

Prisoners of our Concepts: Liberating the Study of Social Movements¹

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Oppression is a result of many conditions, not the least of which reside in consciousness. (Farmer 2004: 307)

We as social movement scholars have become prisoners of our concepts and our professions. Conventions established within the academy to organize our professional lives and to discipline our thinking have prevented many social movement scholars from recognizing important changes taking place in the world we purport to be trying to understand. Privileging Western-dominated and bounded understandings of the state, organizations, and social movements, we have overlooked, to a large extent, the important ways social movements are continuously transforming social and political relations. Although concepts such as social movements are defined in relational terms, they have remained fairly static in our minds. And whereas Charles Tilly (1984) argued that social movements evolved in tandem with national states, we have not fully accounted for questions of how they might continue to be transformed as national states and the inter-state system evolve.

For instance, most research focuses on movements within particular states and frames conflicts largely within existing national (or diasporic) boundaries. The

assumption that conflicts are bounded by national polities blinds the researcher to the ways these conflicts are shaped by a larger world system that affects, for instance, environmental or labor market pressures on national populations, the policy space available to targets (be they governments or corporations), and transnational flows of information and other resources to both challengers and targets.

Moreover, research focusing on individuals typically assumes national frames of reference that can obscure the ways transnational and global identities can and do affect social movement dynamics. For instance, most studies of the U.S. civil rights or women's movement do not consider why the dominant actors in these movements have not attempted to mobilize around global human rights ideologies and institutional frameworks.² In both cases, some within the movement have attempted to use international human rights language to advance movement goals, but these efforts have been limited by both cultural and political constraints.³ Just as states are embedded within a broader world-system, so too are individuals and the identities they adopt. Thus, to fully understand social movements, our research must account for the potential system-level influences on the individual and collective actors involved (Kolb 2007). Applying conventional research methods typically forces the researcher to restrict his or her field of vision, precluding a more systemic perspective.

This chapter explores some of the ways research on transnational movements has been 'imprisoned' by disciplinary and conceptual frameworks and how this has limited our ability to fully appreciate the forces shaping these movements. We engage here in some broad generalizations that are meant to encourage a critical reflection on the ways the professional study of social movements may be limiting our understandings of

contemporary struggles for social change. We recognize that our claims about the failures of social movement research are most relevant within the ‘mainstream’ of U.S. and (to a lesser degree) European social movement research. Indeed, new social movements (NSM) scholars have long been exploring links between macro-level changes and shifts in culture, identities and political participation (see, e.g., Kriesi 1989; Melucci 1989; Offe 1999). The appeal of NSM approaches in the U.S. has been limited, however, in part because NSM scholarship drew attention to identity and culture at a time when U.S. research emphasized more structural and material approaches (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Pichardo 1997). Sarah Waters (2008) links the relative neglect of NSM approaches to the static and reified treatments of social movements in much of the literature.

Disciplinary and Professional Prisons

To the extent that we each analyze our social prisons, we liberate ourselves from their constraints to the extent that we can be liberated. (Wallerstein 2004: 22)

As Immanuel Wallerstein and others have reminded us, the academy is an institution intimately linked to the emergence and spread of the modern world system. The segmentation of knowledge fields into disciplines aided the expansion of capitalism, and it led to a rationalized system of analysis and discourse and legitimated rule by experts (see also McMichael 2003). The separation of science and philosophy prevented social ‘scientists’ from asking questions about what is good, valued, or beautiful. It devalued

disciplines focusing on such questions while privileging those employing scientific methods in the pursuit of some objective ‘truth’. The notion that science can be value-neutral became normalized and prioritized.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos’s (2007: 1) critique is more blunt: ‘Modern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking.’ Western academic institutions as we know them would not exist without the invisibility of non-Western realities that lie on ‘the other side of the line’:

Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other.

What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line. (*ibid.*)

Paul Farmer (2004: 308) notes that ‘increasing specialization has often brought with it the erasure of history and political economy’. By forgetting history - especially the history that links Western societies’ wealth and privilege to the continued exploitation of Southern peoples - scholars effectively ‘de-socialize’ the people who are the subjects of their research. They interpret Southern realities as somehow unrelated to their colonial legacies.

In reviewing sociological literature on globalization, Raewyn Connell also speaks of an ‘erasure’ of the experiences of the global South. She notes that “[e]rasure”, to follow the early Derrida, does not mean obliteration; rather, it means an overwriting. The most important erasure in globalization theory concerns colonialism ’ (2007: 380).

Erasure, according to Connell, can largely be attributed to the social structures within which analysts operate, which enables Western scholars to construct a 'performative unity of writer and reader' that excludes the voices and experiences of people and societies outside the West.

Although feminists, cultural theorists, and other scholars have critiqued dominant epistemologies and questioned the claims to objectivity in science, and disciplines such as peace studies, women's studies, and critical global studies have emerged to actively challenge such claims, those of us in the academy still face strong pressures to downplay the values and political priorities that guide our research. Moreover, in many spaces of the academy, the market ideology has become normalized, and is even actively and uncritically promoted in business schools and economics departments. For instance, Dia Da Costa and Philip McMichael speak of a 'market epistemology' that 'infects' disciplines such as development studies and international relations (2007: 588). Such pressures have become even greater in the contemporary era of globalized capitalism, or advanced neoliberalism, as universities have been increasingly subjected to market discipline. This has meant the gradual corporatization of the university whereby academic productivity is measured in terms of the numbers of high-prestige grants and academic articles, and where universities are governed more and more by professionals with training in management and marketing rather than by their faculties (Aronowitz 2000).

As Thomas Oleson observes in his contribution to this volume, social movement research is based in a 'tradition that rewards empirical analysis and theoretical and methodological rigor'. This has led, he argues to a *professional parochialism* in our field, meaning that we provide detailed accounts and explanations of protest, but 'fail to relate

this research to broader debates about the societies in which the protest occurs'. The emphasis on empirical analysis encouraged research designs that were shaped more by readily available concepts, measurement techniques, and data sources than by the social phenomena that constituted the object of study (see, e.g., Crist and McCarthy 1996; Taylor 1998). For example, research subjects tend to be individuals and organizations most readily contacted by telephone, email, or post. Individuals without access to computers or phones, and organizations without paid staff or offices become invisible through such methodologies (e.g., Andrews 2005). But many social movements operate in more informal, fluid and marginal contexts that are likely to escape the 'scientific' gaze of many Western social analysts (e.g., Oliver 1989). Without attention to these conceptual blinders, transnational research can exacerbate this problem by prioritizing a) organizations; b) that use English or some other dominant world language; c) that have access to technology that allows them to promote themselves in some way; d) that have resources that allows representatives to participate in transnational contexts; and e) that take some form that resembles researchers' conceptions of social movements.

In addition, how we theorize social relations and articulate our concepts can impact our ability to uncover important developments in the interactions between authorities and potential challengers. For instance, as Pamela Oliver (2008) observes, the efforts of U.S. sociologists to distinguish dissent from crime led them to ignore how the U.S. state has, since the riots of the 1960s, used crime control to repress dissent by the poor, and especially by African Americans. Also, the tendency in the U.S. especially to distinguish social movement scholarship from that on labor organizing contributed to a neglect of the ways formal labor laws have systematically disenfranchised the poorest -

usually minority and immigrant - workers from the formal trade union movement itself (cf. Tait 2005).

As feminist and post-colonial theorists point out, positivism tends to privilege those with power and systematically marginalizes the voices of the oppressed. Thus, while adoption of such methods by social movement scholars may have helped legitimate research on marginalized groups, it also turns our attention away from persistent and pervasive sources of inequality and oppression. In short, the conventions of Western social science have prevented us from appreciating the dynamic, interactive and multi-level nature of social movement analysis (more on these latter points below) and the relations of power and inequality implicated in them.

Acknowledging some of this conceptual messiness of social movements can make it harder to achieve professional legitimacy or to get one's work published in places that are valued by university authorities (Croteau, Hoynes and Ryan 2005). Thus, not only do we often fail to connect our research to broader societal debates, our research (and social science overall) tends to reinforce dominant modes of thought as well as professional hierarchies. This also serves to reinforce existing structures of inequality and domination. For instance, in his analysis of the genocide in Rwanda, Isaac Kambola accuses scholars of providing 'ideological cover' for neoliberal capital 'by depoliticizing interpretations of structural conflicts as "ethnic"' (2007: 588). Jackie Smith (forthcoming) demonstrates how much of the literature on post-conflict peacebuilding similarly shifts attention away from the structural and economic forces that underlie most violent conflicts.

The organization of our profession into distinct disciplines is one of the consequences of global capitalist dynamics, according to Immanuel Wallerstein's logic.

Certainly the study of social movements – particularly of the transnational sort- has been hindered by the separation of sociology from the field of international relations or international studies, which (in the U.S., at least) tends to be housed in political science departments. While some are hard at work attempting to chip away these disciplinary walls, they remain robust to the extent that many departments do not hire or even read much work by those from outside their intellectual corrals. Professional associations that help credential scholars and provide networking opportunities reinforce disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries. However, for the study of social movements this has meant, among other things, that questions about global institutions - such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization - and their role in shaping the contexts within which both national and transnational movements operate has been relatively under-studied.

While international relations scholars have explored the development of international institutions and regimes - many of which address the problems around which social movements organize - sociologists have investigated environmental, women's rights, or public health campaigns and organizations in isolation from their globalized contexts. These global contexts include major UN conferences on these issues and new trade regulations that invalidate the state regulations that movements work so hard to win at local and national levels. In focusing on more immediate organizational, identity, and (national) institutional structures, we have neglected how global capitalism and the world system have helped define the conflicts in which social movements engage. For instance, much scholarship defines movement boundaries along specific issues or policy arenas, thereby missing the ways movements might be defying existing

institutional boundaries and developing new ways of organizing in response to this global context.⁴

The pressures of academic life in many university settings dissuade researchers from devoting time and energy to thoughtful reflection on literatures and discussions outside their main areas of research. Disciplinary structures thus confine our thinking and prevent the cross-fertilization of ideas and the unfettered creativity necessary for the production and integration of knowledge in complex societies. Disciplinary sub-fields and their proliferation of specialty journals contain debates on particular subject matters, and networks of scholars typically cluster around defined and often limited realms, with few opportunities (or at least incentives) to interact with others outside those boundaries. This has led, for instance, to the separation of social movement scholarship from political sociology and from the study of labor movements, for example, as well divisions from what may be called the ‘mainstream’ social movement literature and critical and interdisciplinary globalization research, feminist, and post-colonial theories. More significant, however, are the national boundaries that remain important obstacles to the free flow of academic ideas. It is particularly ironic that scholars of globalization celebrate and acknowledge the central importance of the flow of ideas and culture across boundaries and yet they (we) operate within academic networks that tend to be rigidly national - and Northern - in their orientation (Connell 2007).⁵

State Prisons

Although the sovereign nation-state continues to be represented as the key to modernity, at this juncture, the nation-state, the nation-state system, and the United Nations may well have become key obstacles to the realisation of a more prosperous and more stable future for the majority of the inhabitants of the world. (Berger 2007: 1213)

In his contribution to this volume, Marco Giugni and his collaborators echo a theme in much of the literature on globalization and transnational social movements. They conclude that ‘even a genuinely transnational movement such as the [global justice movement] remains partly imprisoned in the cage built by the national state’.

But the objective fact that every movement must be somewhere in the world and therefore must face a particular set of local or national institutions and systems of authority does not in and of itself mean that movements are prisoners of the state. Nor does it mean that the most important question for researchers is whether or not state influence declines as globalization expands. As scholars of social movements have tended to reify the notion of states, activists themselves have transcended their confinement in a variety of ways. They have created transnational associations and networks, developed new forms of identity that privilege transnational over national allegiances, and they have imagined and advocated for new institutional and normative arrangements designed to constrain state power (Finnemore 1996; Kriesberg 1997; Seidman 2000; Smith 2008; Khasnabish 2004). They do this, moreover, even as they continue to engage the national state and its institutions. The institutional and historical

fact of the national state has not constrained social movement actors to the extent that our conceptual frameworks might suggest (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008).

Indeed, while social movements have been seeking to transform the nature of their 'cages', or the national state, capitalists have also been operating along a parallel track, with more obvious effects (Sklair 1997). William Robinson (2004: 77-79) refers to this as the 'revolution from above', whereby corporate elites and their allies have transformed national state structures in ways that further the aims of globalized capital. The resulting neoliberal state is 'lean and mean' (Evans 1997: 85-86), trimmed of its social welfare components but with beefed-up military, policing, and prison capacities (see also Harvey 2005). This revolution from above was even more brutal for people in the global South, where states were hollowed out before they had developed effective systems of representation and distribution (Ferguson 2006, see also Tilly 1990, chapter 7). Advocates of globalized capitalism have shaped the global institutional order through their efforts both to counter the efforts of social movements and to advance institutional structures that support their aims (see, e.g., Bruno and Karliner 2002; Smith 2008, chapter 4). For instance, industry groups are largely responsible for blocking an effective international treaty on climate change, and for advancing international intellectual property rights and agricultural regimes (Coleman and Wayland 2004; McMichael 2003; Sell 2003).

The history of contemporary state-social movement interaction might be read in parallel with the story told by Charles Tilly, whereby competition between authorities and challengers shaped the modern national state (Tilly 1984; see also Markoff 1996). Although Tilly's work contributed to contemporary, state-centric understandings of social

movements, the underlying logic of conflict here suggests a multi-actor context that resembles the global system perspective we advocate for here. Today, and indeed throughout the history of the modern state, competitive dynamics between movements, states, and other political actors are helping define the global polity in important ways (Boli and Thomas 1999; Smith 2004; Guidry, Kennedy and Zald 2000). The perspective offered by this literature suggests that, while social movements are to a large degree defined and structured by the national state, the reverse is also true. The character and structure of states and international institutions are also an outcome of social movement actions.

Moreover, state-centric approaches ignore the fact that the national state can only exist within a larger system of states and institutions that recognize, legitimate, and help reinforce their authority and control over particular geographic regions. Dualistic frameworks suggesting that more globalization equals less state power make little sense when one accounts for human history, or even existing theories of social movements and states. The reification of our concept of the state thus inhibits our understandings of social and political conflict (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008). Sidney Tarrow (2005) attempts to develop a more nuanced argument about the ways transnational activism is both shaped by and shaping the inter-state system, but our read of his argument is that it still suggests an autonomy and resilience of the state that downplays if not overlooks the ways states are constructed or constituted by transnational processes and through social movement challenges. Despite the fact that our theory tells us that states are particular, historically defined forms of social organization (with a comparatively short history, we

might add), we often treat them as if they are robust and enduring rather than dynamic, interactive and constantly undergoing transformation.

Some have offered critiques of this reification of the state, or the ‘methodological nationalism’ that characterizes a considerable amount of the social science literature in political sociology and social movements. Methodological nationalism indicates a tendency of scholarship to remain within the statistical and conceptual confines (prisons?) of the modern national state (Anheier and Katz 2005; Beckfield 2003; Connell 2007). We might argue that, while many social movements have avoided incarceration by the state, many social movement scholars are wearing orange jump-suits! We welcome emerging debates around this point, and see the ‘multi-institutional politics approach’ offered by Elizabeth Armstrong and Mary Bernstein (2008) as especially promising.

Feminist scholars in particular have reminded us of the importance of contextualizing the actors we study. But as Raewyn Connell observes, ‘[f]rom the 1940s to the 1970s, it was common to take the boundaries of a nation state as the boundaries of “society”.’ (2007:369) We might question whether this tendency ended in the 1970s, since it seems prevalent in much academic discourse today. In any case, the idea that social organization does not begin or end with the nation state is an important one that often gets lost in our analyses. And while we may know this in our roles as social actors, we are systematically forced to forget this in our academic practice. The debates in which we must participate to advance our scholarly careers and the concepts that we must use to guide our professional research serve as blinders that isolate particular variables. This can aid in our analysis of causal relations, but the process of putting the pieces back together - or contextualizing our findings - is an essential step that is often left out. Professional

norms and practices can help explain this, but real advances in our understandings will require some new approaches.

The point we make here is not trivial. By maintaining the ‘ontological primacy’ of the national state, and by defining relevant academic audiences in ways that exclude Southern voices, social science research helps normalize the western state. As Raewyn Connell reminds us, ‘[t]he shared experiences of metropolitan theorists and metropolitan readers do not include much of the sharp end of global social processes. The result is sociological texts that persistently underplay systemic violence.’ (2007: 378; see also Escobar 2004) Much social movement research, then, is guilty of what Peter Waterman calls ‘westocentric universalism’ (2001: 234-5.⁶

One could add, too, that it is guilty of ‘capitalocentrism’, in that it naturalizes, or takes as unproblematic, the idea that world-historic social relations have always and will continue to be based upon the capitalist mode of production (Gibson-Graham 2006). In other words, the methodological is political. As Heloise Weber observes:

[A] critical re-evaluation of the formal [state-centric] comparative method is necessary not merely to rectify a methodological problem, but also to expose the politics of methodological choices. The formal comparative method is inextricably underpinned by temporal and spatial delineations that reproduce a particularly problematic framework with significant political implications, not least because it obscures the globally constituted social dimensions of struggles for recognition and redistribution. (2007: 559)

Feminist scholars are not alone in demanding attention to social context. For instance, Philip McMichael (1990) argues explicitly for a World-Historical perspective in comparative methods, as have other scholars (e.g., Wolf 1982; Burawoy 1998; Farmer 2003; Korzeniewicz and Moran 2006). States must be seen as embedded within a broader system of relationships to globalized capitalism and resistance. They cannot be understood outside this larger historical and relational context.

Breaking out of Prison

For metropolitan [i.e., Western] sociology to become more inclusive in this sense is a major project. It requires breaking with professional customs such as the monocultural curriculum in graduate education. It requires an investment of time and resources, in which metropolitan institutions - controlling as they do most of the world's financial resources for social research - must give a lead. Among the tasks are to break the intellectual habits created by the deep eurocentrism of schools such as critical theory (Kozlarek 2001), a process involving risks for careers and reputations. (Connell 2007)

How can scholarship in transnational social movements overcome the limitations we have outlined in this essay? We might begin by observing that contemporary discussions within our professional disciplines are examining and debating the public roles of scholars. These debates are helping to bend the bars of our prisons (Bourdieu 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Clawson et al. 2007; Croteau, Hoynes and Ryan 2005;

Santos 2003; Blau and Smith 2006; Kleidman 2008).⁷ These discussions need to be broadened and extended to a wider audience outside the academy. These efforts at social engagement must win greater legitimacy and acceptance within the professions themselves, in part to allow individual scholars (and their allies in social movements!) to devote adequate time to their pursuit. This will require considerable pressure from civil society itself to demand major transformations in educational policies and practices. In this sense, academics need public engagement in a struggle to democratize the academy and to restructure it in ways that will allow it to better support human needs.

Social science is a political activity. We must scrutinize our own choices of research topics and methods to assess the ways power and social inequality operate through them. We must be honest about the ways our own social position and perspective limit the conclusions we can make from our research, even as we strive to make some limited contribution to the wider search for knowledge and truth.⁸ Just as some people speak of a need for ‘social responsibility’ by corporations, so, too, must social scientists consider more explicitly what it means to do their work in a socially responsible way. By this we mean to do social analysis that contributes to struggles against social structures that reproduce inequality and social exclusion. We must be sensitive to how our professions systematically ‘erase’ the histories and perspectives of non-Western people. And we must actively work to give voice to those made invisible by our dominant theories, conceptual frameworks, and professional routines. Also, while the capitalist world-system promotes competition, hierarchy, and exclusion, those of us committed to global justice must devote our energies to work that advances social solidarity and cooperation.

One way to start is for us to envision ourselves as people, citizens, and workers first, and only then as social scientists. This goes against the dominant structures of the university, which fosters individualistic approaches to our work, and which encourages hierarchies within the faculty as well as between faculty and other university workers. Such divisions have enabled the corporatization of the university and will continue to chip away what remains of value in these spaces. Equitable access to higher education, academic freedom, and professional job security in the academy are all threatened by neoliberal globalization. Only solidarity among workers on campuses and between academic workers and other elements of anti-systemic movements can effectively resist the subordination of universities to the logic of globalized capitalism. In other words, to defend academic principles of neutrality and objectivity, we must forge alliances with civil society groups to demand that our educational institutions operate independently of the global capitalist order. We must, in short, discard the notion that only work that remains detached from social ‘subjects’ can be trusted as ‘objective’, ‘neutral’, and therefore ‘valid’. Instead, we must see ourselves as essential players in the struggle ‘to represent humanity’s interest in containing the unbridled tyranny of market and state’ (Burawoy 2004: 257). By failing to adopt a critical stance towards globalized capitalism we not only abandon claims to neutrality but we also help legitimate and sustain the dominant order.⁹

Once we accept our social responsibility and confront modernist notions of objectivity, part of what we need to do to break out of our various prisons is to radically transform our ways of thinking and acting (see, e.g., Stacey 2007). We are not suggesting that scholars should abandon all attempts at objectivity or that we must forego the

practice of maintaining some distance between ourselves and the subjects of our research. Rather, with feminist scholars, we call for ‘strong objectivity’, which is an effort to situate ourselves, our subjects, and our research claims or conclusions within the larger social context. This contextualization, which is achieved by considering the perspectives of people from social positions other (less privileged) than those of the researcher, is sensitive to questions about how power and inequality shape institutions and ongoing social relations (Harding 1992). In other words, the ideal of objectivity remains, but it is strengthened by the recognition that knowledge and perspective are fundamentally political. Thus, it is only through recognition of our social location, acknowledgement of power relations, and a thoughtful reflexivity (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) that we can fully attain the ideal of objectivity.¹⁰

Santos’s call for greater attention to the ‘sociology of absences’ and the ‘sociology of emergences’ is instructive in this regard. We must use our sociological imaginations to examine how the various social structures in which we work have constrained our own thinking about our roles as scholars and about our approach to our subject matter. Those with more seniority and professional security can and should work to promote more cooperation across disciplines and to mentor younger scholars. More must clearly be done to facilitate cross-national exchanges among scholars, particularly between the global North and South. This requires attention to the ways professional practices and intellectual property rights restrict possibilities for Southern scholars to be full members of a global intellectual community. We need to break down the walls of the ‘ivory tower’ to engage in more egalitarian projects with activists, while attaching greater value to the mutual learning that occurs through these projects (Croteau, Hoynes and

Ryan 2005). And finally, but importantly, we should teach in a way that reflects this perspective.

What is especially promising at this time in history, moreover, is that the social movements we have been studying have generated a process - the social forums - that can facilitate the kind of relationship-building and identity-transformation that is necessary. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006) speaks of the World Social Forum process as the 'epistemology of the South', recognizing that the key ideas and models of organizing have emerged from the 'periphery' of the world-system to influence the 'core' (cf. Markoff 2003). Further reflecting the extent to which major social change initiatives depend upon resistance from those most marginalized by existing power relations, one finds strong links between the ideology of the forums and Third World feminism (see, e.g., Alvarez 2003, 2000). As a space and a model of organizing, social forums at local, national, regional, and global levels provide opportunities for scholars to both enact their identities as world-citizens and to contribute to the work of 'translation' that Santos sees as essential to the process. They can learn about others' struggles and experiences of economic globalization while also contributing to the collective work of developing alternatives.

We conclude by observing that the critique we offer here emerges from the work of countless social movement critics of capitalism, patriarchy, and nationalism. While we claim 'authorship' for these ideas, they are more a reflection of the many conversations we have had with social movement activists, students, and colleagues. They also parallel similar conversations between other critical scholars and practitioners. Indeed, the very practice of questioning basic modes of thought and the power relations implicit in these

constitutes a form of struggle itself. It represents an attempt to critique and transform a culture that has been heretofore utilized in the service of global capitalism. To paraphrase organizers of the U.S. Social Forum, if another world is possible, another sociology is necessary. If oppression resides primarily in our consciousness, then we must reflect critically upon how our own consciousness has been conditioned by relations of domination and oppression. Our research on social movements has taught us that the movements we study (and the people in them) may hold the key to our prisons.

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² Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum, for example, found that the large and professional SMOs of the contemporary U.S. women's movement have emphasized women's issues primarily in terms of the legal discourses and frameworks of the U.S. system, rather than relating their struggles to global discourses and frames. The global women's movement, in contrast, stressed the problem of violence against women and broader reproductive rights, within the framework of the universality and non-divisibility of human rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Although these frames complemented the demands of the U.S. women's

movement, the institutional embeddedness of mainstream women's organizations in the U.S. political system limited their attention to global contexts and opportunities.

³ Anderson (2003) and Kolb (2007) detail the challenges civil rights activists faced in linking their struggles to international human rights language. Early civil rights efforts did use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as part of their mobilizing efforts. Contemporary organizing by people of color has sought to use international human rights language to advance demands for economic and racial justice (Smith 2008, chapter 8; Cox and Thomas 2004). On international feminist influences on U.S. abortion discourse, see Ferree and Rucht (1999).

⁴ For instance, as noted earlier, there has been relatively little attention to the World Social Forums and even the U.S. Social Forum among U.S. sociologists.

⁵ Smith observed this in her work in Canada, where she found little dialogue between social movement scholars in the U.S. and this proximate neighbor. Also, the American Sociological Association's attempt to integrate international scholars has consisted of an 'international scholars' reception' which drew participants who were from outside the U.S., with little effort to draw in U.S. members of the association (this is changing). And a 2007 meeting of the World Society Foundation which focused on globalization and regionalism involved just one (understandably frustrated) francophone African scholar, with the rest being U.S. or Europe based (one or two were originally from the global South but were trained in the West).

⁶ This bias in favor of Northern perspectives also tends to lead movement analysts to see social movements' relations with states as necessarily adversarial. In global contexts, it is Southern activists in particular who are calling for stronger and more capable states rather

than seeking to push back state authority (e.g., Seidman 2004; Guidry 2000; Macdonald 1997).

⁷ European scholars, notably Bourdieu, have been highly influential in promoting an increased appreciation for the importance of the role of the public intellectual in Civil Society. We realize that the idea of ‘public sociology’ is less novel in other countries than the U.S.

⁸ This may require more adjustments to our epistemologies than our methodologies, although it is clear that innovative methodologies are also needed to remedy blind spots.

⁹ Indeed, it is the failure of academic workers to maintain a critical and objective perspective that allowed universities and other educational institutions to be subordinated to the logic of the marketplace and the demands of globalized capitalism.

¹⁰ This approach also encourages attention to right wing social movements that have been less attractive to social movement researchers. It is only by considering the larger context (and causes) of inequality and social exclusion that one can understand why some groups mobilize around racist and anti-social claims. Moreover, attention to the underlying structures that reproduce inequality and social division can help scholars and policy makers avoid framing resource-driven conflicts as more violence-prone identity conflicts, thereby reducing the likelihood that such conflicts will persist and/or escalate to violence.