decision-making negotiations within the confines of established policy frameworks and top-down policy goals, in spite of changing public perceptions and shifting paradigms.

In conflicts involving deeply held values, policy goals are often at the heart of contention and state-imposed solutions at the technical, instrument level simply will not suffice.

The collaborative governance evident in these cases represents a positive response to the inadequacy of corporatist and pluralist systems to implement sustainability goals. Collaborative governance is not a likely option where the incentive structure remains skewed in favor of powerful actors determined to maintain the status quo. However, in those situations where the incentive structures shift sufficiently, in response to cognitive *or* non-cognitive influences, collaboration between long-standing adversaries becomes a viable, if not preferred, alternative.

When activists take advantage of appropriate opportunities to form collaborative coalitions, one-time adversaries can gain the capacity to develop creative, integrative solutions with the potential to penetrate and expand the cognitive boundaries of "accepted" policy discourse. Where empowered by public consent, such coalitions can legitimately compel governments and powerful interests to renegotiate contested policies and institutions in the "shadow of collaboration," improving society's response to long-term challenges.

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George has spent over thirty years as an environmental educator, activist and professional biologist. He was one of the original appointees to the Provincial Capital Commission Greenways Committee in Victoria, BC in the early 1990s and was instrumental in the collaborative efforts involved in creating one of the most successful greenways networks in Canada.

He has consulted extensively with all levels of government on a range of resource management projects involving strategic planning, development, and implementation of programs and policies. As an environmental activist he has come to realize that ecological sustainability is ultimately in the hands of citizens; and in particular those individuals and groups who are willing to take bold and radical steps aimed at shifting paradigms and creating systemic change. All too often, politicians and decision-makers remain mired in the status quo and captive to entrenched interests, to the degree that sufficiently innovative solutions must come from outside the system.

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## **Territorialising Niger Delta conflicts: place and contentious mobilisation**

**John Agbonifo**

### **Abstract**

*The literature on the Niger Delta conflicts is extensive, featuring various theoretical models and eclectic approaches in the attempt to identify processes that generate the conflicts and ideas about how to reverse them. A good deal of this literature is aspatial, regarding place as mere background against which social events unfold. Therefore, there has been little attempt to explore how place structures the conflicts. This article seeks to bring place into analytical focus. Building on existing literature, it argues for the need to apprehend general processes of conflicts in their entanglement with place-specific characteristics if we are to understand the nature of specific conflicts, and why conflict is not ubiquitous in the region. The paper examines the nexus between (a) changes in a given place, shaped by larger socioeconomic processes, (b) the lived experiences of its inhabitants and the latter's worldviews and (c) sense of place, and (d) interpretive activities. It argues that examining the intersection between such general socioeconomic processes, worldviews and cognitive praxis provides a fuller account of why conflicts emerge where they do in the Niger Delta. The Ogoni conflict is taken as a case study.*

### **Introduction**

On 4 January 1993 about 300,000 Ogoni converged, under the auspices of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), to take part in an unprecedented protest march against the State and the Shell oil company (Saro-Wiwa 1995). The Ogoni located their grievances in a skewed federal structure, environmental despoliation and destruction of local livelihoods by the activities of Shell (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Threatened and angered by the MOSOP, the State – actively aided by Shell – harassed and intimidated Ogoni leaders (Ibeanu 2000). In November 1995 the State executed Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders on trumped up charges of masterminding the murder of four prominent pro-government Ogoni chiefs. The judicial murder sparked a wave of international outrage and condemnation (Maier 2000). The sudden death of Nigerian leader Sanni Abacha, and subsequent election of Olusegun Obasanjo in February 1999 ended Nigeria's international isolation and held the promise of a quick and peaceful resolution of the Niger Delta imbroglio.

Contrary to expectations of peace, several militant groups have emerged (Ibeanu 2000). The violent attacks and activities of the militant Movement for

the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) resulted in a roughly 25 percent cut in Nigeria's crude oil production in 2007. Hostage-taking of foreign oil workers, the seizure and destruction of oil installations, and armed confrontations between federal troops and militant groups have become common. It is alleged that the policy sources of grievances and conflicts – such as the Land-Use Act, Petroleum Act and other laws that dispossess and marginalize oil-producing areas – coupled with the operating practices of oil companies, have not yet been adequately addressed by the State nor by the oil companies (Douglas, personal interview 2006).

The Niger Delta has a long history of violent conflicts over environmental resources. The Niger Delta was an important source of slaves for the Europeans from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. After the abolition of the slave trade, the Delta was unsurpassed in the production of palm oil, which formed the core of the “new” trade (Aghalino 1998: 152). In 1855-56 the Delta exported 25,060 tons of oil, over half the quantity of oil exported from Africa (Aghalino 1998.). Between 1871 and 1879 British firms employed armed boats to penetrate the interior leading to a number of confrontations between Europeans and African middlemen. To gain control of the lucrative hinterland trade, Goldie Taubman, the British consul, unified the competing British firms in the region into the United African Company, successfully eliminating foreign competition from 1877 to 1879 (Dike 1956: 209). The people of the Niger Delta opposed and bitterly resisted the company's rule and attacked the company's factories in Akassa, Patani, Brass, Asaba and Idah. Despite such uprisings, the company's superior firepower kept the locals subdued (Dike 1956).

The more recent conflicts in the region have engaged sustained scholarly attention. Several approaches to the Niger Delta conflicts can be discerned in the literature. One approach sees the conflicts as the outcome of incorrigible greed and the tendency to amass wealth (Reno 2002, 2005; Collier 2001, 2002; Omeje 2006). Another approach emphasises conflicting understanding of what constitutes environmental security (Ibeanu 1997). A third approach sees the Ogoni movement as an attempt to secure greater patronage or a reiteration of spoils politics (Reno 2000, 2005; Watts 2004). A fourth approach locates the conflicts in structural problems such as “internal colonialism”, the “National Question”, and the exploitation and dispossession of minorities (Naanen 1995, Osaghae 1995b, Anikpo 2002 and Ikelegbe 2001). Obi (2006) represents a fifth approach in which the problems of the Ogoni transcend national boundaries to implicate the architecture of global capitalism. While the authors present important insights into the conflicts, little regard has been given to place-specific factors that determine ideational reality, the value of resources, and the power relations that organise such resources (Peluso and Watts 2001).

Conflict over a region's natural resources is a geographic phenomenon (Simmons 2005). Political geographers have long recognised the role of space and place in the emergence of conflict (Miller 1994, Agnew 1987, Pile and Keith 1997). Some social movement scholars have embraced the spatial perspective (Sewell 2001, Martin and Miller 2003, McAdams et al 2001). Space is essential

to the choice of tactics and strategy (Agbonifo 2009) and the construction of frames and identity (Agbonifo 2009, Wolford 2003). The insight has, however, made minimal impact on scholarly engagement with the Niger Delta conflicts. This article moves beyond existing literature on the conflict in two ways. First, it seeks to situate structural conditions in place. Second, the article traces how interpretive activities, partly informed by place, transformed conditions to construct insurgent identities. Building on insights from "resource access literature", "society-rooted politics" and place-sensitive social movement theories, it argues that violent conflict emerges at the intersection between structural conditions, place-specific characteristics and place-informed interpretive activities.

The author uses data collected during a series of English language in-depth interviews with randomly selected members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, or MOSOP (both active and inactive, male and female), as well as with other movement activists with relevant information to illustrate Ogoni framing activities, and the role of spatial factors in the onset of mobilisation.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the article is presented in four sections. The first section briefly considers dominant explanations of the Niger Delta conflicts. The second section introduces the spatial approach. Section three situates dominant explanations in place, showing how the characteristics of Ogoni as place, and activists' interpretive actions shaped the movement from structures to action. The final section is the summary.

### **Dominant macro-explanations of Niger Delta conflicts**

This section considers several approaches to the Niger Delta conflicts. The approaches are briefly treated under two broad and arbitrary categories: (1) resource availability and (2) society-rooted politics. It is important to point out at the outset that both approaches are convincing at the macro level but they do not explain why individual actors joined the Ogoni movement because they do not actually situate the conflict in place or people. As Wendy Wolford (2008) argues in the case of the Movement of Rural Landless Workers in Brazil, conventional macro explanations mistakenly assume a direct link between broad structural changes and mobilisation. Unable to explain who joined the movement, or did not, and why, conventional approaches remain "thin on the internal politics of dominated groups, thin on the cultural richness of those groups, thin on the subjectivity—the intentions, desires, fears, projects—of the actors engaged in these drama" (Ortner 1995: 190).

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<sup>1</sup> Random in-depth interviews were conducted between 2006 and 2009 in both Ogoniland and Port-Harcourt.

## 1. Resource availability

There are two schools of thought on how resource availability shapes conflict: first, scarcity results in conflict, and second, resource abundance shapes conflict. The scarcity school argues that scarcity occasions conflict as groups contend for access to limited resources. Conflicting environmental security perspectives, environmental degradation, overexploitation of resources, population growth and climate change and population movement are some of the processes posited to engender resource scarcity and precipitate conflict (Ibeanu 1997, Homer-Dixon 1999). The school has been criticised by those who argue that it is precisely resource abundance (alternatively, resource curse) which shapes conflict (LeBillon 2001, Watts 2001). The resource curse literature thus draws a link between resource abundance and conflict. Collier and Hoeffler (2002) argue that there is a correlation between poverty, natural resource abundance and violent conflict. Collier (2001) is convinced that countries dependent on resource exploitation seem to be among the most conflict-ridden countries in the world. Greed has also been emphasised (Collier 2001, 2002; Reno 2002; Watts 2004; Omeje 2006). What circumstances create the context for resource abundance and competition? Failure to explain those contexts of resource abundance and competition by resource curse literature elicits Watts' critique that an approach based on resource determinism de-emphasises politics as an essential explanatory variable (Watts 2004: 53). Taken together, the resource availability or abundance provides insight into the Niger Delta conflicts along the following lines.

The approach reiterates that land is very scarce in the Niger Delta and the little that is useable is treasured, forming "the very basis – spiritual and material – of life in the peasant communities" (Obi 1999). In this region, and particularly in Ogoniland, both the land and rivers are central to all economic, social and domestic activities. Given that about 90 per cent of the total Niger Delta area consists of water, from many centuries in the past, canoes were critical and indispensable to movement, communication and trade. Long-distance commerce required large canoes to convey bulky goods (Kpone-Tonwe 1997: 25). As timber for construction was rare in the Delta (which is a mangrove terrain), canoe-building centres sprung up in areas such as Ko village in Ogoni, which had thick forests and timber. There was a concentration of huge wealth in Ogoniland due to expanding canoe and pot industries and bountiful farm harvests. The accumulation of goods created the problem of storage, and according to Kpone-Tonwe, as a result of this the Ogoni converted their wealth into other forms of wealth: land, permanent tree crops such as palm oil and coconut trees and money. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a class of wealthy men, whose wealth derived from commercial enterprise, had emerged in Ogoniland (Kpone-Tonwe 1997: 131; 34-6).

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the plain of Ogoniland was densely forested. The fertile plain ensured that Ogoniland became the food basket of the Niger Delta. The Ogoni produced provisions taken on board slave ships (Kpone-Tonwe and Salmons 2002). With population growth and increased demand for



farm produce from the Delta, the early 20th century witnessed the conversion of large areas of forest into farmland. Accelerated population growth increased pressure for farmland such that even the wetter areas of the land were cultivated for quick cassava crops in the dry season, endangering valuable water resources and impoverishing the soils (Kpone-Tonwe and Salmons 2002: 275). With a population of 500,000 people squeezed into 404 square miles, and an estimated population density of 1,250 persons per square mile, the question of land is a very sensitive issue to the Ogoni (Obi 1999). Thus, as Obi argues, land scarcity and environmental degradation are at the core of the struggle in the Niger Delta.

A new current that would exacerbate land scarcity and degradation was introduced with the first oil discovery in 1958 in the Ogoni community, Kegbara Dere. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), in joint venture partnership with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Elf and Agip operates five major oil fields and 96 wells, linked to five flow stations in Bomu, Bodo West, Ebubu, Korokoro and Yorla, all Ogoni communities (Banjo 1998). In 1914, the colonial state passed the Mineral Acts declaring sovereignty over mineral resources, empowering the Governor-General to grant licences and leases to British companies and subjects. In 1938, Shell obtained rights to prospect for oil in the entire Nigerian land space. The company later concentrated on an area of high expectation measuring 15,000 square miles and returned the remaining land space to the colonial state. Shell drilled its first oil wells in 1956 and began to export oil in 1958.

It took the postcolonial State nine years after independence to repeal the 1914 Mineral Act and to enact new oil-related legislation. Shell continued to operate freely within the favourable institutional framework crafted by the colonial state almost a decade after independence (Frynas 2000). Even then the 1969 Ordinance was little different from its colonial antecedent (Frynas 2000: 81). Between 1971 and 1990, there was no formal operating agreement between the State and Shell. For two decades, Shell operated within an institutional void and without obligations (Frynas 2000: 89) ostensibly because the Mineral Acts placed responsibility for oil exploitation in the hands of two monopolies: British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell. The monopoly rested on their agreement with the colonial State to share oil proceeds 50-50 (Osoba 1987).

The Ogoni celebrated the discovery of oil with excitement and hope (Agbo 2008). The installation of oil facilities generated jobs for unskilled labour and attracted small service sector industrialists, job seekers and other migrants to the region. The processes of urbanisation increased, Ogoniland boomed, and the people were excited. However, as Gaventa (1982) argues in the case of the Appalachian Valley, below the surface of the boom, the legitimacy investors enjoyed and the "momentary Zeitgeist, there was quietly occurring the structuring of inequalities that was to have major long-term impact upon the political economy of the region" (Gaventa 1982: 56). To Otite (1990: 327), the "oil rush" of the early 1970s unleashed rapid land alienation, quickly resulting in mass landlessness. The massive dispossession or "material haemorrhage" that became a characteristic feature of the Niger Delta came about through forcible

expropriation, deceit, corruption and state acquisition (Otite 1990: 332). By the early 1970s, the hope in oil was dashed and in its place, a grim realisation of despoliation settled (Agbonifo 2003). Ogoni leaders resorted to petitioning the State (Saro-Wiwa 1992).

The ecology of Ogoniland has undergone profound changes as a result of oil-related activities (Boele et al. 2001). The estimate of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from gas flaring in the Niger Delta stands at about 35 million tonnes annually, the highest annual emission from gas flaring in the world. The large volumes of greenhouse gases released, such as CO<sub>2</sub> and methane, contribute to global warming (Orubu et al. 2004). The soot released causes acid rain, fouling bodies of water and destroying once fertile farmland. Constant gas flares negatively affect the environment, destroying plant growth and wildlife, and driving away important species. Farmers harvest less returns yearly despite hard work and the Ogoni now must buy food from outside (Amanyie 2001: 18).

## **2. Society-rooted politics**

As if to underscore the fears and vulnerability of the Ogoni, in July 1970, a blowout occurred in the Ogoni town, Dere, where Shell first struck oil in 1958 (Saro-Wiwa 1992). According to one report from Dere, "The blow-out continued day and night for about two months during which we were forbidden to make fire, we could neither cook our meals nor smoke tobacco" (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 72). So severe was the disaster that it destroyed farmlands within a radius of about three miles. Worse still, the blowout occurred during the harvest period, destroying the first fruits after the civil war. Yet not a single relief material was received in Dere, as the victims "were left to swim or sink within their miseries" (Osha 2006: 28). Saro-Wiwa charges that what Shell has done to the Ogoni people, land, streams and atmosphere amounts to genocide, murdering the soul of the Ogoni (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 75).

In a petition addressed to the governor of Rivers State on 25 April 1970, Ogoni leaders alleged that after Ogoni returnees, displaced by the civil war, had been encouraged to till the land to eke out subsistence, Shell-BP caterpillars entered cultivated farmlands and bulldozed several acres of crops (Saro-Wiwa 1992). Prior to the petition, the leaders had shown the governor acres of mangrove swamps destroyed by incessant oil spills, imperilling the livelihood of the poor. Crude oil and mud polluted the once sparkling rivers and streams in Gokana area, leaving the people no alternative source for drinking water. Saro-Wiwa (1992: 47) summed up the Ogoni travails thus: "Our people have been compelled to sacrifice all life-supporting necessities so that the nation may enjoy economic boom".

Shell-BP countered the Ogoni accusation arguing that the charges are inaccurate (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 50-1). Nineteen years after the Bomu blowout some families who were victims of the blowout sued Shell for compensation in *Shell v. Farah*. In March 1988, Shell claimed it had rehabilitated and handed the land over to the plaintiffs and that it had paid compensation for damaged trees,

crops and other elements as well as for land degradation (Frynas 2000). The plaintiffs claimed ignorance of Shell's claims and consequently initiated legal action in 1989. In court, Shell relied on an expert witness (Frynas 2000: 168). The judge awarded the plaintiffs Naira 4,621,307 (US\$29, 924.9) in compensation. Shell appealed the judgment but it failed before the Court of Appeals. However, such expert claims have in some cases helped Shell avoid responsibility for environmental damage (Frynas 2000: 169).

Perhaps as a result of its dominance Shell was unperturbed by the increasing number of conflicts which dogged its operations. Frynas (2000) shows that in the period 1981-86 Shell had 24 compensation claims lodged against it in Nigerian courts. In 1998, the number jumped to more than 500 cases. Most of them were oil-spill related. The rise in the number of lawsuits suggests that compensation arrived at through negotiation and mediation was unsatisfactory, which indicated that negotiation and mediation are inadequate methods for resolving community compensation claims (Frynas 2000.) Shell claims it is a victim of sabotage and has employed the guise of sabotage to escape liability for damage. However Shell has so far failed to take legal action against any suspected saboteurs.

With land degradation and alienation, it was only a matter of time before an underclass emerged whose impoverishment could be tied to the lack of adequate regulation of multinational oil companies and subsequent destruction of the local economy (Agbonifo 2003). Consisting mainly of youths, the underclass bore resentment toward society, which they held responsible for their superfluousness, and were thus willing to listen to activist mobilizers (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Increasingly disenchanted with the educated local leaders the Ogoni youths came to perceive the local elites as men who drink beer while the underclass drinks muddy water (McGreal 1996). The youth accused local elites of taking advantage of young men's wives because they had money to jail their husbands in the event of protest. The same elites were those whose overriding interests lie in government positions and Shell contracts (McGreal 1996).

In 1990, the Ogoni took stock of their condition and realised that they were "faced with environmental degradation, political marginalisation, economic strangulation, slavery and possible extinction" (MOSOP 2004: 2). When, as a result, the Ogoni issued its Bill of Rights and ultimatum to Shell demanding payment of compensation, both the State and Shell ignored the movement (Ibeanu 2000). Following the rise in contentious activities, the State issued a decree, which criminalised any call for autonomy (Ibeanu 2000). On its part, Shell commenced a campaign against the person of Saro-Wiwa, arguing he did not represent the entire Ogoni (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Moreover, the company attempted to impugn the environmental claims of the Ogoni by arguing non-problematicity (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

The Ogoni quest for social justice and equality reflects the broader problem encapsulated in the National Question. The core of the National Question relates to how people are organised, empowered or disempowered (Momoh 2002: 26). Osadolor (2002: 31) argues the National Question arose from the amalgamation

of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, the subsequent incapacity to transform the complex into national societies and the consequent problem of what to do with the country. Colonialism engendered divisive policies and made little effort to create a united country. Some colonial officials did not believe Nigeria constituted a single country and expressed a lack of faith in the entity they had created (Osadolor 2002: 32). These forces fostered and enforced the feeling or perception of difference, fear and suspicion.

Mistrust persisted even after independence in 1960. Politics degenerated into a struggle for power at the federal level. Possession of the reins of power at the centre assured access to economic survival and benefits as well as other social ends. In their confrontation over sectional goals, rival groups dispensed with self-restraint leading to a series of political crises that resulted in Nigeria's first military coup on 15 January 1966. The ensuing civil war, the outcome of which favoured federalism, did not resolve the National Question but merely imposed unification (Osadolor 2002: 45). The primary source of crisis in the post-war era has been the inequitable distribution of national resources, in which ethnic minorities of the oil-rich Niger Delta question the essence of Nigeria and advocate convening a sovereign national conference to debate continued coexistence (Osadolor 2002: 43-4).

Extant inequalities in the distribution of wealth generate instability and protract the National Question (Anikpo (2002: 66) which, in effect, is about the issue of equity with regard to resource distribution among the various ethnic and class groups that compose Nigeria. Interethnic inequalities and the National Question predate the emergence of oil as a major revenue earner for the country (Obi 2002: 97). The politicisation of interethnic relations, expressed by the National Question, led to the struggle of majority groups to maintain domination at the expense of the minorities. The tendency of the latter was to escape their domination by opting out of a 'contract of perpetuity in inequality', an option the dominant group actively resisted (Obi 2002: 98). Minority fear and protests against majority domination led to establishing the Willink Commission, which failed to address minorities' anxieties (Obi 2002: 99). As a result of minority marginalisation, local elite anger and rural dispossession "exploded" into Ogoni militant nationalism in the 1990s (Okonta 2008: 5).

Okonta draws on history, institutions, and space in order to understand the social basis of Ogoni nationalism. He employs the deconstructive method to argue that Ogoni activists weaved truth claims to further their identity project. He impugns Kpone-Tonwe's account of the origin of the Ogoni, alluding to the scholar's involvement with MOSOP and the timing of the account. Okonta rejects historical truth claims, preferring to place them in tension. In the process, however, he constructs his own truth claims. The approach employed in this article differs from Okonta's in at least three important ways. Given that social movements are subjective phenomena, albeit not without empirical referents, the article is least interested in the veracity or otherwise of Ogoni activists' claims. It accepts the Ogoni movement for what it says it is. To Okonta, Saro-Wiwa's appeal to the interconnection between the Ogoni and otherworldly is a 'constructed'

"environmental theology" (Okonta 2008: 199). This author gives prominence to the force and symbolic, cultural and otherworldly basis of Ogoni beliefs, frames, identity and strategy.

The resource availability approach provides a materialist explanation of the Ogoni conflict, which involves elements of grievances and greed theories. The political economy of conflict argues that both grievances over exploitation and greed to acquire more resources for provincial needs explain why people resort to contentious politics (Gurr 1970; Collier 2001). The society-rooted approach privilege a materialist and provincial explanation of the Ogoni movement, which aligns with the grievances theories founded on the argument that arduous economic conditions, or perceived inequality, compel resistance to unfavourable conditions (Slater 1985). Both the resource scarcity and society-rooted politics perspectives emphasise the critical role played by the movement organisation, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and leadership in the rise of the mobilisation. Assent on institution and leadership reflects the resource mobilisation standpoint, which underlines that the capacity to assemble resources determines whether, and where, a movement forms.

### **The missing link, place: what is it?**

While elements of the resource availability and society-rooted politics explanations provide a basis for understanding the Ogoni movement at the macro-level, they are unable to explain why individual Ogoni decided to join the mobilisation. By ignoring the micromobilisation activities that preceded contention, both approaches draw a direct causal link between macro-structures and mobilisation. They assume that every Ogoni man and woman automatically joined the movement. But as Wolford asserts, the question is not simply why the movement was formed but why specific people decide to join movements in particular places and times. Who joined the movement and why is a spatially precise, actor-oriented question, which requires a deeper understanding of how the movement came into being (Wolford 2003).

While scholars make reference to spatial factors, such as history, the environmental impact of larger socioeconomic processes or belief systems, they hardly emphasise the mediating role such factors play in the onset and nature of the conflict. For instance, Turner and Brownhill (2004) underscore how some groups of women in the Niger Delta used nakedness to critique oil companies, believing the ritual would lead to the demise of the companies. This tactic and set of beliefs are place-based, but the authors are not concerned to show how place motivated or shaped the women's collective action. In the end, one gets the impression that the scholars' aim was to describe a place-based strategy rather than to describe how place shaped the conflict or strategies employed.

Geographers increasingly focus on place and space as mutually constitutive of social movement agency (Oslender 2004). Oslender emphasises the importance of knowing the place where a movement emerges, where the movement activists

live and the meaning which living in that particular place conveys to them. The core of such sensibility is that the "place and the subjectivities, identities and passions that it generates with locals make a difference to the ways in which a movement organises and articulates itself" (Oslender 2004: 958). Bell (1997: 813) refers to those passions as "ghosts". A place is constituted by the ghosts we take to inhabit and possess it; ghosts of the dead and living, individuals and collectives, of others and ourselves.

Agnew (2005: 86) defines place as "the encounter of people with other people and things in space. It refers to how everyday life is inscribed in space and takes on meaning for people and organizations". Agnew disentangles the concept of place thus:

Interwoven in the concept of place ... are three major elements: *locale*, the settings in which social relations are constituted (these can be informal or institutional); *location*, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale; and *sense of place*, the local 'structure of feeling' (Agnew 1987: 28).

*Locale* refers to the formal and informal arena in which everyday social interactions and relations take place. *Location* captures the physical geographical area and the ways in which economic and political developments, operating on a wider scale, impact on it. The emphasis is "macro-order" effects on a place and "the ways in which certain places are inscribed, affected and subject to the wider workings of economic and political structures that normally originate from outside the area itself" (Oslender 2004: 961). *Sense of place* refers to the ways in which "human experience and imagination appropriate the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location" (Oslender 2004: 962). It stresses how individuals and communities develop attachment to places through experience, memory and intention. Rather than separate and rigid entities, it is best to consider the three components of place as entangled (Oslender 2004: 963). Accordingly, analyses which ignore one or more of the three components of place hide a vital dimension of place and, thus, fall below the bar as fleshed out by Agnew and employed here.

Some would question the argued collective impact of place given the 'fractious' nature of MOSOP. Indeed, symbolic factors contributed to heightened mobilization and commitment to MOSOP. However, they were not strong enough to make the Chief of Eleme sign the OBR (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Symbolic forces did not translate to equal commitment to MOSOP among the Ogoni either. For instance, B.M. Wifa, an Ogoni and former Attorney-General of Rivers State, declined any public role in the movement even though he embraced the goals of MOSOP (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 104). Moreover, the first president of MOSOP, G.B. Leton and other Ogoni leaders, including Edward Kobani, resigned their position in MOSOP regardless of symbolic ties. How may we explain the variation in members' commitment to MOSOP in light of the spatial claims made here? It has been argued by some that such variation is a function of the feeling that Saro-Wiwa had taken the wrong step by resorting to grassroots mobilization and boycotting elections (Wheeler, Fabig, and Boele, 2002). To Watts (2004) individual political career interest explains why Leton and Kobani

opted out of MOSOP. Despite the uses of such explanations they omit important insights that analysis rooted in the study of identity theory presents.

Sheldon Stryker (2000) asserts that given multiple commitments, sets of relations may overlap in which case the individual multiple commitments will reinforce one another. Whereas they are divergent, they may compete for the actor's allegiance.

If commitments to family, friends, or other groups outside the movement are relatively weak, there will be little competition when movement leaders call for participation even of a demanding, all-encompassing sort. Conversely, however, if commitments to family, friends, or other social units are strong, the potential competitive edge of these units may well be high, in part because these units (more so than movements) are likely to be groups, and group-based expectations are likely to be more insistent, more powerful, than non-group-based expectations (Stryker 2000: 32).

Stryker observes that the collective ascription of the elements of a given identity to all members of a community, fail to yield to separation of the differences among group members. It has the effect of focusing attention entirely on the movement identity which participants share while ignoring other potentially salient external identities of the participants and what impact they may have on the latter's commitment. When a participant is committed to an outside group not directly connected to, or adversarial to, a movement, the dominance of the latter in securing the participants' commitment is threatened (Stryker 2000). Naanen (personal interview 2008) suggests that Ogoni elites who insisted on participating in politics were not solely motivated by personal political career. Rather they were motivated by the belief that by foreclosing the political process, an influential path to political engagement and possibility of resolving the Ogoni issues was being closed. It is also the case, however, that many of the local elites had lucrative clientelist links to both the state and Shell.

When Saro-Wiwa's uncompromising stance demanded unalloyed loyalty from participants, the balance between multiple loyalties, which had hitherto been managed successfully, was thrown in jeopardy. The violence that attended Wilbros' destruction of farms in Ogoniland proved to be the decisive moment for some conservative chiefs to choose which identity was more salient. They disowned MOSOP, and ran away to Port-Harcourt to seek government protection (Kpone-Tonwe, personal interview 2008). Leton and Kobani remained henchmen of the movement at the time. Trouble, however, broke for the duo when MOSOP decided to boycott the 1993 presidential elections. Now Leton was a prominent leader in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) whose presidential flagbearer was the popular Chief Abiola (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Their identity as SDP stalwarts and relationship to the party machinery came into conflict with their identity as MOSOP members. Failing to reconcile the conflict and in the effort to secure the former, they severed their relationship with MOSOP. Elites' prior commitments to the state, Shell and later to the SDP competed with loyalty to MOSOP precisely because both sets of commitments were independent. The process of unification, rather than fractionalisation, was ascendant in the course of mobilisation. The force of internal divisions

overcame unification only at moments when leaders were compelled to choose between two, or more, identities.

### **Embedding dominant explanations in place**

The history of oil exploitation has been one of displacement, production of the socio-physical topography of the Niger Delta, and reproduction of underdevelopment. Had awareness and experience of bio-geophysical displacement been sufficient to mobilise collective action, the Ogoni would have mobilised against the State and Shell following the July 1970 Dere blowout. But they did not. The resource availability and society-rooted politics identify some of the important processes that created the necessary conditions that precipitated conflicts. The explanations are, however, insufficient to understand why conflict occurs in some places and not others. For instance, environmental pollution and socio-political marginalisation as identified in the resource availability and society-rooted politics literatures characterise the minority oil-producing areas of the Niger Delta. Yet, conflict is not ubiquitous in the region.

Environmental degradation and socioeconomic marginalisation provided the precipitating background to mobilisation. Ogoni framing activities rendered those conditions intelligible or visible to ordinary Ogoni which led to the initiation of collective action. Interpretive activities – by means of which perceived reality and experience are transformed to construct new identities, perception and behaviour – are critical to the move from structure or grievances to collective action. In effect, the necessary and sufficient conditions for conflict emerge at the nexus between structural conditions, place and interpretive processes. The task for the article is to emphasise how the rich historical, personality and institutional factors discussed in existing literature, or the politics of MOSOP, was shaped by place. In what follows, the article considers how place shaped Ogoni frames, and vice versa, in the effort to make sense of ongoing changes and the mobilisation of opposition. I have paired location with diagnosis, locale with prognosis, and sense of place with rationale for action for analytic purposes only. In reality, the three dimensions of place are conjoined, and each of them can generate frames; diagnosis, prognosis and rationale for action.

### **Location and diagnosis**

Frame refers to “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of their world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam et al. 1996: 6). MOSOP (1991) achieved the objective of fashioning shared understanding and motivating collective participation by deploying various frames. Ogoni activists emphasised and utilised the discourses of structural marginalisation and exploitation to articulate the reasons why they mobilised (MOSOP 1991). Below are some



elements of an oppressive frame evident in Ogoni publications (compiled by author):

1. The elites of the majority ethnic groups, their clients from minority groups, the State and Shell compose a federal system, a colonising order.
2. The colonising order serves the interests of those who compose it while exploiting and marginalising the minority oil-bearing communities.
3. The root of the exploitative nature of the federal system lies in its productive, appropriative and distributive systems.
4. The system of exploitation has given rise to numerous problems for oil-bearing communities, including impoverishment, land confiscation and environmental destruction and political marginalisation.
5. The Ogoni environment, which once teemed with wildlife, was the food basket of the region and the abode of Ogoni spirits and deities, has been reduced to a wasteland by an ecological war waged by Shell.
6. MOSOP aims to roll back these problems by repossessing control of Ogoniland, and attacking the roots of Ogoni dispossession.

In the oppressive order frame, the dominant portrayal of Ogoniland is as space controlled and exploited by the State and Shell in ways that utterly ignore local understanding of environment as meaningful place, abode of deities and the source of wellbeing of its inhabitants. The nature of the rule enriches places and actors beyond Ogoni at the expense of the latter. The Ogoni need to repossess control over the environment, benefit from the resources therein and overturn colonial exploitation. Saro-Wiwa (1995) employed a diagnostic frame to attribute causality by asserting that what Shell and Chevron have done to Ogoni environment and community equate with genocide.

The oppressive frame was shaped by place/location. Aware of the difference between contemporary and historical Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa recalled an era in which the Ogoni ruled themselves anticipating the day the Ogoni would repossess the autonomy their ancestors bequeathed to them. Saro-Wiwa realised that the Ogoni and Ogoniland are located in the periphery of a translocal network of relations, including states, global capital and local elites. Within that context, the Ogoni had little control over how its resources are exploited and distributed, and over who benefits from it. Moreover, Ogoniland and its inhabitants could scarcely escape the externalities of oil production. The Ogoni captured its relative powerlessness by frames of "slavery and possible extinction", "domestic colonialism", and "ecological disaster" (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 148). According to Saro-Wiwa (1995), the Ogoni are engaged in a twin war; "35-year-old ecological war", and "a political war of tyranny, oppression and greed". Although nobody is maimed or killed, the war remains devastating in its

impacts. The casualties of the twin war include men, women, children, flora, fauna, the air and water and the land (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

The strategy to internationalise the anti-State and Shell struggle meant drawing distant people and places as allies in the struggle. Keck and Sikkink (1999) argue that transnational advocacy networks are not new in history, and their aim is to bring about a change in the behaviour of centers of authority. Yet Okonta (2008) and Bob (2005) argue that the Ogoni decision to internationalise the struggle was a risky strategy. Moreover, Okonta sees the appeal to the international community as a strategy informed by fear of the possible backlash from the Nigerian state. While both positions are plausible they ignore another equally plausible explanation. MOSOP was embroiled in conflict with Shell, a multinational oil company. The core of the stake of conflict was oil, a global commodity and the source of global capitalist accumulation (Obi 1999). In effect, MOSOP was involved in conflictual relations with a translocal network of actors, including states, global capitalists, and shareholders located in far-flung places, including London, The Hague and other major cities of the world (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 188-189). Advocacy networks have been critical in value-laden debates, particularly where domestic groups are denied channels of redress (Keck and Sikkink (1999). By initiating a translocal network, the Ogoni could take advantage of the benefits of advocacy networks to make its voice heard in global cities, appeal to the conscience of global allies of Shell and the state who otherwise subscribe to human rights, environment and social justice norms, and counter the non-problematique discourses of Shell and the state at the global arena.

Ogoni choices were equally informed by place. Activists utilised local religious beliefs, polluted places and frames to achieve mass mobilisation of Ogoni. Without such a groundswell of self-mobilisation, MOSOP would have had little basis to mobilise international support. Bob (2005) may have been right in his claims that Ogoni strategy was informed by the need for external support. But he fails to give analytical attention to how place shaped such strategies. To mobilise resources, activists may have made decisions based on rational calculation of costs and benefits. Costs and benefits make meaning within particular places. Ben Naanen, former Secretary-General of MOSOP, asserts that MOSOP was made offers of military assistance by insurgent groups outside Nigeria. MOSOP declined the offers because it was aware that given the flat and accessible terrain of Ogoniland, the Nigerian military could over-run it in days (Naanen, personal interview 2008). In effect, a violent strategy was seen as costly within the context of the flat terrain of Ogoni. Moreover, the physical reality of places of pollution in Ogoniland shaped MOSOP's largely peaceful strategy. For instance, by being able to point at places devastated by oil spills, terrain criss-crossed by pipelines and spots of unending gas flares, activists believed they could jolt the conscience of the world, secure international support and mobilise global pressure on the state and Shell to alter their behaviour.

Quayson (1998) draws attention to a spatial dimension of the Ogoni conflict (location) when he argues that the violence that led to the death of four prominent Ogoni chiefs in controversial circumstances should not be blamed on Saro-Wiwa. He asserts that the social context within which the violence occurred was over-determined by the ethos of Nigerian politics:

The Babangida years had seen the perfection of a system of political patronage popularly known as "settlement". Because of this, any one who put themselves up as representatives of their people ran the danger of being accused of being "settled" if they ever showed signs of compromise. And so when the traditional leaders argued that the aggressive politics of Saro-Wiwa would alienate them from political authorities and that they should take a more measured stance, it was easy for them to fall under suspicion of having been bought off. The atmosphere of vilification did not require a Ken Saro-Wiwa as such.

To the scholar, political values operating across the nation space shaped the Ogoni resort to violence against those they perceived as having compromised their struggle.

### **Locale and prognosis**

The dominant macro-explanations of Ogoni conflict emphasises grievances arising from the expropriation of Ogoni oil resources by the central government. While the Ogoni bore the externalities of oil exploitation, they benefitted little from it. However, the experience of exploitation and marginalisation did not automatically motivate participation in the protest movement. Activist leaders deployed a spatial frame, which are frames that underlined the ancient connection between the Ogoni and Ogoniland. Thus, decision to join the protest was spatial in content because it was rooted in cultural understanding of the link between people and place. Locale or everyday social relations shaped Ogoni frames, including the *Miideekor* (landlord's rights) frame. The Ogoni has a five-day week. Deekor is an Ogoni word, which refers to one day in the five-day week. Traditionally the palm wine-tapper may keep the palm wine produced in four out of the five days. However, Carolyn Nagbo emphasises that the remaining day's production belongs to the landowner (Nagbo 2008, personal interview). The one-day-a-week proceeds due the landowner is *miideekor*, which symbolises the relationship between the owner of a palm field and the palm wine-tapper. During the mobilisation of the Ogoni, an ordinary Ogoni woman, Rhoda Komdu Nwinaalee, employed the concept of *miideekor* from the Ogoni cultural repertoire (Alonale-Laka 2002). One can distil elements of the *miideekor* frame from informants' articulation of grievances and activists' publications (compiled by author):

1. The oil resources in Ogoni belong to the Ogoni.
2. It is only right that as the property owner, Ogoni receives a fair share of the resources.
3. However, the State and Shell who are tenants on Ogoni land conspire to deny the Ogoni their due.

4. At the same time, Shell pollutes and confiscates Ogoni land without compensation, and with impunity.
5. This situation is thievery, exploitative and unjust.
6. What the Ogoni demand is a fair share or *miideekor*, not everything.

Applying this cultural frame, the Ogoni defined themselves as owners of Ogoniland and the oil beneath it, casting the State and Shell as the tenants on the land (Saro-Wiwa 1995). What they expected from the latter is their *miideekor* or fair share as landowner. In the cognitive frame, Damgbor Moses (2008, personal interview) argues, *miideekor* is a widely shared word in the vocabulary of the Ogoni people. The frame served to construe the State and Shell as thieves, exploiters and oppressors who deny the Ogoni what belongs to them (Saro-Wiwa 1992).

Ogoni locale or context of daily existence was structured by religious systems and beliefs. The existing religious worldview shaped activists' beliefs and action. Religious belief shaped Saro-Wiwa's decision to sacrifice his resources and life for the struggle. He heard the Voice of Ogoni spirit, a culturally rooted being (MOSOP 2004). The Ogoni expected the arrival of a mythical being, *Wiayor*, who would liberate them from bondage. Saro-Wiwa was largely seen as the *Wiayor* (Kpone-Tonwe 2008, personal interview). Ogoni beliefs in the involvement and sanction of their ancestors and deities fired participants' emotions and commitment to the struggle. Kpalap (2008, personal interview) explains that the Ogoni believed that their ancestors not only supported but also led the struggle. "To be honest with you, every Ogoni believes there is a spiritual touch to everything. The belief in ancestral leadership is a culture of Ogoni". This explains why the Ogoni view anyone or anything, no matter how highly placed, who betray the cause of the struggle with anger and suspicion (Kpalap 2008). Activists' frames articulating Ogoni grievances were, thus, shaped by religious beliefs in the involvement of God and Ogoni deities. Biblical frames which defined the Ogoni condition as unjust and evil and equated it to the condition of Israel in bondage in Egypt were utilised (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

Dominant explanations allude to various material and provincial bases of Ogoni strategies. Reno (2002) cites Saro-Wiwa's personal ambition; Bob (2005) emphasises Saro-Wiwa's risky tendency; Okonta (2008: 178) focuses on the shaping role of personal, institutional and historical factors on activists' strategies. He accuses Saro-Wiwa of hiding "unpalatable truth" and eliding over the historical tension between Eleme and other Ogoni clans. Okonta is concerned with how the "nationality" principle shaped the strategies Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders chose as they struggled to make MOSOP more effective (Okonta 2008: 196-197). Saro-Wiwa dreamed of a mass organisation and therefore pursued the idea of turning an elitist movement into a mass movement that would speak for all Ogoni (Okonta 2008:194). He claims that the Ogoni national march of 4th January 1993 was Saro-Wiwa's response to waning interest in MOSOP and rising interest in national politics among

powerful elites. By definition, however, social movement engage in public protests (Timothy Doyle 2008). Moreover, through protests activists signal to authorities that the former is "Worthy, United, Numerous, and Committed" (Charles Tilly, 1998).

The impact of the otherworldly on MOSOP strategy has been given scant attention in the literature. That may be the result of the failure to appreciate that gods and spirits co-exist with humans and that being human means being with gods (Chakrabathy 2000). Ogoni activists frequently allude to the role of the gods, ancestors and spirits in their mobilisation. Thus, they emphasise how existing religious belief systems shaped Ogoni strategies (Agbonifo 2009). Saro-Wiwa (1995) provides a religious frame to explain why he initiated the struggle. He claimed the Voice of Ogoni spirit mandated him to liberate the Ogoni and similar people elsewhere. The appeal to spiritual commissioning served as an incentive to the Ogoni who thus believed they would succeed. Similarly, place-specific cultural antecedents shaped grassroots mobilisation strategy. For instance, the idea to make MOSOP an inclusive organisation was championed and culturally legitimated by a committee of Ogoni experts. The committee, formed during the leadership of Leton, revived the idea that historically the Ogoni organised themselves along the lines of the *Yaa* tradition (Kpone-Tonwe 2003). The *Yaa* tradition was all-inclusive and it was the secret of Ogoni autonomy and prosperity in the past (Kpone-Tonwe 2003). Saro-Wiwa successfully applied the principles and methods used by Ogoni secret societies to mobilise his people (Kpone-Tonwe 2002). MOSOP was shaped along the traditional lines of Ogoni youth organisation (personal interview with Kpone-Tonwe 2008) and was similar to the *Yaa* tradition in terms of its grassroots basis and the relationship between Ogoni youths and MOSOP elders (Kpone-Tonwe 2003).

MOSOP took advantage of the everyday routine of the Ogoni, particularly in the mobilisation of Churches in Ogoni. Most Ogoni people had converted to Christianity even if they retain awe for Ogoni deities (Maier). The Churches helped to define the problems confronting the Ogoni as similar to the situation of Israel in Egyptian bondage. Beyond that, they pushed the frame that the Christian God was interested in delivering the Ogoni from bondage just as he delivered the Israelites. The Christians brought this Biblical perspective to bear in their own reality. Thus, MOSOP activists bore their tribulations with equanimity, drawing parallels between such experiences and that of Israel (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 214). Also, they looked to Saro-Wiwa as a replica of the Biblical Moses who led Israel out of Egypt. MOSOP tapped into the everyday religious routine by incorporating the Churches in the movement, holding night vigils, fasting, and services where supplications were made to God for deliverance.

### **Sense of place and rationale for action**

To the Ogoni, rivers and streams do not only provide water for human use or fish and sea food for human enjoyment and survival; 'they are sacred and are bound up intricately with the life of the community, of the entire Ogoni nation' (Kpone-Tonwe and Salmons 2001: 276). As such, Ogoni jealously guarded the integrity of their territory, maintaining with ferocity the independence of their society and honour of their environment against external violation. In that regard, the Ogoni instituted a cultural taboo against intermarriage with neighbours, except the Ibibio. They evolved the *Yaa* tradition; a system of inclusive social organisation that ensured the Ogoni maintained its independence against its more numerous neighbours (Kpone-Tonwe 2003). The land as the material embodiment of the Ogoni lies at the root of Ogoni identity, 'community memory' of their past, present and future, Ogoni prosperity and guidelines for negotiating the world (Livesey 2001: 73).

However after 32 years of oil exploitation, during which Ogoni oil provided the State some US\$30 billion, Ogoniland had become "a land which is, in every sense of the term, an ecological disaster. This is not acceptable" (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 74). Oil development brought Ogoni nothing except a blighted countryside, a land devoid of wildlife, full of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, polluted streams, creeks and rivers. As a result, the Ogoni self-sufficiency in food production became a thing of the past. The decimation engendered by oil exploitation elicits Saro-Wiwa's nostalgic dirge for his beloved homeland: "Where are the antelopes, the squirrels, the sacred tortoises, the snails, the lions and tigers which roamed this land?" (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 83). In other words, the ghosts, real and imputed, that constitute the distinctiveness of Ogoniland, and which fostered a sense of attachment or elicited emotions of beauty and joy, was under assault. He contrasts the present with the past:

Growing up in Bori in 1947 (the year the Ogoni won the right to have their own Native Authority from British colonial government), I was privileged to see the Ogoni administering themselves and doing for themselves all those things which would not be done for them while they were administered as a part of other Native Authorities... Ogoni was a blessed land at the time. The fertile alluvial soil of the plain provided a rich harvest of yam, cassava, and vegetable. The pure streams and seas brimmed with fish and other sea food. We lacked for nothing... And I felt proud to be Ogoni. (MOSOP 2004: 35)

The negative balance sheet informs the Ogoni charge:

Shell has waged an ecological war in Ogoni since 1958. An ecological war is highly lethal, the more so as it is unconventional. It is omniscidal in its effect. Human life, flora, fauna, the air, fall at its feet, and finally, the land itself dies. This is violence at its height (MOSOP 2004: 3).

To reverse the possibility of "extinction" and mobilise action against the State and Shell, MOSOP deployed an environmental frame, which resonated with all Ogoni. In the frame, Ogoniland, rivers and forests are not merely resources but co-extensive with community. The environment is the abode of Ogoni ancestors and deities. The decimation of the environment imperils the spiritual basis of Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa employed moral incentive to motivate action against the depredation of Shell even if it meant death (Saro-Wiwa 1989: 256). There is no better way for man to die than facing fear itself in defence of "the ashes of his

fathers" and "temple of his gods". These are powerful evocative phrases, which refer to Ogoni environment and underline the deep connection between Ogoni deities, ancestors, the living and the land.

Apart from providing rationale for collective action, movement activists also frame a vocabulary of motive, which persuades recruits and potential recruits that collective action will produce the desired changes. Traditionally, Ogoni believed that the individual on whom the spirit of revolution rested would succeed in his endeavour. The people believed Saro-Wiwa was the chosen one, and eagerly embraced him (Kpone-Tonwe 2008).

I told the house that what was happening in Ogoniland was a revolution; that in history, a revolution is caused by a "spirit force", which rests on a single individual; that in the case of Ogoni, that individual was Ken Saro-Wiwa; that in a traditional setting, based on my study of Ogoni tradition, what the elders used to do, was to find out the individual on whom this "spirit force" rests. (Kpone-Tonwe 2003: 63)

Customarily, Ogoni people rally around the individual on whom the spirit of revolution rests because he is seen as divinely chosen. Thus, the people eagerly embraced Saro-Wiwa as one sent by God, and whatever he said was taken as the divine will (Kpone-Tonwe, 2008 personal interview). The legitimacy conferred on Saro-Wiwa by the association drawn between his leadership and the supra-human domain was a compelling reason for mass recruitment into the mobilisation (Agbonifo 2003). It contrasts with Okonta's (2008: 205) revisionist explanation – that Ogoni youth and women rewarded Saro-Wiwa with loyalty because he brought them to the mainstream of MOSOP.

A sense of place or belief in the presence of ghosts, deities and gods shaped the strategy of the Ogoni who took advantage of extant spiritual resources by mobilising supra-human actors in their environment. On 4 January 1993, Ogoni elders poured libation and asked Ogoni ancestors to support and bless their struggle. A day earlier, Ogoni people prayed at the grave site of Birabi. Kpalap (2008, personal interview) explains that the Ogoni believe that their ancestors not only supported but also led the struggle. MOSOP held mobilising services in churches, which actively participated in the movement and framed the Ogoni situation as evil and unjust (Saro-Wiwa 1995; Obi 1999). Women embarked on regular fasting and prayer for the deliverance of Ogoni (Kpalap 2006). The involvement of the Church created a powerfully charged spiritual atmosphere where the syncretistic could flourish. In such a context, the Christian God, Ogoni spirit and other deities came together for the Ogoni cause, creating a cocktail of beliefs in the miraculous (Agbonifo 2003). Maier (2000: 105) highlights the power of Ogoni cultural belief system when he argues that although a large number of the Ogoni converted to Christianity, the Ogoni retain awe for the Ogoni spirit. Ogoni leaders employed symbols and texts from different belief systems to mobilise members, thereby providing religious approval for political rebellion against unjust systems (Tschirgi 2007).

Critics may raise questions regarding the determining role of ideational factors given that there is no single Ogoni identity; internal squabbles are rife among Ogoni villages despite attempt to create an Ogoni identity (Isumonah 2004).

Moreover, Isumonah stresses, for identifiable reasons, there was no pan-Ogoni ethnic consciousness, and even though there was an Ogoni Central Union (OCU) in 1945, all Ogoni did not identify with it. Emphasis on the internal divisions within MOSOP is less important than the question of how Ogoni activists built at a point in time one of the most formidable movements in the history of Nigeria despite subsisting differences. It is trite knowledge in social movement scholarship that a social movement is not a unity; rather it is composed of varying and sometimes conflicting elements. Thus, Derrida (1994) argues "You cannot object to a unity simply because it is the result of a process of unification . . . [T]here are no natural unities, only more or less stable processes of unification, some of them solidly established over a long period of time". The absence of pan-Ogoni identity did not imply absence of a worthy platform for a shared worldview, generalised trust and unity of purpose.

To many MOSOP activists, Saro-Wiwa was a reputable leader. The genesis of Saro-Wiwa's reputation dates back to the days immediately after the Nigerian civil war when almost single-handedly he saw to the rehabilitation of displaced Ogoni people (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Later, as Commissioner of Education in Rivers State, he awarded scholarships to Ogoni students, many of whom had become adults by the 1990s (Innocent Barikor 2007). Damgbor Moses (personal interview 2008) asserts:

I believed so much in Saro-Wiwa because he was not poor; he had everything a man needed. Yet, he was not satisfied with the condition of Ogoni people. At a meeting in his home in Bane village one day, we were sweating and people began to fan themselves. I drew his attention to the drama to underline the need for electric fans and a generating set. Ken replied by saying we should all suffer together. He would not instal fans in his house because the people around had no fans. He said a private generator would not supply power to those around him, meanwhile they would suffer the noise pollution occasioned by it. I was touched and vowed I would never leave him and that I would follow the movement to the end.

Informants show that they willingly attended mobilisation meetings when they heard Saro-Wiwa was addressing such meetings. Trust in Saro-Wiwa is distilled by Chief Deemua (personal interview 2008) thus:

Ken was a dynamic leader. We found his "yes" to be yes, and his "no" to be no. We saw he is not a cheater. We have Ogoni sons and daughters in government, but it does not reflect on Ogoni. They do not do anything for the good of Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa was not like that. Wherever he went, he had the betterment of his people in mind.

Here, we find the emergence of trust in the context of mobilization, but which has deep roots in activists' perception of the personality of Saro-Wiwa.

The reputation of historical figures matters too. The new social movement theory emphasises the centrality of cultural elements (Johnston 2002). However, social movement interests in culture, notably the studies of frames, have revolved around its interpretive and instrumental uses (Jansen 2007). There has been less focus on how the past – specifically its historical figures – constitute a critical symbolic resource for groups in contention (Jansen 2007: 958). Saro-Wiwa (1995) appropriated Nigerian nationalist leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, to legitimate his argument for equality of all ethnic



nationalities that composed the country. Moreover, the Ogoni made use of the historical figure, Birabi, a foremost Ogoni nationalist leader. As an ancestor, Ogoni believed he would provide spiritual assistance to the new struggle in continuation of his earthly efforts. In a syncretic context that involved elements of the Christian and traditional religions, activists transformed the dead into a transcendent actor when invocative prayers were made at Birabi's graveyard a day before the 4<sup>th</sup> January protest (Saro-Wiwa 1995). The use of the historical figure concentrated the belief that spiritual forces were on the side of the Ogoni against the State and Shell. During the visit to Birabi's grave, the passion of everyone present rose and the environment became so charged everyone could feel it; it was as if the Ogoni protest was happening that day (Kpalap 2008, personal interview).

## Conclusion

A comprehensive understanding of resource-related conflicts in the Niger Delta need to move beyond the singular focus on macrostructural conditions that constitute the backdrop to the conflicts, and pay deserved attention to the mediatory role of place. While impoverishment, environmental pollution and political marginalisation are commonplace, conflict is not. There is, therefore, the need to understand why conflict emerges where it does. A consideration of the general conditions in their imbrications with place-specific characteristics is called for. The intersection of the general and specific creates the conditions for emergence of the conflicts.

Much of the data presented here are available in the existing literature. However, they have hardly been considered within the framework of place, which asserts that conflict is inherently geographical, that is, structured by the core elements of place; locale, location and sense of place. Thus, the article argues that insights from the resource availability and society-rooted literature provide the precipitating backdrop to the conflict. Place-specific factors, notably the history of struggle and environmental disaster, sense of attachment to place, existing religious worldviews and place-informed framing combined with broad societal conditions, precipitating the emergence of the Ogoni movement.

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## **Personal Interviews**

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Hyde-Clarke, Nathalie, ed. (2010). *The citizen in communication: re-visiting traditional, new and community media practices in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta. (240pp. R269.95 paperback)

Reviewed by Marian Burchardt

Kuhn, Gabriel (2010). *Sober living for the revolution: hardcore punk, Straight Edge, and radical politics*. Oakland: PM Press. (304pp. \$22.95 paperback)

Reviewed by John L. Murphy

Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2010). *Dispossession and resistance in India: the river and the rage*. Oxford: Routledge. (242pp. £80 hardback)

Reviewed by Lesley Wood

**Davis, Laurence and Kinna, Ruth, eds. (2010). *Anarchism and utopianism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. (304 pp. £60 hardback)**

Reviewed by **Martha Ackelsberg**

Many years ago, Lewis Mumford wrote, in *The Story of Utopias*, that "Utopia has long been another name for the unreal and the impossible. We have set utopia over against the world. As a matter of fact, it is our utopias that make the world tolerable to us: the cities and mansions that people dream of are those in which they finally live." As many of the essays in this volume note, because of the association of "utopia" with the "unreal and the impossible," "utopianism" has an ambiguous legacy. On the one hand, those who are critical of movements for social change often condemn them with the charge of utopianism; and, on the other hand, as Peter Marshall notes in his preface, "Utopian thinking and reverie have been with us... ever since our ancestors on the African savannah first lifted up their heads and wondered what kind of society might be over the horizon or on the other side of the mountain range." Similarly, anarchism has sometimes been "tarred" with the utopian label. What makes this volume—which focuses on the relationship between anarchism and utopianism—particularly compelling is that its contributors include both those who attempt to distinguish anarchism from utopianism, in hopes of escaping the label, and those who proudly claim the utopian label. The inclusion of both advocates and critics of utopianism is but one example of the diversity of the contributors to this intriguing anthology.

The essays are, indeed, very diverse, ranging from explorations of Daoism in ancient China to the politics of love and desire in late Nineteenth Century Britain and the mid-late Twentieth Century US; examinations of literary utopias; and (conflicting) presentations of the place of emotions in anarchist and/or utopian theorizing. While the topics are varied, and the approaches even more so, they are all linked, as Laurence Davis rightly points out in his fine introduction, by the "idea of speaking/living/being utopia as a manifestation of the anarchist emphasis on the inextricable interrelationship of means and ends." And all of these contributors question the received wisdom of our time that capitalism is here to stay, and is, in effect, the "only game in town." While some of the contributors are more hesitant than others to offer alternative visions (perhaps for fear of being labeled "utopian!"), all begin from a critical standpoint vis-à-vis dominant relations of economic, political, and gendered power.

The volume is arranged in five sections: the first offers an historical and philosophical overview; the second has two essays on antecedents of the anarchist literary utopia; the third consists of four chapters exploring anti-capitalism and the anarchist utopian literary imagination; then follow three chapters on free love, anarchist politics and utopian desire (my favorites!); and the final section contains



four concluding essays on contemporary anarchist politics. One aspect of this volume that differentiates it from other anthologies, and that I found particularly appealing, is that the essays are all relatively brief: 10-20 pages, on average. The authors tend to present their arguments in clear and pithy prose, which makes these essays accessible to academic experts and “lay” readers/activists alike.

John P. Clark’s introductory essay takes the reader directly into the conflict between the dominating/repressive and the creative/expressive/libertarian dimensions of utopian thought (especially in literary contexts). In this respect, his contribution both introduces and manifests the tensions about utopianism that are explored throughout the volume. Clark argues—as do many of the contributors—echoing Mumford, that there is a prefigurative dimension to both anarchist and utopian politics; that is, “utopia is present in all the creative play of energies, in spiritual and material voyages of discovery, and, of course, in everything touched by the transformative imagination... Even if it can never be attained, utopia is already present or it is a fraud.” Thus, this essay provides a compelling entry into the complexities that are also explored in other chapters in the volume.

The two essays in the section on antecedents of anarchist literary utopia were, to this reader, at least, rather less accessible than the rest. Perhaps because I am less familiar with the historical contexts (particularly of Rapp’s essay on radical Daoism “re-examined in light of the Guodian manuscripts”), the articles sometimes felt as if they were beginning “in medias res.” Some readers might well benefit from a bit more historical contextualizing. But the arguments the authors raise about the complexities of utopian visions are certainly clear, and relevant to contemporary movements.

Some of the contradictions—or at least differences of opinion—among the authors and within the volume come through clearly in the chapters in the sections on the anarchist utopian literary imagination and on free love and radical politics. Indeed, although the first section seemingly focuses on literary genres—and the essays certainly begin with literary utopias—they tend to range rather far beyond, including anthropological, psychological and historical analyses and perspectives. There is an intriguing common thread running through these essays, which is brought to the fore more directly and explicitly in the fourth section: namely, explorations of the place of desires and emotions in utopian theories and practice. Thus, Nicholas Spencer’s essay on B. Traven and Pierre Clastres, and Gisela Heffes’ on the “political implications of emotions,” highlight not only different forms of power (coercive vs. non-coercive), but also the disruptive effects of desires and emotions in would-be utopian/anarchist contexts—a theme that Dominic Ording also explores in his discussion of post-Stonewall gay liberation manifestos.

Taking a different tack, fascinating chapters by Judy Greenway and Brigitte Koenig (found in the section on anarchist politics and utopian desire) explore late-nineteenth and early twentieth century experiments in free(r) love—both historical

and literary—and suggest ways that desires and emotions, while potentially destabilizing, can also point the way to new possibilities. Nevertheless, while Ording's essay, drawing on early post-Stonewall gay liberation manifestoes, did a fine job of exploring both the utopian promise and complex realities of sexual liberation, I was struck by the absence in it of a feminist awareness and sensibility. No doubt, the essay reflects the perspectives of the gay male activist-writers of the time, who believed themselves to be inventing new modes of being in the absence of any models. That they were ignorant of contemporary radical feminist efforts to re-imagine love, desires, commitment, etc. was one thing; that Ording fails to mention those efforts is another. It is not that late 60's radical (and lesbian) feminists had all the answers either; but at least they, too, were struggling with the questions. It would have been valuable to note the disjuncture, the relative lack of communication, between groups that were attempting similar utopian explorations.

The four essays in the final section bring us back, directly, to the tensions and the creative possibilities in the confrontation of anarchism with utopianism. Whether in explorations of the place of education within the anarchist/utopian project or in examinations of the possibility of dissenting action within contemporary advanced capitalist (or post-capitalist) industrial society, these essays make clear that anarchist and utopian perspectives have much to offer us, particularly at moments that seem as politically bleak as our own. I found Uri Gordon's concluding essay particularly compelling. He confronts head-on the claim that the "type of present-tense utopianism" explored in the volume "necessarily leads to abandoning the thankless but necessary work of building a mass revolutionary movement...?"

To this question, he offers two (partial) answers. The optimistic one is that it is precisely the building of alternative spaces, the practice of prefigurative politics, that offers the strongest argument for joining a movement for social change. The "pessimistic" response is that "a lack of belief in revolutionary closure becomes a strength rather than a liability; having let go of long-term utopian aspirations, activists are already partially equipped with the mental and emotional resources they need to carry on with their work despite the bleak prospects they might anticipate for global society in the coming decades." In short, despite the dystopian conditions of contemporary life in the West, the need for utopias—and, in particular, anarchist-inspired utopian thinking—has never been greater. While this book does not offer us any blueprints—and, in fact, insists that anarchism is not about offering blueprints—it does offer us many compelling stories, as well as possible grounds for the hope that change is possible. And that is no small thing.

### **About the reviewer**

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**Dukelow, Fiona and O'Donovan, Orla, eds. (2010). *Mobilising classics: reading radical writing in Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. (265 pp. £14.99 paperback, £60 hardback)**

Reviewed by **Fergal Finnegan**

The idea behind this book is both a good and deceptively simple one. In fact the editors should be commended for a coming up with such an engaging and straightforward format for a book that immediately makes you think “why hasn’t this been done before?” They approached a number of Irish radicals, nearly all of whom are academics, and asked them to write about a “classic” piece of radical writing which has inspired them or which they considered particularly important.

The book consists of eleven chapters each of which explores one “mobilising classic” in detail. Every chapter provides some introductory historical and biographical material about the author of the classic text along with an analysis of the piece in question. Crucially, the writers also explore the relevance of the text to social movements and explain how the piece of writing has been read and been acted upon in Ireland. Most of the writers also describe how they first came across the text and the political motivation behind their choice. So although the book is academic there is no pretence to false neutrality from the contributors. These things mark it out. After all, there is no shortage of collections of writings on social movements, but the emphasis on how ideas circulate and get *used* combined with some insights into the personal reasons underpinning the choice of a piece of writing gives the book an avowedly political, intimate and human quality that many academic collections lack.

Most of the chosen pieces are very well known. So included in the eleven are Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man*, Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* and Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton’s *Black power*<sup>1</sup> along with writing by Ivan Illich, Adrienne Rich and Robert Tressell. Two other socialist writers are featured who may not be familiar to non-Irish readers but are famous in Ireland—James Connolly and William Thompson. The

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<sup>1</sup> Carmichael later renamed himself Kwame Ture.

only real surprises, for this reader at any rate, was the choice of *Our Common Future*—the 1987 UN report on the environment and sustainability which is used as a way of exploring debates within the Irish environmentalism, and a very stimulating essay about *The Myth of Mental Illness*, an attack on mainstream psychiatry by Thomas Szasz.

Given the purpose of the collection, the familiarity of most of the choices is not surprising or disappointing. In fact much of the pleasure in reading the book consists in seeing a familiar set of ideas through another's eyes or in being gently reminded that in fact you have never got round to reading a certain piece of writing. The structure and focus of the collection also means that it provides accessible and readable introductions when texts are unknown or a chapter is exploring unfamiliar areas of activism. As such it is likely to appeal to activists searching for ideas outside their main field of interest and academics concerned with exploring the relationship between theory and practice.

It is probably already clear from description of its contents that *Mobilising Classics* mainly features writing from the latter half of the twentieth century<sup>2</sup> and strongly reflects the concerns of "new" social movements with gender, race, sexuality and environmental issues. The importance of class is also highlighted and the book is emphatically internationalist. Within the collection there is also a marked interest in the connection between education and mobilisation (see the pieces on Thompson, Illich and Freire). It is also noteworthy, and I think very telling, that most of the chosen classics were written by people who were primarily activist intellectuals rather than traditional academics and includes no arcane versions of post-structuralist or postmodern theory.

The editors have bookended the essays with an introduction and a conclusion that offer a broadly Gramscian analysis of the material. However, by its nature a collection like this is heterogenous and the value of the book is that it offers possible departure points for future inquiry rather than a systematic theoretical analysis. Each reader will be drawn to different things. For me there were two common threads within the collection that I think are worth highlighting in a little more detail—how memory and tradition are constantly reworked within social movements and the relationship between hope and radical thought. To sketch this out I will focus my attention on three specific chapters and by doing this, hopefully, will also give readers a flavour of the book.

The politics of memory have loomed large in the Irish radicalism. The major political movement in twentieth century Irish history was anti-colonial nationalism and claiming ownership over this political tradition became very important in Irish radicalism. However, donning the mantle of tradition has its risks and this approach can all too easily degenerate into a secular hagiography of heroes and

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<sup>2</sup> There is one 18th-century text, one piece of writing from the the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, two from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and six from between 1940 and 1987.

martyrs linked to a simplistic and linear notion of history. Two of the best pieces in the collection work through some of these issues. They acknowledge the importance of tradition but point out, both directly and obliquely, that to remain vital traditions need to be constantly revisited and remade by social movement activists.

This is clearly part of the argument being made in a wonderfully pugnacious and refreshing contribution by Bernadette McAliskey in her analysis of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*. As a key figure in civil rights movement in the north of Ireland in the 1960s who then became involved in the Republican movement, community politics and a number of high profile campaigns, McAliskey is the best known contributor to the book<sup>3</sup>. In her article she goes on an intelligent meander through the debates on liberty and rights that gripped Europe and America two hundred years ago to explore a model of radical democracy relevant to the here and now. In doing so she is saying something about how she views the Republican tradition and which is critical of narrow nationalism. She is also making an argument about what it mean to be radical and to live and grow through ideas.

Significantly, she begins her article with memories of her working class father and his passion for education, reason and the writings of Paine. She ends with the advice "Read avidly. Read till your eyes hurt, think til your head hurts, then do what you think needs to be done to change what you see and doesn't make sense. This will make you an informed, educated and better human being, and with any luck, lead to you want to read, experience and know more" (p. 20). This type of fine Enlightenment zeal is as refreshing as it is unfashionable. More importantly in exploring the links between Irish history, her family history and her political vision through the ideas of Paine she is making a compelling argument for both the importance of tradition and the necessity of a critical and theoretically aware remaking of tradition.

Similar themes surface in the historian Fintan Lane's account of James Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*. Lane offers a very able and succinct introduction to this canonical socialist and Republican tract which is critically attentive to the uses and abuses of tradition. Above all his chapter reminds us that there is a massive difference between between revered and being read. Following Connolly's execution as one of the leaders of the 1916 rising, Lane suggests, he became a figure around who there was an atmosphere of "dogmatic piety" (p. 39) "but generally emptied of his subversive anti-bourgeois purpose" (p. 38). Ireland wanted Connolly's sacrifice but not his socialism. Lane argues that despite its fame *Labour in Irish History* had always found a very limited audience and was rarely

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<sup>3</sup> McAliskey may be better known to some readers as Bernadette Devlin and was a key figure in the mass civil disobedience in Derry in the late 1960s, was elected to the parliament in the UK, was involved in Socialist Republican groups and numerous campaigns (including the 1981 hunger strike) and has survived an assassination attempt. She is now a community worker and lecturer.

read outside of the far left and trade union circles. Furthermore, Lane suggests that even amongst the left the book was often used as a talisman for connecting radicals to the Republican tradition rather than as a resource for socialist analysis. By offering a sceptical, historically informed account of a cultural icon Lane also makes a case that an awareness of the uses of tradition is fundamental to informed activism.

This is a version, with specific Irish resonances, of a more general argument made throughout *Mobilising Classics* that engaging with radical writing allows us to resist the gravitational pull of the now, to think beyond the given and occasionally to make the seemingly unthinkable possible. In fact if one thing unites this disparate collection it is the belief that reading offers us resources of hope in an era in which, to paraphrase Fredric Jameson, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.<sup>4</sup> All the articles grapple in some way with how the politics of critique is, or should be, linked to the politics of hope. However, it has to be said though that the results are very mixed and inconclusive, probably because the goals of radical activity are understood in such diverse ways by the writers.

The chapter that deals this issue in the most subtle and nuanced way is Rosie Meade's article on Robert Tressell's novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* one of the classics of the socialist canon. Paradoxically, by articulating her personal feelings of occasional despair in the face of neoliberalism and what she memorably terms "the loneliness of the long-distance socialist" (p. 68) and linking and contrasting this with the experience of the characters in Tressell's working class novel published in 1914, she achieves something very worthwhile. Part of the reason for this is the broad frame of reference she brings to bear on the novel in that she also outlines, albeit very briefly, an analysis of the contemporary logic of capitalism and the Irish left in her essay. In shuttling back and forth in this manner she offers some historical perspective on how and why we encounter despair in a way that makes room for hope.

Meade's piece book is notably ambitious, McAliskey's is remarkably passionate and Lane's is commendably lucid and sceptical but it should be said that nearly all the authors involved in *Mobilising Classics* offer readable introductions that piques the reader's curiosity and manage to deal with substantial and relevant issues in contemporary social movements. This is no mean feat and makes the book of potential interest to an international readership. On a more parochial level the emphasis on how a text has been received and used within Ireland means there are fascinating insights into Irish social movements, most notably the feminist

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<sup>4</sup> See Jameson (2003: 76). Of course the question of where and how we foster hope has a relevance far beyond Irish social movements and has been a recurrent theme in the 'movement of movements' globally.

movement, and some less relevant but nonetheless worthwhile anecdotes that will make the book of real interest to some Irish readers<sup>5</sup>.

Part of the purpose of such of a collection, which it should be said makes no claims to being "representative", is of course to get readers noting the absences within the selection. Each reader will have their own private zoo of hobbyhorses and bugbears and I was surprised that none of the contributors made an argument for the inclusion of more recent writing as "classic" and that historical and economic analyses received such short shrift. Overall, there is not much encouragement in *Mobilising Classics* to get your hands on material that helps you grasp the systemic logic of capitalism or think through alternative forms of social organisation. I was also taken aback that it includes only one piece of fiction. The exclusive focus on writing may have also been unnecessarily restrictive and the absence of films, photography, music and art that have been "mobilising classics" is arguably a mistake<sup>6</sup>.

This brings me to a more substantive criticism. Why are nearly all the contributors primarily academics? The collection benefits greatly from its concern with the circulation of ideas and how theory and practice inform each other in different times and diverse places. With that in mind it may have been instructive to have seen how including the choices of a few organic intellectuals outside the academy, especially younger intellectuals, would have contributed to the dialogue within the book about the nature of hope and resources of critique.

These caveats aside, this is an interesting, well written and accessible but academic account of some of the ideas that move us and make us and on that basis deserves to be read and circulated widely.

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<sup>5</sup> So if you are at all curious about why Simone De Beauvoir spent a couple of disconsolate days in a pub in rural Ireland or how the radical educational thinker Ivan Illich was received in County Clare in 1989 the book might be worth picking up.

<sup>6</sup> There are hundreds of examples that come to mind here. See for instance Hyndman (1996) which discusses how music scenes impacted on some northern Protestants' sense of identity and politics.

### About the reviewer

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**Graeber, David (2009). *Direct action: an ethnography*. Oakland: AK Press. (568 pp. \$25.95 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Mandisi Majavu**

David Graeber's goal in writing this book is to tell the story of what it feels like to be part of a major demonstration against a global summit. His aim is to illustrate what sort of issues activists argue about when planning such demonstrations. Through ethnographic writing, he narrates - in great detail - what it is like to participate in a marathon, two-day meeting, and to come out of it feeling that one has experienced "something profoundly transformative." He defines ethnographic writing as the kind of writing that describes the outline of a "social and conceptual universe", which, although it is theoretically informed, does not champion a single argument or a single theory.

At the time of writing this book, Graeber was involved in New York *Ya Basta!* collective and New York *Direct Action Network* (DAN) - both these groups are based in North America and are a part of the global justice movement. Graeber makes it clear that he does not pretend to be an objective observer in writing this book. "I did not become involved in this movement in order to write an ethnography. I became involved as a participant" (Graeber 2009, 12). Graeber further notes that when he criticises the movement, it is because he wants to refine and advance the objectives of the movement.

The first part of the book describes the meetings and events that led to the mobilisation and the protest against the "Summit of the Americas" which was held in Quebec City (Canada) in April 2001. One interesting meeting that Graeber describes is the spokescouncil that he and some of his comrades from *Ya Basta* drove to Quebec City on March, 23, 2001 to attend. Graeber explains that the local organisers in Quebec City - that is, *Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes* (CLAC) and the *Comite d'accueil du Sommet des Ameriques* (CASA), had planned the spokescouncil because they wanted to come up with the broad framework for the protest against the summit. Additionally, the organisers wanted "affinity groups coming from outside the province to give them advice. Also, they want to get some idea of what those outsiders are intending to do" (Graeber 2009, 64).



This particular meeting was held at a venue called Rene-Levesque on March 24, 2001, and was attended by about 200 activists. It was structured in such a way that it was to move from the general meeting to a breakout session in which a series of questions provided by organisers were to be addressed. At the end of the breakout session the representatives of different groups were expected to explain what their affinity groups were thinking of doing during the Summit which was to be held the following month (April 2001). This became a basis on which the facilitators constructed a list of different sorts of action such as blockades and street theatre.

Graeber explains that the rules governing the meeting were that anyone attending the spokescouncil could speak; however, only representatives empowered by their groups could vote. Being used to consensus decision making processes, Graeber and other American activists did not understand the issue of voting at first.

Graeber points out that it was explained to them that the process was going to be a "bit more formal than we're used to". This was partly because the meeting was more of a consultation process than a spokescouncil. Additionally, it was also explained to them that activists in Quebec City "have had, until very recently" no real experience with consensus decision making processes, and thus they were learning the process from scratch. It was further pointed out that Quebec City activists had moved in the space of few months from using a majority vote system to a semi-consensus system, "in which, if they fail to find consensus on the first go, they move to seventy-five percent super-majority vote" (Graeber 2009, 64).

A representative from the CASA presented to the spokescouncil a series of proposals that CASA and CLAC had developed for the protest against the Summit. She (the representative) explained that the final details of proposed action that came out of the spokescouncil could be ironed out on 19 April 2001 - the day before the Summit was scheduled to commence. Additionally, she proposed a torchlight parade to take place at night that same day. "...Our goal is not to be arrested before the 20<sup>th</sup>, but to welcome the Summit, as it were" (Graeber 2009, 65).

She continued:

On Friday the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Carnival Against Capitalism march will assemble on the Plains of Abraham at noon, and then people can choose where we go. ...On Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup>, we will participate in the big labor demo as an explicitly anti-capitalist contingent. ...Sunday the 22 will be the same: there will be space for different actions... (Graeber 2009, 66).

These proposals were then discussed by the representatives of affinity groups, and the representatives also submitted their own proposals. At the end of the spokescouncil, representatives were expected to take back to their affinity groups across North America a summary of ideas discussed at the spokescouncil in order to allow affinity groups to choose ideas that they felt comfortable plugging into. Graeber argues that the outcome of the discussions illustrate how "through such open-ended and sometimes apparently unproductive discussions, action plans really can take form" (Graeber 2009, 84).

The brilliance of Graeber's book lies in the fact that in addition to recounting the democratic processes that informed the demonstration against the Summit of the Americas, Graeber further puts those processes in their proper historical and political context. Also, it is worth noting that Graeber is a master storyteller---he easily transforms what may appear at first as an unremarkable story into an insightful and interesting reflection. Witness Graeber reflecting on the confrontation between the police and activists at the Summit:

In a major action, there's absolutely no way to grasp even a fraction of what's going on. There are a hundred tiny dramas happening at once, later to be given narrative form by participants. At any given time, you are probably seeing tiny pieces of a dozen---someone running off in what seems a random direction, someone standing engrossed, a cluster of people doing something you can't quite make out in the distance. Major events might be happening twelve feet away---behind a wall, under an escarpment---of which you have absolutely no idea; at least, until much later, when you start to synthesize accounts (Graeber 2009, 160).

Apart from discussing the Summit of the Americas, the book investigates other issues as well. For instances, part two of the book grapples with concepts such as "direct action", anarchism, direct democracy and "activist culture". Graeber's exploration of these topics is informative and insightful.

The one issue that I feel Graeber does not convincingly explore in this book is the culture of "summit hopping" associated with activists who organise and participate in demonstrations against global summits. Graeber writes that those involved in the movement agree with the critique that actions like Seattle (1999), Prague (2000), or Quebec City (2001), ought to be extensions of a project to build a popular, multi-issue, mass movement that is rooted within communities' struggles. "Even before Naomi Klein (2000) wrote her famous article in the Nation warning activists about the dangers of 'summit hopping,' of 'following trade bureaucrats as if they were the Grateful Dead,' all this was already a major item of debate" (Graeber 2009, 209).

According to Graeber, the demonstrations in Seattle and in Quebec City were meant to serve two purposes. On the one hand, these demonstrations aimed to expose the undemocratic nature of institutions like the WTO, IMF and the World Bank. On the other hand, the action against these summits was meant to showcase the living example of what it means to organise a street protest based on direct democratic principles and egalitarian decision making values. "The *Direct Action Network* (DAN), which forms much of the immediate focus of this book, emerged directly from this project" (Graeber 2009, 210).

However, Graeber does not thoroughly review how effective these demonstrations are in serving their purpose. It is only when Graeber discusses the issue of white privilege within movements such as DAN that one gets the sense that this strategy is somewhat ineffective. He writes that in the United States most communities of colour see an emphasis "on direct democracy as itself a form of white privilege". In

fact, Graeber points out that the New York DAN that he was involved in was considered “decidedly upscale” by other activists. He further admits that groups like DAN were largely white, and what in fact was particularly striking about these groups was the absence of African Americans. “For most of its history, NYC DAN had a single Black member, in an active core group of about fifty” (Graeber 2009, 244).

This lack of diversity in movements such as DAN reflects a disconnect between privileged, middle-class white activists and poor communities. Our movements have to encourage and cultivate diversity if we are interested in building a truly multi-issue, global justice movement. As a start, we could give the demonstrations against global summits a greater meaning and strength through reaching out to local communities by for example, organising events in which we spend a considerable amount of time clarifying issues, aims, and the logic of our political activities to new audiences who do not agree with our efforts (Albert 2002).

Ultimately, demonstrations against global summits will pose a serious threat to elites when they are rooted in dissident communities spread out in our societies. And, as Graeber has pointed it out, activists who participate in demonstrations against global summits agree with this view. The challenge however is to come up with ways to overcome the disconnect between middle class activists who tend to be the brains behind demonstrations against global summits and poor and oppressed communities. Graeber does not convincingly explore this particular issue in this book. And, in my opinion, this is the main weakness of the book.

Nevertheless, the book remains a very important contribution to the study of global justice movement. It is the most comprehensive account of what issues activists consider and argue about when planning street protests against global summits.

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## About the reviewer

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**Hyde-Clarke, Nathalie, ed. (2010). *The citizen in communication: re-visiting traditional, new and community media practices in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta. (240pp. R269.95 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Marian Burchardt**

In South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, citizen journalism and community media have become crucial in reconfiguring the landscapes of public communication, in providing “alternative” avenues of news production, distribution and consumption, and in enabling the formation of political alliances in the shadows of the pressures and demands of both markets and states. Made possible by new technologies, these developments challenge inherited scholarship on media practices as they often thwart these very time-honoured dichotomies such as public/private or production/consumption.

This edited volume takes up the challenge of creatively thinking through the analytical issues emerging from these changes. Focusing on the fascinating case of South Africa, it draws attention to how these innovations in media practice and communication affect notions of citizenship in a post-revolutionary society torn between tendencies towards authoritarianism on the one hand, and the renegotiation of notions of movement activism on the other. The book is primarily targeted at scholars and students in communication and media studies. As the discussion is chiefly about South Africa, students, media professionals or activists dealing with this country will find it most interesting but it also contains valuable information and debates that will be of interest to people from other African countries. For scholars from industrialized countries the book will be extremely helpful in understanding how new media practices can have transformative impacts even under conditions of sometimes very limited internet access and resource scarcity.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section addresses the analytical concerns and empirical questions that emerge through the intertwinements of “new technologies” and citizen journalism, including the normative and political issue of how to reconcile citizen participation with journalistic quality and ethics. The second section discusses diverse forms of community media – radio, television and newspapers – and their economic, political and cultural underpinnings in post-apartheid South Africa.

The first section starts with a systematic review of existing approaches to new technologies and citizen journalism by Hayes Mawindi Mabweazara. He also synthesizes these approaches into a more comprehensive framework encompassing professional imperatives as well as social organizational, cultural and political factors that shape the possibilities and constraints in the deployment of new technologies (p. 23). Citizen journalism, as this and the following chapters make

clear, refers to diverse forms of audience participation, generation of contents by users for users, and possibly the devolution of all the different steps of news gathering, selection, editing, and distribution to ordinary, non-professional citizens. In reality, however, the practice of citizen journalism is contingent upon the perception of its functions and meanings by different actors in the media sector. In this context, the differences but also intertwinements of citizen journalism and traditional journalism as discussed in several contributions are significant: Amongst traditional media organizations there are tendencies to absorb citizen participation into classical formats (e.g. user blogging in mainstream newspapers) but clearly also inclinations to restrict citizen journalism's function to that of news gathering while professional journalists retain control over the entire process of selection, editing and presentation. The authors emphasize that this may undercut the emancipative potentials of citizen journalism in constructing counter-publics and in reconfiguring the interface of democracy and the public sphere by weaving horizontally instead of top-down organized webs of communication.

Mabweazara also points to the need of adapting existing, mostly Western, research agendas to African realities, particularly with regard to access to technologies and political conditions. The chapter by Dumisani Moyo on SMSing and citizen journalism in Zimbabwe addresses these such specificities in a particularly lucid way. Here, because of extreme poverty and the political repression of most mass media, SMSing became a primary means of building up a counter-public in the wake of the 2008 elections and the withholding of its results by the regime. Moyo also excavates the cultural significance of SMSing, which resonates with widespread forms of pavement debate through storytelling ("radio trottoir"). Instead of private information, SMS became widely shared news sources pointing to the public use of supposedly private mobile phones. What matters is that the notion of citizen journalism ties in strongly with specifically African cultural traditions of orality, in which the use of public places by ordinary citizens for face-to-face debates on politics often served to challenge print- or emission-based publics. Interestingly, in social contexts where traditional professionalized mass media rarely constitute hegemonic formations, citizen journalism may therefore be much less of a novelty than elsewhere.

Many of the authors take great pains to conceptualize the "alternative" nature of citizen journalism, defining alternative media as community-oriented, as opposed to mainstream media, as radical in content and counter-hegemonic, as part of civil society, or in a poststructuralist manner as rhizomatic. These discussions skilfully rehearse seminal scholarly interventions such as those by Bayley *et al.* As they appear in many chapters, they sometimes become redundant, which is a pity if one reads the whole book but helpful if one uses selected chapters for course work.

The same thing happens with the problem of defining community as it forms part of the concept of "community media" that is the subject of the second section of the book. Many authors struggle to identify adequate working concepts of

"community" within the psychological and sociological literature. This becomes a somewhat dry exercise at times, especially because of the tendency to assemble lofty criteria for community media only to find out that the cases under consideration rarely meet them.

What is much more interesting are the ways in which the notion of community is rendered political by its deployment in political discourse and practice. Brilliant Mhlanga discusses the fascinating case of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation)-sponsored community radio XK FM targeting the ethnic and linguistic minority groups of !Ku and Khwe in the Northern Cape province through vernacular programming. This is community radio in the classical anthropological sense (community as coextensive with "culture" and language) and these "communities" appeared to be satisfied with the existing forms of community participation precisely on these terms. Simultaneously, this was no community radio at all as none of the structural criteria (ownership, decision-making, public participation in content generation) was met. In the contribution on community newspapers by Thalyta Swanepoel and Elanie Steyn, the political and structural meanings of community almost evaporate as it is equated with locally or geographically limited readership while the great majority of the community newspapers under consideration are owned by big media corporations. Little mention is made of how such newspapers may contribute to the challenging of power relations.

This volume fills a crucial gap in scholarly literature on alternative media and gives a remarkably comprehensive overview of contemporary transformations of South Africa's media landscape. It also seems, however, that its own shortcomings point to greater gaps in research practice. One major problem is the apparent lack of a methodological agenda. A fair share of the contributions that are based on empirical research are rather descriptive and the sociological and political significance of some of the new media practices (e.g. the staging of "cellphilm" festivals) do not always become clear. Furthermore, it is surprising that the perspectives and voices of the otherwise celebrated "ordinary" community members or citizen journalist figure less prominently than those programme directors. Many of the chapters approach the subject by describing details of South Africa's media architecture and how regulations enable or limit participation and resistance; while this is important they sometimes fail to reach down to actors they really wish to address. This, in turn, makes it difficult for the reader to grasp the political dimensions of these media transformations and, by implication, their role in facilitating social movement activism.

As most authors rightly state, for most alternative media groups the end of apartheid in 1994 came as a watershed leaving them not only with little resources and foreign funding but equally importantly with questionable legitimacy. As other civil society activists and social movements, they were and still are caught up between the agenda of social transformation and liberation and the problem of

redefining their relationship towards the democratic government. This dilemma is exacerbated by the fact that organizations that are close to the government such as the ANC Youth League or COSATU visibly retain their movement character and movement politics. The fact that they are part of both the state and of civil society makes it possible for them to criticize government and at once sustain it while blurring the boundaries between power and resistance.

If activism is thus at home at both sides of the state/civil society divide, however, what are the consequences for constructions of the public sphere and of counter-publics? How are citizenship journalism and alternative or community media deployed by those activists who operate in the interstices between state-led social development, "governmental activism" and the ongoing racial divisions in terms of economic power and media ownership? Unfortunately, these questions are only touched upon in this volume. This means that it is less valuable for those who want answers to these questions but extremely valuable for those looking for an analysis of media practices in terms of context information and for analytical tools to engage in further research themselves.

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## About the reviewer

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**Kuhn, Gabriel (2010). *Sober living for the revolution: hardcore punk, straight edge, and radical politics*. Oakland: PM Press. (304pp. \$22.95 paperback)**

Reviewed by **John L. Murphy**

Ian MacKaye of Washington D.C.'s *Minor Threat* sang in 1981's "Straight Edge": "Never want to use a crutch/ I've got the straight edge." This assertion turned an admonition: abstaining from not only intoxicants but from harmful sex and a non-vegan diet that fuelled a capitalist dependence upon a destructive system. Anarchist-activist Gabriel Kuhn's anthology gathers sXe (I will employ this shorthand for "straight edge") international contributors from bands, scenes, and labels. He interviews participants, includes manifestoes, and compiles an introduction situating this movement emerging from 1980s hardcore punk.

Five sections comprise this collection. This review will follow Kuhn's presentation of these chapters.

### **Introduction**

Kuhn notes his decision to expand sXe coverage beyond white, male, American contexts which dominate conventional media. Radicals tend to dismiss the movement as dogmatic, exclusive, and privileged. Kuhn emphasizes the "politically conscious" challenges within sXe, defining radical as those who actively pursue social change for free and egalitarian communities, and who "maintain a clear distance to politically ambiguous ideologies". (p.14) These include "religious groups or belief systems". He omits sXe members from Christian, Hare Krishna, or Islamic communities, although a few contributors allude to these outside Kuhn's self-imposed frame. The total absence of Buddhist contexts disappoints, given American advocates and authors "hardcore Zen" Brad Warner and "dharma punx" Noah Levine have earned prominence among dharma-practitioners who grew up alongside sXe. However, Kuhn acknowledges his focus aims at politics, not sobriety or culture.

### **Bands**

Ian MacKaye logically begins the interviews. He tells how his lyrics to "Out of Step" set the scene: "Don't smoke, don't drink, don't fuck, at least I can fucking think," were not directives, but "anti-obsession," while they were followed by "But at least I can fucking think" (pp.34-35). That is, the choice remains for the punk to think through the ramifications of this pledge. The second line's subtlety may have been lost on many, yet MacKaye's example remains a guiding force through



his inspired, "all access" approach to overcome barriers of age, income, and expenses for concerts with his band *Fugazi* and through Dischord Records. He defends a "free space" for unconventional ideas as a "constant, ever-flowing river" that persists as a river channels its energy endlessly. (p.24)

MacKaye's distrust of dangerous sex matches his disdain for alcohol and drug abuse. These encourage selfishness, blurring awareness of the present moment. They also diminish willpower, break down defences, and weaken potential for positive change. But, as a movement, sXe contained its own dogmatic danger. MacKaye analyzes how movements falter by creating a "higher calling" which mimics the pursuit of power and the imposition of violence upon dissenters. These "triggers" ignite nationalism and persecution; as more of a "*Minor Threat*" they foment prejudice between punks. This intolerance within sXe sparked a backlash from the hardcore scene, as violence among supporters and deniers led to sensationalist treatment from political activists and the mainstream media.

Articulating sXe as "straight" for MacKaye builds a basis for a life, not a lifestyle. The straight line equals common equality. Food, water, air remain, with sex as the imperative for survival. Converting these needs with wants, advertising sells out the communal, organic solidarity formed by sXe, with its slogan "Live as you desire the world to be!" (p.43) Such idealism compels others to follow MacKaye.

Liner notes to the Swedish band *Refused's* 1998 album *The Shape of Punk to Come* remind the listener: "It's never been safe to live in a world that teaches us to respect property and disregard human life" (p.66). *ManLiftingBanner*, a Dutch communist band, presents here the clearest allegiance to a standard political philosophy. Many contributors cite them as a major influence. Frederico Freitas of Brazil's *Point of No Return* agrees with *Refused's* Dennis Lyxzén: the European and Third World traditions of resistance impel many sXe supporters outside America to connect with established progressive forces. While the U.S. by WWII lost its radical mass, Freitas and Lyxzén by their thoughtful if idealized manifestoes hearken back to a proletariat integrating contemporary working-class and communally organized opposition struggles.

## Scenes

This evolution offers a counter-reaction to three earlier sXe stages. The 1980s individually-centered reaction which *Minor Threat* jumpstarted, the "wolfpack" street crews of Boston and New York City, and the VeganStraightEdge 1990s trend all, for Freitas, lack militancy. Bruno "Break" Teixeira from Portugal's *New Winds* seeks a similarly leftist link to class-based politics now, while Robert Matusiak from Poland's Refused Records contrasts the Russian and German tendencies among a sXe minority reverting to race-based extremism with a community situated in co-operative enterprises and non-profit employment.

This internal shift for the committed activist has led to charges by radicals and punks of sXe elitism. Jonathan Pollack's pro-Palestinian direct action involvement in *Against the wall* ensures him, as an Israeli, a prominent position of opposition.

As a political idea, the Straight Edge of ebullient refusal to the decadence of our times is not that of an ascetic anchorite in the badlands of western civilization or of religious purity. The need to extract oneself from society, so prevalent in Straight Edge, is fuelled by the desire to see and live in a different reality; a desire that can't subsist in the clubs, cafés and drug culture of mainstream society. Both my Straight Edge and my activism are strongly rooted in this passion, and neither is dependent on whether we will reach this different reality or not. (p.112)

As this anthology progresses, interviewees and contributors seek to stand apart from the commodification which, as punk became marketed as fashion, weakened its oppositional stance. Pollock muses how "the farther you get from cleancut looks and fancy clothes," the more interesting the movement becomes. That is, sXe itself may represent conformity amidst punk's supposedly purer (non-)conformists, so the move away from puritanical commitment may signal the imminent realization of values which transcend music or style: to transform.

Catalyst Records' Kurt Schroeder speaks from another confrontational stance, the vegan aspiration. He admits many adherents come from America's middle class. This context may weaken vegan sXe acceptance by European or Latin American radical fellow-travellers drawn to socialist or leftist aspects. Yet, all two dozen contributors appear to thrive on vegan diets and radical ideologies. This skews the political message in Kuhn's edition to the already converted. However, this affirmation of connections between sXe and radicalism provides an encouraging collection for those seeking exactly this compendium.

## Manifestos

While *Refused* and *Point of No Return* in their extensive liner notes produced manifestoes in all but name reprinted earlier in this anthology, a separate section matches three lengthy pamphlets with their authors, who reflect years later upon the impact of their messages. Under the aegis of Alpine Anarchist Productions, XsraquelX repels conservative punk reactions to veganism with DIY ethics grounded in personal choice rather than ideological duty. By its exclusivity, xSe risked reduction into a "fascist mentality" constrained by moral codes which refused any deviation. She argues for an "antifa[scist]" decision of absence as "an actual and symbolic mode of promoting a life of responsibility and shunning dependency" on capitalism. (p.158) Feminism, minority and animal rights, and environmentalism accompany "like-minded social action" for Antifa sXe communities.

For the CrimethInc. Ex-Workers' Collective, an "intoxication culture" looms as the

class enemy. Yet, Kuhn wisely prefaces this entry with the collective's explanation that it originally had added a "hypertrophied appendix," which was "a sort of sendup of primitivist historical revisionism, though based on kernels of truth." They left it out of this reprinting "for fear it could be taken too seriously outside its original context." (p.164) A sense of humor too often lurks far outside this edition. While many entries remain worthy for their unstintingly committed determination, the moral tone at such an elevated register, over hundreds of pages of similar-sounding justifications, may weary the less ardent.

Therefore, "*Wasted Indeed: Anarchy and Alcohol*" manages to convince more than its stolid comrades by its lightly self-deprecating narrative. "Like the tourism of the worker, drink is a pressure valve that releases tension while maintaining the system that creates it." (p.166) Pithier and wittier than previous entries, this statement argues for abstinence as a fulfilling, truly engaged response to life's possibilities. "No war but the class war—no cocktail but the molotov cocktail! Let us brew nothing but trouble!" It does so as a slight caricature of leftist sobriety, to highlight its self-righteous dangers of insecurity ("they cannot rest until everyone in the world sees that world exactly as they do"). It concludes amidst gentle satire with sincere encouragement, "as a reminder for all who choose to concern themselves that *another world is possible*." (pp.170-71)

## Reflections

Nick Riotfag's queer advocacy gains in-depth coverage; he narrates the difficulty of creating safe spaces for non-drinkers within environmental gatherings, co-op meetings, and anarchist settings. He supports "Take the straight out of straight edge" campaigns, as gays confront homophobes and reactionary punk enclaves. Similarly, Jenni Ramme from Poland's *Emancypunx* sets herself apart from mainstream feminists who work within capitalist and corporate settings. She rejects integration. She seeks utopian space beyond the state or the conventional network of the firm, the market, the press, or the broadcast.

Mainstream media will never see underground culture as anything but new, fresh meat to make profits. They are part of a capitalist and consumerist culture of blood-sucking zombies. They take without giving anything back. This is not a base to build radical movements on. (p.226)

While Andy Hurley now drums for *Fall Out Boy*, a successful American "emo" band adopted by the mainstream, he retains his credibility with anarcho-primitivist advocacy influenced by Kevin Tucker's "feral edge" post-civilized and John Zerzan's anti-leftist, pro-wilderness perspectives (Marshall 2010). Hurley rejects leftist participation in politics and power. Kuhn gently prods Hurley, the most mainstream of those included by his current band's allegiance, but the most radical by his drift away from communal solidarity in the pursuit of self-reliance. This interview sidles towards thoughtful, if admittedly incomplete, explanations

of Hurley's responses to a set of complicated compromises. For all its open-endedness, this concludes this section with a relevant portrayal of how an activist works towards his own truth.

## Reflections

Global networking within the social margins, prominent in this cross-cultural sub-cultural anthology, flows through Argentinian-Israeli Swedish resident Santiago Gomez' punk and anarchist-vegan efforts. His footnoted, lively essay interprets sXe as "intuitive resistance". He moves from Melville and Turgenev to Tolstoy and Lenin within the context of hardcore; he cites Zapatista liberated zones which have banished alcohol—without appearing pedantic. His ironic sense shows as he quotes Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* (the scene when followers pick up and immediately imitate, and then debate, the accidental discarding of Brian's single shoe, or is it a sandal?) to illustrate how *Minor Threat's* two lines from their lyric for "Out of Step" became adopted as a creed.

Tellingly, Gomez segues into a reminder of how the "X" on the back of the hand used as a signifier of sXe started not out of a devotion to sobriety, but a nightclub's stamp that the patron was simply too young to legally drink. He sketches out a nuanced position, that sXe has faltered by its anti-intoxicant and animal rights definition while neglecting the larger struggle against all capitalist exploitation. Gomez does not retreat from his own ideological agreement with abstinence, but he reminds his audience that the imperative fight against oppression endures.

Three veteran activists end this collection with their own rallying cries. Mark Andersen brings the entries back to their Washington D.C. origins with his own account of inner-city community organizing at Positive Force House. He champions collectives as a logical foundation for incremental change. He rejects superior attitudes formed by snobbish sXe members, and sets out revolutionary progress as coming from not only the process—"profoundly aided by the clarity and health that drug-free, meat-free lifestyles can bring," but the victory. This triumph waits, Andersen wraps up this volume, by reaching out beyond sXe.

This anthology does preach to the choir. Those outside the sXe community will find no explanation of how the music sounds compared to hardcore (a "crust" punk's recollections comprise a bit of variety, albeit marginal), even if sXe lyrics urge a nobler practice. Kuhn gathers those with whom he agrees; the book's main intention is to reinforce leftist and radical ties to sXe. Within these parameters, the collection succeeds, for what will likely remain a small, but committed audience seeking social and political change by principled transformation of their own appetites and desires and by communal solidarity.

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## About the reviewer

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**Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2010). *Dispossession and resistance in India: the river and the rage*. Oxford: Routledge. (242pp. £80 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Lesley Wood**

In the early 1990s, the struggles of Indian villagers protesting against the mega-dams that would flood their land and destroy their homes, electrified the world. Images of people with only their heads above water as the floodwaters surged around them compelled action. Along with documentary films, and attention was directed towards the campaign by award winning novelist Arundhati Roy in her essay, "The Greater Common Good" that was later included in her edited collection *The Cost of Living*. By the mid 1990s, this movement had become global, and when it succeeded in pressuring the World Bank to withdraw its funding from the Sardar

Sarovar Dam, it became one of the paradigmatic examples of a local struggle, gone global. However, the celebrations of victory became muted, and the world's attention drifted when the dam projects continued to be built.

A product of deep engagement with and sympathy for the movement, Nilsen's work is grounded in his interviews with movement actors and his analysis of movement documents. These different sources combine to give us a sense of both the victories and the failures of the movement. But this isn't simply a history of the movement. Instead the book uses this material to make a particular theoretical argument.

As is evident from the title, Nilsen uses Marxist scholar David Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" that characterizes the period of neoliberal restructuring since the 1970s to frame his discussion of the movement. Using this concept – which emphasizes how wealth is siphoned from the poor through the taking of their lands and resources. Nilsen looks at the underlying political economy of the distributional biases of the Narmada dams. But he carefully and usefully maintains agency for the activists struggling to resist these process by highlighting the importance of movement learning processes. He argues that while the historical context influences pre-existing assumptions and internal dynamics which create movement strategies and repertoires, these are modified by ever-changing and particular practical experiences and learning, resulting in particular movement infrastructure and strategic repertoires.

He describes the cycles of struggle that the movement endures as cycles of learning – citing Vester's (1978) approach. This emphasis on learning and struggle is a central theme in the book, and it emphasizes how through challenging the state and other authorities, activists are engaging in reflexive, 'conflictual learning' and building 'counter-expertise'. Through these processes, the movement builds an infrastructure that takes them from local campaign to transnational movement, and back again. They both produce and are produced by the particular political and economic bases of post-colonial India. And as such, are at the root of why the Narmada Bachao Andolan ultimately failed to achieve its goals.

These cycles of learning, cycles of struggle underlie the movement's changing answers to a number of strategic questions that face many movements.

The first is the question of the state. How much should social movements direct their attention to the state?

In answer to this question, he accounts the story of how in the late 1980s, urban activists helped local villagers to begin to resist the corrupt practices and 'everyday tyranny' of state forest officials. They helped to transform the consciousness and confidence of these locals by providing them with knowledge about their constitutional rights, the state apparatus and electoral processes. Through showing the malleability of these political processes, they were able to build a "militant

particularism" and "rightful resistance", and build an organization, campaigns, schools and environmental regeneration campaigns.

But this emphasis on the state runs the risk of "jury politics", that in the end may mean the movement places too much hope in state structures and processes. This quandary around emphasizing the state is one that many movements face. Nilsen takes a balanced approach to this by showing how real victories were possible through making claims on the state. In the end however, because the opposition challenged the basic modality of the post-colonial, neoliberal Indian state, the campaign was doomed. He suggests that the political economy of state power constrains the strategic viability of jury politics.

The second question the book addresses is the question of populism. What are the advantages and drawbacks of using national symbols and myths in organizing? The author describes a high point for the movement in 1989, when tens of thousands of people from across India met in Harsud for the National Rally against Destructive Development, held on Indian Independence Day. Unlike other stages of the movement – this was no "jury politics". Instead, the rally signaled a total challenge to the postcolonial development project. It was a moment where the movement had built alliances that suggested a capacity for expressing a new hegemony. The rally was an attempt to redefine Indian independence that included a version of development that valued social justice, environmental sustainability and participatory democracy.

However, this populist strategy has some drawbacks. Nilsen shows how the narrative of "we the people" obscured difference amongst castes and classes that were important to recognize. He shows how such differences undermine the potential of this movement as a large scale, radical struggle. Much of the time, the ideas and analysis of the movement is not considered relevant or related to the day to day lives of many of the most affected communities, for which the campaigns speak. This problem of what he calls limited downreach is widely recognized in a range of movements. Despite the successful building of alliances and the creation of a national movement, in order to truly create an alternative, movements need to go deep and emphasize militant particularisms and local rationalities.

For those uninterested in the details of this important struggle, this book may seem a bit long and detailed. But anyone, whether activist or academic, who is interested in the questions of movement success and failure would benefit from seriously considering Nilsen's main argument. Because he shows the ways macro-structural processes shape the form and potential of different movement infrastructures and capacities, he offers us a framework that is applicable to both organizers and analysts trying to understand movement success or failure. In sum, this is an important and useful book.

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## **Call for papers vol 4 issue 1 (May 2012)** **The season of revolution: the Arab Spring**

**Issue editors:**

**Rana Barakat, Abdul-Rahim al-Shaikh, Magid Shihade**

In December of 2010, a man in small town in Tunisia set his body ablaze. Muhammad Bouaziz's act of self-immolation, and the subsequent tireless efforts of people in SidiBouazid to bring this revolutionary act of self-sacrifice to national attention, set the spark ablaze for what has been described as the Arab Spring of Revolutions in 2011, unleashing uprisings that spread from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Jordan and have reverberated globally. Bouaziz's sacrifice was the spark for an incredible new phase in contemporary Arab history. From the fall of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt to the unprecedented challenges by popular movements to regimes in Morocco and across the Arab world to the Gulf, these revolts clearly show that a new century has begun.

A great deal has already been written about these "Arab uprisings" as they continue to unfold and touch regions well beyond the Arab world. This new phase in local history is the product of long-term political activity with roots in the region and beyond. Our goal in this special issue is to address questions inspired by these revolutions and to offer a critical intervention in debates generated by them as well as to address the issues that have been obfuscated by much of the current analysis. The broad themes to be covered will include the role of class, gender, popular culture, "youth" culture and politics, the Palestine question, internationalization (in terms of neo-colonialism, imperialism and anti-imperial movements), the role of solidarity movements and fronts and the evolving discourse of liberation.

*Interface: a journal for and about social movements* is dedicated to popular mobilizations at every level from the micro to the revolutionary. Written, edited and refereed by activists and social movement researchers, it promotes engaged intellectual activity which seeks to support movements' own self-reflection and development of their own practice. *Interface* is multi-lingual and globally organised, aiming to develop dialogues between movements in different countries, people organising in different political traditions, and research in different academic disciplines. It is free and open-access.

Much of the initial attention to the Arab uprisings concentrated on new forms of social connectivity and media as new kinds of organizational tools for the protests. This sort of analysis has also paid an extraordinary amount of attention to the role of youth. However, we need to question if this focus on youth, helps us fully understand the Arab Revolution. Does an uncomplicated reading of youth fall into the trap of overemphasizing generational conflict and

discontinuity? Are there more nuanced ways of seeing the participation of youth in the revolution that would take into account issues of class, nationalism, imperialism, or other ignored factors?

Given that the university is a primary site of political action (and repression) among a younger generation, how can we use our understanding of the space and place of the university to further our analysis of the revolutions? What role do students, as well as academics and institutions, play in these movements? The Arab world is often overlooked in the historic analysis of the global movements that were defined by student protests in 1968, so perhaps we can now read the university sphere in the Arab world in a different way and one that complicates this generational analysis. Can a more inclusive and complicated historical reading of political participation in these uprisings provide a useful intervention in traditional readings of revolutions?

The paradigm of violence and non-violence has also been a point of great interest among analysts/commentators in the early months of these revolutions. Compared to movements in both Latin America and Eastern Europe, critics initially focused a great deal of attention on the role of non-violent strategies. Moreover, some observers from imperial metropolises claimed to have guided and supported the uprisings. What can the Arab revolutions teach us about the non-violence/violence paradigm? Are there clear demarcations between the two strategies? What role(s) does this narrative about virtuous non-violence play, especially for states with imperial interests like the US? How has this paradigm affected our understanding of the role of state violence?

The incredibly important geo-strategic position of the Arab world has historically meant it has been subjected to a great deal of direct and indirect imperial intervention in the modern era. In this Arab Spring, the question of internal and external factors that have plagued regional history and politics continues. Are these uprisings a response to colonialism and the failure of decolonization projects as well as neo-liberal agendas? Is this the local and regional response to their "stolen moment of modernity"? How does the Arab Spring relate to other "revolutionary waves" such as those of 1989 or the Latin American "pink tide"? And where are its boundaries - the Arab-speaking world or the Muslim world as a whole? Are events elsewhere in Africa linked more than rhetorically?

More specifically, how did the United States and Europe initially respond to the revolutions and how important is this response to the "progress" of the revolutions? Has this intervention become an effective counter-revolution? What tactics have been used by regional and international powers in the making of the counter-revolution and how have people on the ground responded? What are the forces and sources of the counter-revolution and have they been effective? For example, did the US and European-led military intervention in Libya help the uprising or undermine it?

Has the lively debate among progressives brought the international left to a watershed moment in our understanding of the paradigms of revolution and

how has this debate changed our understanding of imperialism, if at all? How has this moment of auto-critique among Arab activists as well as progressives and leftists globally changed the nature of the uprisings on the ground as well as the ongoing revolutionary movements in terms of political frameworks and grassroots activity? What are the present and future dangers of the counter-revolution and how can they be understood in local, regional, and global terms?

In spite of, and because of, the incredible level of foreign interest and intervention in the Arab world, these revolutions have proved that organic (grassroots) movements have thrived in terribly repressive environments in these Arab countries. The involvement of professional associations as well as labor unions have challenged our traditional understanding of vanguard movements and changed the way we read revolutionary struggle. How can we look at these unions and associations as a new way of understanding the failures of capitalist focused neo-liberal "economic reform"? Do the cross-class alliances of the revolutionaries in Egypt and Tunisia defy narrowly defined revolutionary theoretical understandings of the role of labor in revolution? How did the unions survive in the region in light of decades of infiltration and repression? How do we understand their role in the political uprisings and their role in the state structure –before, during, and after regime changes?

Women in the movements and on the streets have also played an interesting and important role in the revolutions - or the media has at the very least obsessed about the "role of women" on the streets in these Muslim countries. How can we offer an analysis of these gendered tactics and how can we think about how to frame this in more complex ways that challenges colonial feminism? How can we complicate familiar tropes of agency and submissiveness and still grapple with the deliberate involvement - strategic or otherwise - of women's primary and public roles in the revolutions? Do these uprisings provide us with an opportunity to try to explore the idea of liberation through secular politics? Again, as with the youth paradigm, how does the emphasis on women's participation contribute to representations of the revolutions both inside and outside their own societies?

Some have claimed that these revolutions have distanced themselves from the core political issue of the Arab world – the question of Palestine. Is this a fair depiction and from where does this kind of analysis derive its legitimacy? What role does the question of Palestine play in political and social goals of the revolutions? How has the occupation and continued oppression of Palestine – in political, cultural, and social terms – affected politics and political action in various ways in each of the uprisings? Is solidarity with Palestine a litmus test for the fate of the regimes in the Arab world? Because the question of Palestine has been manipulated in varying degrees by the totalitarian regimes of the Arab world, is this a moment of reckoning regarding action about Palestine?

Finally, a great deal of attention has been given to popular culture in relation to the revolutions, ranging from the use of Facebook and social media to the role of music and art. How has popular culture affected/recorded/moved these revolutions? Where do movements end and culture begins? Is this an

appropriate discursive division, or have these revolutions necessarily changed our reading of "culture" and "politics"?

We welcome submissions that address these and other related questions and themes. Papers are welcome from different disciplines and fields using various methodologies (such as media analysis, historical critique, empirical research, etc). We also welcome perspectives from movement people and those who are a part of the revolutions and uprisings. In general submissions should aim to speak to an international audience and focus on the understanding and practice of the movements and uprisings themselves rather than the general analysis of Arab societies, international geo-politics etc.

### **General submissions**

Lastly, as in all issues of *Interface*, we will accept submissions on topics that are not related to the special theme of the issue, but that emerge from or focus on other movements around the world and the immense amount of knowledge that they generate. Such general submissions should contribute to the journal's mission as a tool to help our movements learn from each other's struggles, by developing analyses from specific movement processes and experiences that can be translated into a form useful for other movements. In this context, we welcome contributions by movement participants and academics who are developing movement-relevant theory and research.

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

### **Deadline and contact details**

The deadline for initial submissions to this issue (Volume 4 Issue 1, to be published May 2012) is November 1st 2011.

Our online guidelines for contributors explain more about what *Interface* is trying to do, who reads it and what different kinds of articles we publish, as well as the usual details on format, wordcount, referencing etc.

Manuscripts for the special theme of "The season of revolution: the Arab Spring" can be sent in Arabic or English to Rana Barakat (barakat.rana AT

gmail.com) or Abdul-Rahim al-Shaikh (aalshaikh AT birzeit.edu); or in Arabic, English, German or Hebrew to Magid Shihade (mshihade AT gmail.com). For submissions in other languages, please see our list of editors and languages.

Similarly, manuscripts for general articles can be sent to the appropriate regional editor.

More information on submissions (including guidelines for contributors, lists of editors and languages, and book reviews) can be found via <http://www.interfacejournal.net/submissions/>.