



CATALYST: A SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM

REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1, 2015



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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: MODES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

CRAIG SCHAMEL

When the theme for this issue of *Catalyst* was conceived, it was imagined that contributions might present both defenses and critiques of liberal justice, that is, one might say, that these contributions would either promote reformist or revolutionary modes of justice. Instead, all of the submissions took a fairly decisive position of critique of liberal modes of justice, though they are not necessarily in agreement about what constitutes a revolutionary mode of social justice, and they do not always adopt the term 'revolution' itself as a description of the critique they present and the direction in which they point.

Not only did the spirit and letter of the submissions for this issue effectively endorse revolutionary modes of social justice, but these works hit the ground running, with most immediately moving into attempts to describe and help create a strategy of practice for a social justice which could be called revolutionary, and which rather decisively rejects liberalism and in some fundamental ways, conveying in spirit a sense of impatience even with justice as it is conceived and carried out by liberal systems. It is this spirit of the authors of these works and the feeling of eagerness to describe and participate in the effectuation of a revolutionary praxis which they convey, and also on the idea of liberalism as an ideology, on which I focus briefly in this introduction.

When we implicate 'liberalism' by placing it in the position of ideologies, discourses, and apparatuses of injustice, we use a term which is "a vague term that embraces many diverse and even incompatible positions."¹ Nevertheless, critics of liberalism as a mode of social justice and strategists of social justice are increasingly aware that even an uncongealed or derivative historical demarcation can still very much be considered the primary locus of injustice, and a valuable framework or ideology for the comprehension of questions of justice as they are playing out in practice, as well as a framework for the development of strategies for the achievement of social justice, even if "liberal theorists attempt to justify an arrogation of liberalism to a political-philosophical position that is superideological."²

A critique of the liberal mode of justice with a focus on strategy, which is in keeping with the directive of *Catalyst* to focus on the *practice* as well as the theory of social justice, and to "push the ideals of social justice to new levels" gives rise in turn to theory, and also makes use of, is nourished by, and improves upon existing theories. Theories that can be understood to speak to the practice of social justice often become the contextual framework within which the practice of social justice occurs. Or is it the reverse? One must suppose that it is both, actually - that, generally speaking, practice and theory are mutually informative and create one another, albeit in different sorts and types of relationships. That said, with the questions that this issue of *Catalyst* raises, we can perhaps be permitted to wonder if we are approaching a change in the way that theory is done by scholars and academicians, a change that is *not* a movement toward theory in the service of the needs of "employers" and capital and markets, but rather one that moves toward practice in a very different way, akin to the way that medicine first detached itself from philosophy as a practical τέχνη.³

One of the larger questions that serves as a foundation for this interaction of theory and practice is the question of whether social justice can best be achieved primarily locally or primarily at some larger level, such as the national or global level. The presentation of local solutions to the problems of social justice is evidenced in the work of Russi and Ferrando, who put forward the food sovereignty movement, which contains within it a critique of large scale plans for food production and distribution, as a potential solution to those problems of production and distribution. Russi and Ferrando wisely use some of the

same analytic tools and mechanisms of evidence and proof that advocates of globalized, state-organized, and market ruled systems use, in order to show that these systems can be irrational and inefficient. The food sovereignty movement and other movements that promote a more localized control and an autonomy that does not seem possible without such localization are really rejecting the larger apparatuses of the administration of life and justice traditionally promoted by both advocates of state-planned economies and by market ideologues. Put in terms of liberalism, the tying of local control to greater social justice can imply the distrust of totalizing critiques and remedies of justice, and this is understandable in an era when communist states, while achieving great levels of economic justice, failed to adequately address the social aspects of justice, and when the state apparatus in liberal states has become little more than an footservant of finance capital. Further, as the work of Yaghi elucidates, the false universality of the tenets and practices of social justice in the liberal polity, and the racist and nationalist distortions and exclusions that are part of the liberal society's actual discourse and practice of justice seem to force those who might otherwise look to more universal ideas of justice to regroup and to practice the politics of forced localization, i.e. an identity politics that is forced to be responsive to the racist or nationalistic delusions of the liberal polity. Yaghi quotes Charles Taylor, who writes that identity in liberal societies is often shaped by the misrecognition of others. Taylor, though, who is among those engaged in the redemption and reform of the liberal state and in its practical mainstay, social-democratic politics, will not likely go where Yaghi takes his thesis, and that is to the advocacy of revolution on the very basis of such "misrecogniton" and what it produces. There is then, an important sense in which a kind of localization is forced on political and social actors by the liberal state and its false universal and democratic idea of justice, and in this forced localization and parochialization can lie incipient revolution.

Political strategy and strategy for social justice for theoreticians has for many years now in Western thought been bound up with the understanding of power as micropower, in which power is understood as occurring often outside the state, and in the dynamics of a relational subjectivity, with the expression of justice often, within this understanding, taking the form of expressions of justice and power in the interstices of a culture in which loci of power are continually shifting, being recreated, rechanneled, understood. The problematization of this understanding of power, which attempts to render former conceptualizations of power obsolete, is evident in the papers of both Sharif and Ishchenko, with Sharif offering a pointed and sophisticated critique of its shortcomings, which have to do with the fact that "all forms of micropolitics recommend resistance in bits and pieces [and]...fetishize the everyday struggle against the control of power" and Ishchenko designing social science research which helps to illuminate specific problems in the confrontation of state, systemic, and historical power by groups which attempt to evade or confound these systemic problems and injustices with the type of spontaneity and immediacy of the social group format, groups whose self-conception seems to comport with the micropower-micropolitics understanding of power. This problematization of theories and practices of micropower in terms of resistance is, I believe, important to the understanding of how to achieve social justice insofar as the achievement of such involves confrontation of liberal-systemic processes and powers. Anyone who has some knowledge of the operation of political groups who are highly concerned with justice will know this problem. While we who are concerned with social justice have rightly paid obeisance and respect to a reconceptualization of the power with which social justice has had to be concerned, what are we to make of the fact that, in practical experience for example, anarchists, while claiming a greater level of fairness and focusing on internal or prefigurative justice, in my direct experience, have taken over and commanded other organizations thereby, quashing dissent with, for example, rules for internal procedure which allow for tyranny and the silencing of many voices? And, at the superorganizational political level, can we still agree, after the fuller unfolding of neoconservative politics, with Deleuze and Guattari when they write that "the masses are not tricked by ideological lures into submitting to power"?⁴

The understanding of micropolitics through micropower, as a framework within which social justice is studied and pursued, is not only a positive understanding which can concern itself with the development of strategies for social justice, but it can also be, and is in its more original Foucauldian conception, a phenomenon which acts against social justice, as Russi and Ferrando point up when they

"[try] to sketch a picture of the effort aimed at rearranging farming according to the calculative logic of capital" which occurs via "carving spaces of control (assets) on which an investment calculus can subsequently be pegged." More often though, a localized understanding of power, which modulates traditional and micropolitical conceptions of agency, is seen as the best position from which to create resistance to social injustice, as in the participatory approaches to research described by Sitter and Burke, who show consciousness of this localization of power to effectuate social justice: "Change in this context is not necessarily characterized by large-scale alterations to policies and systems", but who incorporate, among other approaches, a Freirian sociopolitical model which, while "stressing community-led learning and praxis" incorporates an awareness and conscious addressing of the problem and reality of larger and systemic power, that power which has the ability to create systematic education. Freire asks, "But if the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution?"⁵

The papers in this themed issue of *Catalyst* also bring up the question of the position of the social in relation to the political, and of its structure, and its connectedness to justice. The question of this distinction and relationship is partly a question of whether individuals or political or social groups are better vehicles for the achievement of social justice, and under what circumstances. The question of what the social is in relation to the political often plays itself out in the effective or express answers to such questions. Sitter and Burke describe strategies for social justice within groups that primarily see themselves as social, and as operating in the mode of a social movement, and Sharif points the way toward spatiotemporal templates for the comprehension of justice which he finds superior to infrapolitics: "spatial entitlement has much more potential for organizing a social movement". It is the political that is often seen as the locus of the oppressive, and the social as the place where both the pain of political injustice is felt and lived (e.g. in the exclusion and 'othering' of French Muslims [Yaghi]), and also the place where resistance often begins or seems most correct or genuine, despite the existence of well-developed economic and political theories and patterns and avenues to justice. Even though the social is the realm where the pain of injustice is often felt the most, my own essay points up the problem of too much strategic reliance on the social when the political, sometimes in the form of the propaganda which creates and shapes discourses, overpowers this social realm.

Insofar as the social realm is comprised, in terms of the practice of social justice, of social movements, we must be aware that "the reality is that, whatever their transformative potential, new social movements have shown a marked incapacity for confronting the imperatives of political power."⁶ Thus, while the social is on the rise in terms of its centrality to human identity,⁷ we as theoreticians of the social cannot slip into delusionality about its current power in relation to the political, a problem illustrated by the 'discourse of hate' propounded by the liberal establishment as a template for the comprehension of anti-gay abuse. Such problems are compounded by the fact that, the more that one accedes to the false discourses of political power, the more power one has to describe the social. These false discourses can have an express layer, such as the liberal constitutional tenet of "freedom of speech" problematized in the work of Yaghi, or less express but equally deleterious assumptions, such as the "ableism" pointed to by Sitter and Burke, which underlies rights discourses and constitutes social movement assumptions. Important questions about the relationship between the social and the political are raised around this question of ableism in their description of the citizenship components of the disability rights movement (D.R.M.), questions such as that of how "social policy" is created by political powers, while in Ishchenko's work, the "value-rational solution" approach to systemic injustice illustrates some of the problems of attempts to effect systemic change from a position that is more that of a social group than a traditional political one.

In the practical mode of social justice, one of the concerns to emerge from these works is what would seem to be a central question for those concerned with social justice, and that is the question of against whom or against what we are struggling when we struggle for social justice. The answer is, in the main,

that it is the liberal political establishment against which we struggle, either in its (performative) entirety (Yaghi) or in its specific elements at the state and international level (Russi and Ferrando). Often though, an accusatory finger is expressly or effectively pointed toward academia itself as an aspect of this liberal state (Sitter and Burke, Sharif, Schamel) or toward specific disciplines within academia, such as social movement studies (Ishchenko). That is, insofar as most of the contributors to and readers of *Catalyst* are, if not full time academicians, persons who have at least dalliances therewith, that accusatory and impatient finger is pointed in some sense toward ourselves.

Various aspects of the liberal polity, and of globalism (transnational liberalism) are often seen by critics in terms of ideology. Louis Althusser, in his theory of ideology,⁸ names the educational system of the liberal state as the most important of what he calls 'ideological state apparatuses'; that is, as an apparatus which, despite its pretensions to criticality and independence, exists primarily to serve the interests of a state-supported system of injustice, and is actually the primary functionary of those interests. Even if, however, academia and the entire education system can and should be considered the primary manifestation of a system of injustice which we might call 'liberal ideology', it is not the only one. Sitter and Burke address the mass media's legitimization and normalization of political ideologies, using the term 'ideology' in an only slightly more limited sense, while, with the same sense of ideology in mind, my own essay points up the problems of religious ideology, and the way it becomes part of (and always was part of) the idiom of liberal politics. Sharif rightly questions the very question of revolution in its contradistinction to reformism, pointing up in so doing the fact that often critical discourses themselves can be misbegotten insofar as they incorporate elements of a hegemonic 'ideology'. At the convergence of ideology and strategy, Ishchenko's thesis undertakes, as one of its elements, an examination of prefigurative politics as an ideology of praxis.

Several years ago, before I began boycotting American Political Science Association meetings, at one of these meetings I had the pleasure of taking a short walk with Anne Norton, who had written book on the Straussian political philosophers, who were among those with whom both she and I had studied, and somehow emerged as something more like progressive and revolutionary, respectively, against the natural right conservatism of some of our teachers. Our conversation brought up love and its position in scholarship and the idea of it as a motivation. We both became uncomfortable, or at least, I did. Mention the word 'love' in connection with your research and you will witness an evident unease on the part of scholars, and even perhaps some signs of disapproval. Likewise with anger. I remember when, at the founding of one revolutionary organization, a woman announced, "We found this organization in love and anger." Putting the two together struck me as the motivation for revolution. More precisely, it was the idea that, without anger when it was appropriate, there was no love. But we tend to, with good reason, consider the disinterestedness of social science one of the pillars of its value, even if we are inclined to think that doing social science might require a different approach from that of other sciences. Somehow though, a concern with social justice seems to require a different relationship between emotion and scholarship.

Relatedly, we can ask whether working toward social justice even makes sense in a period during which the old political-philosophical problems of identity and free will are dominated in discourses of the social by 'subjectivity' and 'sites of agency' - that is, whether the relevant repository of love and anger and other feelings is still personal identity. In the pursuit of social justice, we can ask if there is such a thing as an enemy, or as a 'that against which we fight'. For social scientists, the concept of an enemy is problematic. And yet, the past forty years in the U.S. and in the Western World have seen the shortcomings of social scientific practice when faced with such forces as globalism and neoconservatism. And how do we fight for social justice if causation no longer finds a home in the traditional view of individual actors as forces who can be considered responsible for deleterious actions? Can a stand still then be taken in the premises of social science questions, as I believe Russi and Ferrando and Ishchenko so valuably attempt to do? In the prioritization and formulation of research agendas? In the naming of problems? Is not objectivity a part of the procedure of science, *after* one has a hypothesis? And does not

the problem always occur at the point of formulation of the hypothesis, that is, in that under-region -'Υπό'- of the scientific process? Are we permitted to be angry, and to incorporate that anger into our theory and action? And, perhaps more importantly, if our work, if our research, and if we as scholars who stand on this work are to endorse revolution, are we really willing to back that endorsement up with effective action, or is it the case with us that, as Robespierre said, we "want revolution without a revolution" - revolution with no harm, suffering, or punishment; or, as Slavoj Zizek formulates it, "revolution deprived of the excess in which democracy and terror coincide?"⁹

Or are we merely slipping into a sentimentality that is unproductive of actual social justice when we raise these questions?

... I am now thinking of Eve K. Sedgwick's call to redeem sentimentality.¹⁰ I am thinking of the Greek people's attempts to fight back as they are clubbed to death by the bankers and their footservants. Of the image of the chador, maliciously overlain with the idea of evil. Of the gay-iconic image of Marsha P. Johnson's dead body floating in the Hudson River.....

To the extent that, when we indict liberalism and reformism from the perspective of social justice, it is *we* as social scientists and scholars who are the indicted, perhaps any evidence we might find of our willingness to traffic in these kinds of thoughts and to let them motivate and even change the nature of our scholarship, is one thing we can call to our defense.

¹Bernstein, Richard J. *The New Constellation. The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1995, 239.

²*Ibid.*, 243.

³Zeller, Eduard. *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*. Trans. L.R. Palmer. New York: Dover, 1980, 24.

⁴Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1987, 215.

⁵Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Books, 1993, Chapter 1. Accessed online at webster.edu (<http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-1.html>).

⁶Boggs, Carl. *Social Movements and Political Power*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, 75.

⁷As evidenced by, for example, the development of the discipline of social history and by the interest in Hannah Arendt's problematization of the social. With regard to the latter, see Pitkin, Hanna. *The Attack of the Blob. Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998

⁸Althusser, Louis. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (Notes Toward an Investigation)', in Zizek, Slavoj, ed., *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso, 2012, 100-140.

⁹Zizek, Slavoj. 'Robespierre, or The Divine Violence of Terror'. [lacan.com](http://www.lacan.com/zizrobes.htm) (<http://www.lacan.com/zizrobes.htm>).

¹⁰Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 'Some Binarisms (II): Wilde, Nietzsche, and the Sentimental Relations of the Male Body', *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 131-182.

THE PERFORMANCE OF TERROR IN FRANCE

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I. Introduction: French Muslims and social justice

Major news anchors reported the action second by second. They replayed video footage of two hooded gunmen executing a French police officer followed by reports of other connected attacks and images of deployed French counter-terrorism units. The unfolding drama quickly created an atmosphere of panic, even in places far away from where the incident of Charlie Hebdo took place. The sequence of events also gave birth to a global support movement. Among the vast crowds coming out in French cities, international state high officials marched alongside President François Hollande ostensibly to defend freedom of speech, express their unity in the fight against Islamic radicalism and demonstrate readiness to crack down on global jihad. This fast-paced sequence of events left little room for reason or reflective thinking in France and other locations in Europe. Emotions, understandably, were riding high. After all, the hideous attacks sought more than just reaping the lives of the cartoonists for lampooning Islam, mocking its symbols, and ridiculing its followers. The attacks on Charlie Hebdo meant to execute a memorable “performance of terror,” to send a strong message to the French Republic and the Judeo-Christian Western world. Convinced that they, righteous and pious, are ordained by God to rid the world of the blasphemous West, the attackers understood their own struggle in global and religious terms, a clash of civilizations and a war between good and evil.

The attackers, who chose martyrdom for their grand finale, had no interest in drawing attention to the chronic national crisis of French Muslims, struggling to be seen and heard. France has yet to integrate them as citizens with equal rights and equal responsibilities. The grandiose performance of terror obscured the minoritized French Muslims and, for years to come, will undermine their struggle against countless manifestations of social injustice. This performance of radical terror, I however contend, was just one show among many. Like the jihadists, Charlie Hebdo, the French political establishment, and several heads of state have created the illusion of an existential clash between *liberal* free speech and barbarism, secularism and radical religion, good and evil, the West and Islam. Veiled under marketable names—freedom of speech, liberal secularism, counter-terrorism, and global security—their performances have contributed to the systematic marginalization of the arguably most vulnerable ethno-religious group in French society today, yet they are rarely acknowledged formally as such. Indeed, although their performances took place on the French national stage, the involved parties seem determined to frame what was happening in the context of the global war on terror as if the agreed upon directive is to manipulate the tragic incidents for particular purposes: increase authoritarian state powers, perpetuate social injustice, strip French Muslims of their right to exist even as a minoritized community, and relieve the establishment of accountability. The chances of granting equal rights soon to French Muslims are weak at best because at the heart of their problem lies French liberalism. Not only that, but also they are caught between national, transnational, and global competing performances of terror. The Charlie Hebdo attack has further denied them equality, respect, and recognition. Under these trying circumstances, they cannot successfully fight alone, nor could they start a revolution. But a revolution is needed to restore justice to them as well as to other marginalized minorities. Particularly, I would argue, responsible intellectuals can spark the revolution. They can challenge the unjust status quo by producing historicized and contextualized counter narratives in order to draw attention to the normative absence of social justice in the French Republic.

To smoothly discuss these points, the article proceeds in the following order: It (1) explores the crisis of French liberalism, (2) examines the French political establishment's troubling approach to home-made terrorism, (3) draws attention to the problematic nature of internationalizing the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, (4) identifies acts of liberal racism in Charlie Hebdo's philosophy and points to the need for a revolution spearheaded by responsible intellectuals before it, (5) finally brings the discussion to a point of closure.

1. The Crisis of French Liberalism

In favor of a strictly literal interpretation of liberalism, the French political establishment objects to the visibility of cultural and religious markers of ethnic French citizens. If this difference does not recede, the popular argument goes, French liberal democracy will lose its foundational values and secular character. The problematic nature of French liberalism, however, has to do initially with two inherent blind spots in liberalism as a theory and political system: the principles of impartiality and recognition. Liberalism dictates that all citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious, racial, sexual, economic, or educational orientations, are entitled to the same expectations, rights, and obligations. Some governing bodies, including the French political establishment, interpret impartiality to strictly mean no accommodations ought to be given to religious, ethnic, or cultural minorities because privileging one group over other citizens, by accommodating its difference, violates the code of impartiality. Occupied with impartiality, many European liberalisms have yet to take seriously the need for recognition, especially of ethno-religious and cultural difference. "Many members of minority cultures," writes Jonathan Seglow, "do not receive the public recognition they deserve. And one reason for that is a lacuna in liberal theory itself: it does not recognise the importance of recognition in forming individual and social identities."¹ Although minoritized groups request, and deserve, recognition because they advance "claims for justice," Seglow states, their requests or needs are "claims for special treatment, for something extra in the way of rights or resources which other people do not have. This goes against the central liberal idea that the state should be impartial among different citizens whatever their particular identities and allegiances."² Accommodating difference, or rather accepting cultural and ethno-religious diversity, indeed, poses a serious challenge to liberalism in many European countries.

The case of France, however, is especially troubling. The contemporary French Republic presents itself as a liberal, secular state for all its citizens, yet it segregates against French Muslims. Arguably, Islam as a marker of alien religious difference in the Republic forcefully came to the fore after the 9/11 attacks and the declared War on Terror. Before 9/11, however, Arabness, not Islam, was widely seen as the unwanted difference. "It is in the relatively recent, expanded meaning of a secularized public space, [Jack] Chriac's sense," John R. Bowen writes, "that *laïcité* was deemed to be under threat from Islam. As late as 1999, however, the threat had not yet been identified quite so clearly."³ Indeed, in *Looking for Palestine*, memoirist Najla Said, who travelled in France in 1991, recounts an encounter with French fieldworkers, an encounter that confirms Bowen's point. For Said, one of the men stood out because of his throat-cutting racism towards French Arabs of Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan descent.⁴ The man, Said reports, "began a conversation with his friend. He spoke rapidly and with great passion . . . He was complaining about a group of people who were 'ruining' France." Said hears the man repeating the phrase "'*Les Arabes*' with disdain approximately ten times" before he asks her "'*Et toi, tu aimes les Arabes?*' . . . with a giggle, obviously aware that as an American" Said "would have no idea what havoc '*les Arabes*'

¹ Jonathan Seglow, "Liberalism and the Politics of Recognition," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Liberalism*, edited by Mark Evans, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. Press, 2001), 89.

² Jonathan Seglow, "Liberalism and the Politics of Recognition," 90.

³ John R. Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2007), 31.

⁴ According to Bowen, "[a]bout 60-70 percent of Muslim immigrants to France have come from three countries of North Africa. Algerians and Moroccans have contributed the largest numbers, followed by Tunisians. Turks and West Africans form the next largest groups" (50).

were wreaking on France.”⁵ Les Arabs, according to the fieldworker, are “*Les Algériens, les Tunisiens, les Marocains*.”⁶

Contemporary hostility towards French North Africans is rooted in French colonialist history. The French subjugated Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. In Algeria, French colonialists distinguished themselves from indigenous Algerians. Separation was the norm. Indeed, according to Bowen, French settlers in Algeria “were fully French citizens, with French political and social institutions at their disposal. The Muslim colonized would remain as a separate ‘indigenous’ population with a distinct personal status” throughout the colonization period (36).⁷ For the duration of French colonization of Algeria (1830-1962), the French colonialists committed atrocities, exploiting the subjugated people and their land, until indigenous resistance forced them out. This past violent divorce, however, continues to inform how French Arabs and French Muslims are treated in France. At best, they are second-class citizens, denied equal rights, economically deprived, and are subjected to popular and formal discrimination. Basic social justice principles do not apply to them. A 2007 secret cable addressed to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice demonstrates the crippling status of French Arabs and Muslims. The sensitive document accuses the French of exercising acts of “discrimination against minorities.” The dispatch further criticizes the French official “approach to religion and minorities”: the French political establishment “promote[s] assimilation under the banner of equality” and places “a strong emphasis on laïcité.” Accordingly, the adopted policy “demands official blindness to all racial and ethnic differences.” The French denial of difference manifests itself in French law, which “formally prohibits the collection of statistics on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background.”⁸ In this official French context, the principle of impartiality, meaning treating all citizens as equal by refusing to accommodate minority difference, further loses its claims to equality when minoritized groups face systematic discriminatory policies and practices. In fact, impartiality becomes a myth.⁹ Not of their own choice, the undesired French Muslim difference has seriously disadvantaged French Muslims and more so after the Charlie Hebdo attack as evident in the French political establishment’s response.

⁵ Najla Said, *Looking For Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab American Family*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013), 146-47.

⁶ Najla Said, *Looking For Palestine*, 148.

⁷ John R. Bowen, *Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2007), 31.

⁸ U.S. Embassy in France, “Engagement with Muslim Communities—France,” January 25, 2007, <http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07PARIS306_a.html>. Similarly, Bowen argues that “[a]lthough France keeps no statistics on the religious beliefs or practices of its inhabitants, estimates of the number of Muslims resident in France today range from four to five million people” (50).

⁹ Impartiality as the French political establishment understands it neither fosters equality nor leads to justice. Models of successful plural democracies nurture and embrace the ethnic, religious, and cultural differences of their minorities; only by so doing, they achieve equality and justice among their citizens. In such democratic models, impartiality means official direct interventions so as to recognize and protect minority differences. In situations where minorities face discrimination and struggle for inclusion, the liberal regime should respond not by ignoring or attacking their difference, but it should publicly celebrate their difference. In this regard, Anna Elisabetta Galeotti rightly argues:

The struggle over the public acceptance of differences can . . . be understood not simply as an issue of compatibility with the ideal and the practice of liberal neutrality, but rather as a contested attempt to overcome marginality and exclusion, and to achieve fair access. Since individuals are marginalized and excluded as a result of their membership in minority groups, the positive assertion of differences in the public space is seen as the first symbolic step towards full inclusion. If this is what is at stake in contemporary controversies about toleration, then the normative response cannot be toleration as non-interference, but toleration as the symbolic recognition of differences as legitimate options of pluralist democracy. (67)

Anna Elisabetta Galeotti expresses this insightful point in *Toleration as Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2002).

2.1. The French Establishment: A Home-made Terror

The French political establishment conveniently took the attacks to be acts of global jihadi terror directed at the French freedom of speech. Not only did the political establishment willfully ignore the French nationality of the attackers or quietly push under the rug the colonial history and the hopeless present they are trapped in, but it further went to reassert the sacred French tradition of free speech by embracing the “Je Suis Charlie” slogan. Instead of the pre-attack standard circulation of about 60,000 copies, the government aided in the printing of five million copies of the first issue of Charlie Hebdo after the attacks. In fact, the “magazine’s distributors said its print run had been lifted to 7 million copies.”¹⁰ President Hollande, a strong believer in the French concept of freedom of speech, thinks it is “the [French] culture [of secularism] that the terrorists want to put an end to because it is insolent, because it is disrespectful, because it is free, it’s human.”¹¹ This liberal ill-conceived logic imagines a cultural clash: a civilized secular, liberal “us” versus barbaric religious “them” dichotomy. Hollande believes, more secular satire will combat jihadist Islam. Accordingly, the first post-attack issue of the magazine stayed faithful to the tradition of satirizing Islam. The published issue featured the Prophet on its cover. In a sense, the French establishment has decided to combat terror with terror, violence with violence, and hatred with hatred. Its disguised liberal freedom of speech engenders forms of liberal racism.

As expected, the new issue of the magazine drew violent protesters out on the streets in some Muslim countries. In response to the demonstrations outside France, President Hollande expressed his dismay at the protesters for failing to understand the importance of freedom of speech for the French Republic: “There are tensions abroad where people don’t understand our attachment to the freedom of speech. . . . We’ve seen the protests, and I would say that in France all beliefs are respected.” To tell the truth, Hollande should have said, “all beliefs are” *respected as long as they confine themselves to the private domain until the so-called believers eventually disappear or seek radicalism because the Republic, overtaken by an ultranationalist dogma, does not want them*. President Hollande zealously sanctifies secular French liberalism, especially the value of freedom of speech—or the right of the state and its apparatuses to terrorize marginalized segments of the French society—, yet he does not recognize religious beliefs and immigrant cultural identities as worthy of mutual respect. It seems like there are superior secular and inferior religious values. President Hollande unfortunately forgets a fundamental truth: “[d]ue recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need,”¹² says Charles Taylor, and “the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression.”¹³

This oppression travels beyond French national borders. In a statement about the angry protests in Niger, Algeria, and Pakistan, Hollande asserts that France “supported these countries in the fight against terrorism” and “I still want to express my solidarity” towards these countries, “but at the same time France has principles and values, in particular freedom of expression.”¹⁴ Although one must denounce the protesters’ violence, while President Hollande demands respect for mainstream French difference, he dismisses the principle of universal dignity when he insists on sanctifying the French freedom of speech that silences minoritized ethno-religious and cultural difference. Because politics of difference is born out of the politics of universal dignity, equality, and recognition, in demanding the former (i.e. difference) without committing to the latter (i.e. universal dignity, equality, and recognition), President Hollande participates in what I would call “liberal racism” discourse. Liberal racism manifests itself in a set of commonplace racist policies and practices seen in the eyes of mainstream France as politically correct as long as they are directed at the minoritized French Muslims. This liberal racism racializes French

¹⁰ *ABC News*, “Charlie Hebdo: French President Francois Hollande Defends Freedom of Speech amid Worldwide Protests over Prophet Mohammed Cover,” January 17, 2015.

¹¹ *AFP*, “Charlie Hebdo Will Live On: Hollande,” January 14, 2015.

¹² Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”: An Essay with Commentary*, edited by Amy Gutmann, (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1992), 26.

¹³ Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” 36.

¹⁴ *ABC*, “Charlie Hebdo: French President Francois Hollande Defends Freedom of Speech Amid Worldwide Protests over Prophet Mohammed Cover,” January 17, 2015.

Muslims. While it imposes an oppressive imaginary homogeneity on a diverse population, it defines them as the ultimate opposite of *liberal* Republican values and French secularism. In the context of President Hollande's response to the demonstrations, liberal racism further seems grounded in French colonialist heritage: French secularism and its liberal freedom of speech are rational, modern, and thus superior while the values of the protesters, and by extension those of French Muslims, are irrational, premodern, and therefore inferior. On the basis of this logic, the violence the former commits is permissible, while the latter's violence is deemed barbaric. President Hollande's statement masquerades French particularism as universal, but it does not extend reciprocity towards the values of Muslims and Muslim French.

Instead of taking some responsibility for the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, the French political establishment continues to pin what happened on global terrorism. In so doing, it erases the Frenchness of the jihadis and denies the failure of the state in integrating French Muslims. It willfully ignores the horrors Western, including French, colonialisms have brought upon countries like Niger, Congo, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine. In fact, colonialist burden is not a mere matter of historical heritage. Since 2003, France has aligned itself with the U.S.-led war on terror coalition. France has been militarily involved in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Because French Muslims do not exist in a vacuum, some French Muslims might define their identity against these harsh realities. The radicalized French Algerian attackers, says Tariq Ali, "were a pure product of French society. Unemployed, long-haired, into drugs, alienated till they saw footage of US torture and killings in Iraq."¹⁵ Their attack points to a homemade French problem whose roots reach back to French colonialism in North Africa. In addition to colonial heritage, which ails France now, contemporary economic, societal, cultural, and political harsh realities increase the rift between French Muslims and the French establishment. According to Vaiju Naravane, French suburbs are scarred by "desolation, deprivation, violence, and poverty." In these centers of collective misery, "[y]outh unemployment is over 40 percent, four times the national average; the school dropout rate as high as 36 percent. A majority of France's six million Muslims live in the suburbs, the rich, inner-city neighborhoods of large towns being beyond their reach." These impoverished "North African Arab or Blacks from France's former colonies . . . live jammed together, isolated and cut off from the rest of the country," Naravane writes.¹⁶ Living under such abject circumstances, denied the basics of social justice, particular French Muslim youth could easily be pushed towards terrorism.

After all, these French suburbs, according to second-generation French Algerian author and filmmaker Mehdi Lalloui, are populated by the wretched of the earth. They "have been marked by racism and condescension born out of colonial superiority." Speaking to Naravane, Lalloui shares his own experience in one of France's deprived suburbs:

When I was growing up, my [French] teachers said: you are not apt to go to university. You will train as an electrician. And that's what I did. But later, on my own, I went to university, became an author and filmmaker. The ambitions of several kids in the banlieus are crushed this way. Many fail because the French system tries to fit them into a mould—culturally, intellectually and even politically. They fail, become dropouts and are then tempted by organised crime and the ideology of radical Islam that appears to give them a purpose in life. Those who succeed academically get away from these ghettos as soon as possible. So these areas go from bad to worse where the state is completely absent.¹⁷

Dynamics of the exclusion and othering of French Muslims are self-evident in the statement. Sadly, these serious issues have been constantly pushed under the rug and they will be further "pushed . . . so long as life in the rest of the country can continue unaffected," says sociologist Annie Faure.¹⁸ There is neither the economic capability nor the political will to treat the festering problem of the French suburbs.

¹⁵ Tariq Ali, "France Tries to Mask Its Islamophobia Behind Secular Values," *Outlook India*, Interview with Pranay Sharma, January 2015.

¹⁶ Vaiju Naravane, "Charlie's Angels," *Outlook India*, January 2015.

¹⁷ Vaiju Naravane, "Charlie's Angels."

¹⁸ Naravane, "Charlie's Angels."

Even the tragedy of Charlie Hebdo which should have been an opportunity for the political establishment to unite the nation and re-imagine a France inclusive of all its citizens was sadly instead turned into international publicity fare—a cheap political farce.

2.2. International Heads of State: State-sponsored Terror

Another performance of terror materialized on January 11, 2015. Gathered in Paris, numerous world leaders marched with President Hollande in solidarity. Their message was to express support for freedom of speech, denounce terrorism, and stand in unity with France against global terror. Among these state officials were the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, British Prime Minister David Cameron, Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Gabon President Ali Bongo Ondimba, King Abdullah of Jordan, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, and the U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder. These alleged supporters of freedom of speech have in fact suppressed free speech, persecuted journalists, and shut down media outlets in stark violation of the freedom of the press. Outraged by the hypocrisy “of leaders from countries where journalists and bloggers are systematically persecuted,” Reporters Without Borders issued a formal statement to denounce the “presence of [these] ‘predators’ in [the] Paris march.”¹⁹

In addition to hypocrisy, violence and opportunism are common characteristics the present leaders and state representatives share. For example, the Israeli-organized acts of terror in the Gaza Strip last year took the lives of seven Palestinian journalists.²⁰ In Israel, liberal journalists like Gideon Livy found it difficult to freely express their opinions, especially during Operation Protective Edge. In fact, Livy had to hire bodyguards after death threats were made on his life from Israeli ultranationalists. Hoping to attract the votes of more Israelis, including ultranationalists, Prime Minister Netanyahu joined the Paris Charlie Hebdo March although the French government advised against it.²¹ His presence was opportunistic and his case was by no means exceptional. Jeremy Scahill is, indeed, right to call the display of world leaders a “circus of hypocrisy” because “[e]very single one of those heads of state or representatives of governments there have waged their own wars against journalists.”²² Although the display of these actors of state-sponsored terror was an insult to the pure concept of freedom of speech, their presence in Paris posed a more serious problem. Their presence internationalized a homemade French problem. Therefore, it absolved the French political establishment of any responsibility for the Charlie Hebdo tragic event, aided in its effort to silence French Muslims, and created the illusion of a clash of civilizations. To better understand the gravity of this political theatre, I must turn to the case of Charlie Hebdo.

2.3. Charlie Hebdo: False Prophets

Charlie Hebdo became the bastion of French liberty and *the* symbol of liberal freedom of speech immediately after the January 2015 attack. The history of the magazine, however, underscores the complexity of the French situation. It points to a sophisticated breed of state hypocrisy and it therefore raises legitimate questions about the limits of freedom of speech. Founded in 1969, the magazine was called Hara-Kiri Hebdo. In the following year, it faced a serious challenge from the French political establishment for ridiculing the deceased former French President Charles de Gaulle. “The country’s interior minister,” writes Oliver Duggan, “swiftly banned Hara-Kiri Hebdo, forcing the group to change their name.”²³ Failing to attract enough readers to cover its operational expenses, the magazine closed its doors from 1981 to 1991. Since 1991, the magazine gradually has focused its satire on the trouble with

¹⁹ Reporters Without Borders, “RWB Condemns Presence of ‘Predators’ in Paris March, Calls for Solidarity with All ‘Charlies,’” *Reporters Without Borders*, January 11, 2015.

²⁰ Jessica Elgot, “11 Troubling World Leaders at the Paris Charlie Hebdo Rally,” *The Huffington Post*, January 12, 2015.

²¹ Barak David, “Why Benjamin Netanyahu Attended Paris Anti-Terror March over France’s Objection,” *The Jewish Daily Forward*, January 12, 2015.

²² Amy Goodman, “‘Circus of Hypocrisy’: Jeremy Scahill on How World Leaders at Paris March Oppose Press Freedom,” *Democracy Now*, January 12, 2015.

²³ Oliver Duggan, “The History of Charlie Hebdo, Bastion of French Satire,” *The Telegraph* (UK), January 7, 2015.

Islam and the related objection to freedom of speech; consequently, it “tripled its usual sales and the politicians whose predecessors had once forced Hebdo to close came rushing to its defence.”²⁴

This newly-found appeal among French politicians, including President Hollande, possibly has to do with the French hyper-anxiety over, and institutionalized prejudice towards, French Muslims and visible signs of religiosity among French Catholics and Jews. The magazine has been in harmony with the political establishment on issues of *laïcité*, or French secularism, and the discourse of “liberal racism.” However, to evade charges of racial and religious vilifications of French Muslims, the magazine has constantly argued for its professional and constitutional right to ridicule the worldwide phenomenon of Islamic extremism. Indeed, according to Alain Gresh,²⁵ deputy director of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Philippe Val, the director of Charlie Hebdo, signed, in 2006, “The Twelve’s Manifesto: Together Against the New Totalitarianism.”²⁶ In this manifesto, Val and others wrote the following: “After having overcome Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, the world now faces a new global threat of a totalitarian nature: Islamism. We—writers, journalists and intellectuals—call for resistance against religious totalitarianism . . . to promote freedom, equal opportunity and secular values for all.”²⁷ The call conceals a liberal racist attitude towards French Muslims. This dishonest call to target global Islamism is part of a revived transnational clash of civilizations discourse, a discourse opposed not only to the presence of Muslims as citizens of the West, but also to the visibility of all manifestations of ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious diversity.²⁸ It targets multiculturalism.

2.3.1. Pens for Social Justice: The Role of Intellectuals

Read in the context of formal French politics towards French Muslims of North African descent, the magazine’s satirical representations of Islam not only infringe on their religious and cultural character, but they also veil the harsh realities under which French Muslims live. After all, satirical representations operate within the national domain. They are influenced by, and inform, the general public mood. Satirical art does not operate in a vacuum. On this ground, satirical art is a powerful tool of critique, *if* used ethically. An intellectual, the artist has a moral obligation and especially so in locales where

²⁴ Duggan, “The History of Charlie Hebdo.”

²⁵ Alain Gresh, “It’s Going to Get Worse for French Muslims: The Problem with Drawings that Fuels Sectarian Tension,” *Aljazeera*, January 8, 2015.

²⁶ The manifesto document was published in the weekly magazine *L’Express*, by Bernard-Henri Levy, Caroline Fourest, and Antoine Sfeir.

²⁷ The manifesto is quoted in Alain Gresh.

²⁸ Regardless of the strong criticism Samuel P. Huntington’s thesis of the Clash of Civilizations has received, in the context of the Global War on Terror, the rising nativism in North America and Europe, and the general anxiety over economic recession and immigration, a plethora of American and European writers have found the thesis rather appealing. Geert Wilders, Thilo Sarrazin, Gisèle Littman also known as Bat Ye’or, Oriana Fallaci, Niall Ferguson, Pamela Gellar, Robert Spencer, Daniel Pipes, Patrick Buchanan, Christopher Caldwell, Mark Steyn, the late Christopher Hitchens, and Bruce Bawer claim that the West is facing a reverse Muslim crusade. Muslims will take over the West through demographics and conspiracies. Particularly, they all consider the presence of Muslims (Arabs included) in the West a tectonic threat.

These culturally conservative views strongly resonate in the writing of first-generation American cultural conservatives of Muslim or Arab descent. Brigitte Gabriel, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Nonie Darwish, and Wafa Sultan, among others warn the West of what they consider the inevitable threat Islam and Muslims constitute—both nationally and globally. In their narratives, Islam, multiculturalism, and all manifestations of non-Western cultural and ethno-religious difference are to be erased. In *Nomad: From Islam to America—A Personal Journey Through the Clash of Civilization*, Ali argues that the contemporary clash is not only between the West and Islam: “the West needs to criticize the cultures of men of color too. We need to drop the ethos of relativist respect for non-Western religions and cultures if respect is simply a euphemism for appeasement” (242). All non-white and non-Christian others are a threat. All must be assimilated: “When I speak of assimilation,” Ali clarifies, “I mean assimilation into civilization. Aborigines, Afghans, Somalis, Arabs, Native Americans—all these non-Western groups have to make that transition to modernity” (260).

prejudice and racism penetrate the institutional, societal, and moral fabrics of one's nation. This obligation, according to the late Edward Said, "is not to consolidate authority, but to understand, interpret, and question it." To Said, "the intellectual vocation essentially is somehow to alleviate human suffering and not to celebrate what in effect does not need celebrating, whether that's the state or the patria or any of these basically triumphalist agents in . . . society."²⁹ Artists who do not speak truth to power and do not help set the record straight, by pushing normative boundaries to a point of break, are fake intellectuals. Artists, satirists, academics, and other intellectuals, Said argues, are "individuals with a vocation for the art of representing;"³⁰ however, they are "of their time, herded along by the mass politics."³¹ But they are "capable of resisting those [representations] only by disputing the . . . trends of thought that maintain the status quo." Intellectuals ought to speak *to*, but not *for*, power. In the French context, racist liberalism is now the normalized form of unchallenged power. It imposes essentialist notions of identity on individuals, communities, and the French collective. It does not recognize the plurality of identities, histories, and worldviews that compose contemporary France. It rather aims for a pure France, one without any ethno-religious difference, an imaginary France controlled by authoritarian regimes. In the face of such veiled tyranny, a true intellectual must destabilize normalized oppression and must disrupt dominant narratives. Intellectuals must advance "alternative versions in which, to the best of one's ability, the intellectual tries to tell the truth."³² To fulfill these expectations, intellectuals ought to give voice to the voiceless, the oppressed, and the persecuted, those who are silenced by the might of the sword or the belligerence of the word.

These are not romantic ideals. Indeed, there are responsible intellectuals who question the status quo especially when voices for reason and justice are hushed. The accomplished graphic artist Joe Sacco engaged with the Charlie Hebdo incident in the form of satirical cartoon. In his response, Sacco exposes the limits of freedom of speech and draws attention to the responsibility of the artist—a responsibility to contextualize and historicize his or her narrative. Sacco interrogates the romanticized status official France bestowed upon Charlie Hebdo. "Though tweaking the noses of Muslims might be as permissible as it is now believed to be dangerous," Sacco writes, "it has never struck me as anything other than a vapid way to use the pen."³³ Sacco objects to Charlie Hebdo arguing for an absolute freedom of speech to vilify the marginalized while ironically dismissing "a cartoonist—Maurice Sinet . . . —for allegedly writing anti-Semitic column." Responding to this dismissal case, Journalist Alain Gresh writes, "[w]hile claiming to stand for press freedom, Charlie Hebdo dismissed one of its star cartoonists, Sine, due to false accusations of anti-Semitism."³⁴ Standing against this hypocritically oppressive artistic philosophy of liberal racism, Sacco reminds his fellow journalists and artists that absolute freedom of expression is a myth. This myth is as problematic as lampooning Muslims, on the ground of tectonic contemporary conditions shaped by Western imperialism and state-organized terror, is. Indeed, context and historical facts seem to have no currency for Charlie Hebdo. Satirical art communicates serious messages about real life people and their everyday challenges. It is by default political. Artists who cannot recognize that "lines on paper are a weapon" are false prophets. They produce *performances of terror*. Like sharp knives, their oppressive representations unremorsefully cut the throats of those who dwell in the margins. It is a given that "satire is meant to cut to the bone. But whose bone? What exactly is the target? And why?"³⁵

²⁹ Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U. Press, 2000), 502-03.

³⁰ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 13.

³¹ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 21.

³² Said, *Representations*, 22.

³³ Joe Sacco, "On Satire: a Response to Charlie Hebdo Attacks," *The Guardian*, January 9, 2015.

³⁴ Alain Gresh, "It's Going to Get Worse for French Muslims: The Problem with Drawings that Fuels Sectarian Tension," *Aljazeera*, January 8, 2015.

³⁵ Joe Sacco, "On Satire."

3. Conclusion

So far, opportunistic ultranationalists, both religious and secular, have used the Charlie Hebdo tragedy to advance their agendas or pursue short-sighted objectives. To serve their interests, they have all performed acts of terror. According to their deformed worldviews, there is room on the national stage for *only* one actor, one tradition, and one hegemony. All manifestations of unsanctioned difference must be forced into unconditional submission. Yet, each player righteously claims moral superiority. These players forget a basic fact: the formation of identity is dialogical and relational. Charles Taylor is indeed correct to point out that

our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *misrecognition* of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.³⁶

Caught between state-sponsored and rogue performances of terror, French Muslims, among other minoritized sectors of the French society, will continue to suffer in silence. Subjected to state-sponsored demonization, abject exclusions, liberal racism, and most likely further draconian securitization measures on the ground of so-called war on terror, French Muslims have to endure until the rogue currents dissipate and the clash of civilizations discourse loses its purchasing power. Until the currents shift, French Muslims will continue to be the object of suspicion and discrimination. To liberate them through exposing liberal racism, intellectuals should condemn all performances of terror, including those executed by the state and its apparatuses against minoritized ethno-religious communities.

Indeed, violence in all its forms and shapes must be condemned, but condemnation alone is not enough. Deconstructing the essentialist representations of the self and its imagined other is a good place to start. Exposing liberal racism for what it is is next. In this endeavor, true intellectuals carry a heavy burden as they speak to, but not for, power. Their pens can, and should, spark a revolution.

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QUEERING THE REFORM/REVOLUTION DYAD: A SPATIOTEMPORAL DIALECTIC

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Abstract

All ages deal with the debate between reform and revolution in the contexts of their distinctive challenges, problems, and prospects. While reflecting on today's socio-political realities in the U.S., this paper identifies a theoretical stagnancy in academia that deters any radical praxis for revolution. Addressing some key theoretical stances within the reform/revolution dyad, the paper argues that any criticism of "revolution in a linear future" is no easy approval for "reform in a static present" either. Also, replacing the "apocalyptic future" with the "here and now" of the progressive present is perhaps inadequate without critically reflecting on the "quality" of the "present". This paper does not recommend any specific prescriptive means but outlines a speculative prospect of "here and now" for revolution. It critiques theoretical stances of a number of postcolonial and poststructuralist thinkers and argues that these stances eventually get appropriated within the hegemonic reform-based justice underpinning neoliberalism. It argues that using the work of Henry Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Doreen Massey, a spatiotemporal dialectic for revolution can be developed which in turn also embraces revolutionary visions of Alain Badiou. The paper explains how this dialectic reveals an inadequacy in the politics of reform and adjustment within theories of James C Scott, Michel de Certeau, Homi K Bhabha, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. It shows how liberal justice discourses that routinely promote reform in an attempt to misguide revolutionary potentials manage to find a comfort zone in the politics of difference. Specifically, the paper invests in the interstice between two types of theories to queer the longstanding reform-revolution dyad..

Section I

'Change Life!' 'Change Society!'-these precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space."

~ Henry Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*

Why is it that when we get impatient with the tyranny of a socio-political system, we usually imagine revolution in a distant future? We do so because our political imagination maintains a linear spatiotemporal sequence: reform *now*, revolution *later*. Queering the reform/revolution dyad would require queering this linearity and, thereby, questioning the normalcy of our static political imagination. In this paper, I question such normalcies and argue for a spatiotemporal dialectic of reform/revolution as an alternative way of understanding the relations between them.

Such queering is required today to radicalize our political imagination. This is what Henry Lefebvre suggests when he, as in the epigraph above, argues that without production of appropriate *space*, changes to society would mean nothing. Similarly, for Alison Kafer, radicalizing political imagination means not deferring the chance of revolution endlessly, because doing so inexorably ushers in “stagnation and acquiescence, an inability to move in any direction because of a permanently forward-looking gaze.”¹ What we require instead is a dialectic between present and future, between our “now” and our “later”. This dialectic is required in order to create an ‘appropriate space’ for revolution. This paper attempts to reflect on some possible means of producing this ‘appropriate space’. It also critiques academia’s involvement in making our political imagination static.

To begin with, it is helpful to contextualize the reform/revolution dyad in our static imagination. In other words, how we have been made to pursue reform as an alternative to revolution can be tracked in understanding the operation of authoritative forces across the socio-historical formation of different forms of power: sovereign power, disciplinary power, biopower, and necropower. Sovereign power is the power of the emperor. It is the absolute power having right over life and death of the subjects. It gets exerted directly on bodies through corporeal punishment. Thus, sovereign power is punitive and vengeful. The Medieval period, the age of monarchy, was the heyday of sovereign power. Later, because of gradually changing power relations in society, sovereign power started to lose its efficacy. Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, marks the eighteenth century as a transitional phase, a phase in which sovereignty gets overlaid with a new form of power what Foucault calls disciplinary power. This power also keeps targeting the body but through different means. As a modern form of power, it establishes control more with rational means rather than with brutal force. Within this modern form of power an individual “is [not] amputated, repressed, altered by our social order ... [but] is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of force and bodies (1991:217), as Foucault explains. Disciplinary power is productive, not punitive like sovereign power. It is productive in the sense that it produces docile subjects, not by oppressing bodies physically, but in and through establishing techniques or conditions within which subjects ‘take birth’ or come into play.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, this disciplinary power again gets overlain, this time with “biopower”. Foucault defines biopower as non-disciplinary technology as it gets “applied not to man-as-body but to the living man ...to man-as-species (2003:242).” Biopower starts controlling larger groups of people with regularization of “the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity and so on (2003: 243).” Biopower controls subjects in applying particular forms of reason such as “forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures (2003: 246).”

To explain how biopower works, Achille Mbembe, in his essay “Necropolitics”, explains the relations among freedom, politics, and agency, as he argues

[I]t is on the basis of a distinction between reason and unreason (passion, fantasy) that late-modern criticism has been able to articulate a certain idea of the political, the community, the subject— or, more fundamentally, of what a good life is all about, how to achieve it, and, in the process, to become a fully moral agent (Mbembe:13).

Mbembe thus marks the technique of biopower, which, for him, is a control through interplay of reason and unreason. Later, he questions if the same technique should be referred to when we inquire the conditions within which warfare, drone attack, massive killing, and so on get performed today. Mbembe states that a choice between life and death, not the interplay of reason and unreason, is what has occupied the center stage within a new configuration of politics, communities, and subjects. It is not the promise of the good life any longer which sets terms for the exertion of power, but physical death, social death, and the threat of death on which the latest form of power operates. Mbembe calls this "necropower".

The reform/revolution dyad through the ages of sovereign power, biopower and necropower has accordingly gone through different paradigm shifts. First, let us consider what we might call reform/revolution 1.0. In this model, reform means changes within an ongoing system so that the system in question can be fixed to establish the principle of social justice. Revolution, on the other hand, is throwing away, destroying, or abolishing the system itself to replace it with a new one. What motivates revolutionary zeal is passion for social justice infused with a new vision of equality for all. This model was at work in the French Revolution, in the American Revolution, and in the decolonization of the global South after World War II.

But this understanding of the reform/revolution, especially the notion of activists' agency in the pursuit of their passion for justice and equality, needs to be contextualized within the socio-economic reconfigurations after World War II. With the onset of the neoliberal capitalist aggression, consent of the people gets increasingly "hijacked" instead of being simply "manufactured" by nation-states, which in turn start working as components of the machine called "Empire"². Later, since the 1990s, with the intensification of neoliberal manipulation through biopower, and since the 2000s, through its supplementary force, necropower, the consent of the people gets neither "manufactured" nor "hijacked" but starts being celebrated as "always already taken" or as "bankrupted."

This bankruptcy of the people's consent reconstitutes political imagination as disciplined, domesticated and non-transgressional. Individuals and groups increasingly seek justice within rights-based frames. All they seek is protection and legal fixes from states while keeping intact the core structures of injustice: racism, sexism, ableism, patriarchy, capitalism, islamophobia, trans phobia, and so on. While the Civil Rights Movement sought justice within a biopolitical conditioning, i.e. "the promise of a better life", rights-based movements in the post 9/11-world carefully follow the logic of the necropolitical, the necessity of being protected from social death and physical death. Instead of integrational movements incorporating HIV activists, prison activists, LGBT activists, trans activists, black radicals, ecojustice activists, homeless activists, and so on, all we witness is a pattern of parallel and separate movements. The necropolitical risk—police brutality, imprisonment, death and so on—in organizing radical social movements, the necessity to cash out activists' efforts in short-term goals while endlessly deferring the "non-achievable" ones, the efficacy of identity politics, a form of quick organizing among homogenous interest groups while not transcending boundaries of race, class, sex, gender, and so on, are some recent trends that blur the radical vision in the Civil Rights Movement, a vision for ceaseless united struggle until true equality gets established. Worse, the mainstream LGBT movement in the US claims affinity with the Civil Rights Movement, but the mainstream LGBT movement takes the Civil Rights Movement as an end point of the struggle for equality across racial lines. Also, those involved in the LGBT movement organize themselves while 'crowding out' black people, using the Civil Rights Movement as an analog for their own movement while

continuing to organize in and through anti-blackness. Regarding the civil rights analogy, Jared Sexton, for example, points out:

The metaphoric transfer that dismisses the legitimacy of black struggles against racial slavery (and ...its 'functional surrogates') while it appropriates black suffering as the template for nonblack grievances remain one of the defining features of contemporary political culture (Sexton: 42).

The separate and parallel movements sometimes compete against each other to get closer to the *sovereign* in an attempt to victimize others who do not belong to any given interest group. Sarah Lamb, for example, shows how a partnership between the mainstream LGBT communities and the police criminalize the immigrants and the Muslims in the UK and the US. She terms this as 'queer investments in punishment'³.

This trend of disintegration finds some comfort zone in the popular fetishizing of the politics of difference in academia. How academia, in the last four decades, has participated in this bankruptcy of consent and disintegration of social movements and how we can recover from this constitute two key concerns of this paper. The incorporation of academia within the neoliberal capitalist project is often criticized as the project of the Military-Industrial-Academic-Complex (Chomsky, 1997; Robin, 2003; Giroux 2007). What Henry Giroux wrote about his time at Penn State is still true about all universities: "[...] faculties were becoming irrelevant as an oppositional force. Many disappeared into discourses that threatened no one, some simply were too scared to raise critical issues in their classrooms for fear of being fired, and many simply no longer had the conviction to uphold the university as a democratic public sphere" (as cited in Hedges, 2009, p. 91). Giroux in the same interview was talking mainly about changes in the universities especially after the demise of the World Trade Center. However, in general, the Military-Industrial-Academic-Complex since the 1990s has gone through a paradigm shift from the Cold War economy to the neoliberal capitalist one. The shift is *not* just from one of the bipolar world politics to that of the unipolar, it is more about intensification of biopower and necropower to discipline people while managing an uninterrupted flow of capital across spaces within the global capitalist economy. Though numerous scholars, critics, and intellectuals like Henry Giroux, Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein and others have already marked the incorporation of academia in both phases, an inside story of the participation of academia to the increasing de-radicalization of political imagination remains long overdue.

I argue that one of the ways this de-radicalization occurs is in and through the production and dissemination of certain theories that provide frames to define, influence and shape all possible discourses, including those of activism and politics. In the era of interdisciplinarity in academia, we are going through the best of times and the worst of times: the neoliberal and biopolitical fascism in the name of "democracy" (?) have been more severe than ever but at the same time, we witness numerous uprisings and protests against this across the world. In this conjuncture, people finding new hope for revolution must reshape the role of academia so that a much required radical praxis for revolution can at last emerge.

First, it is important to understand how an increasing number of academic scholars, researchers and authors promote certain views of power and counter-power which recommend ceaseless adaptation to and compromise with the hegemonic systems in the form of micropolitics and identity politics. This is how academia deters radical politics or transformative changes. In this paper, I will present a case study to show how established concepts of power and counter-

power within academia are inadequate to bring transformative changes. Also, I will foreground spatiotemporal dialectics as one of the means towards revolution.

Section II: Influential concepts of power and counter-power in academia

In the age of post-everything theories, academia has moved from structural to poststructural discourses of power and counter-power. Instead of articulating any systematic and structured ways of mobilizing dissent, academia routinely foregrounds fragmented, partial, and sporadic attempts to combat power. Stigmatization of Marxist theories on the one hand, and the increasing fetishization of poststructuralism, on the other, has obviously inspired people to locate the operation of power and also the scope of resistance *everywhere*. I would argue that this *everywhere* eventually becomes *nowhere* since the logic of fragmented combat deprives people of any adequate forms of resistance. To offer a brief glimpse of the Foucauldian and Deleuzian concepts of power and counter-power within academia, I would state the following as established and common views:

a. In an age of the intertwined complexities that emerge within global capitalism, it is futile to single out particular persons, agents, or even multinational companies for the miseries of the common people.

b. People should locate and combat power in bits and pieces not because these would gradually constitute larger momentum but because this is the only way of combating manipulative forces, since any total resistance is conceptually futile. One way of combating power is using identity politics that demands rights within the existing system.

Overall, academia has found it convenient to replace the “totalizing” view of power and counter power of Karl Marx, for example, with the differential view of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

Though there is a difference between their views of power, both Foucault and Deleuze believe that power is embedded in all of our practices and social relations so intertwiningly that any particular nodal point of it is as significant as any other. Foucault, therefore, foregrounds microphysics of power and Deleuze argues for molecular vestibules of desire as liberating power. Both of them, however, promote micropolitics or fragmented resistance as means of counter-power (Buchanan, 2008). Foucault emphasizes an individual’s intersubjectivity as embodied reality within conflictual operations of power, between the societal domination and the individuals’ resistance in their attempts to claim power. Foucault believes that power operates at most micro levels of social relation and he calls this the microphysics of power. Individuals can be powerful as they attempt to “transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (1988: 18).” Micropolitics of power for individuals would be gaining the upper hand in the process of intersubjectivity. Deleuze, on the other hand, considers counter-power or resistance as reactive and replaces it with affirmative configurations of desire—liberating libido, with the use of which individuals can escape fascism or repressive impulses. For Deleuze, desire itself is revolutionary in the sense the free-floating desire would transform both the molecular and the molar configurations of the society but it should always start with the molecular. Hence transformative changes at the level of the micropolitical should be given priority. James C. Scott, Michel de Certeau and Homi K Bhabha

also promote micropolitics in their respective projects. All forms of micropolitics, generally, recommend resistance in bits and pieces, a technique which does not confront larger structures of power, such as capitalism, imperialism, racism, patriarchy, et cetera. All forms of micropolitics fetishize the everyday struggle against the control of power.

Locating micropolitics or *infrapolitics* in the theoretical legacy of counter-hegemonic struggle will open up a space for us to understand the nature and objective of micropolitics and also its relative strengths and weaknesses. James C. Scott in his 1990-book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* introduced the idea of *infrapolitics*, an everyday form of resistance that falls short of openly declared contestations. Scott, attempts to foreground the superior-subordinate relations in which the subordinate appears to acquiesce willingly to the stated and unstated expectations of the dominant, and argues that the weak and oppressed of the society are not free to speak in the presence of power. These subordinate groups instead create a secret discourse, which Scott labels as “hidden script”, that represents a critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant. (A similar theory of everyday resistance is developed by Michel de Certeau in his 1988-book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Certeau argues that the authority in and through some overpowering policies and actions—which he calls “strategies”—tries to control individuals, who in turn apply *tactics*, innovative actions to defy, evade, and critique, if not permanently overthrow, that authority.

In a similar vein, Homi K. Bhabha in his 1994-book *The Location of Culture* offers concepts like “sly civility” and “mimicry” as counter-colonial Certeauian *tactics* which are basically attempts to evade systemic appropriation by transgressing the colonizer/colonized binary. To define mimicry Bhabha (1994) writes:

[C]olonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (p.122).

As Bhabha argues, colonial discourse wants the colonized to be extremely like the colonizer, but by no means identical. If there were an absolute equivalence between the two, then the ideologies justifying colonial rule would be unable to operate. The colonizer assumes that there is a structural non-equivalence, a split between superior and inferior which explains why any one group of people can dominate another at all. Bhabha intends to puncture the colonizers’ claim or assumption of superiority by relying on the slippage of meaning through which the colonized achieve their agency. This sounds revolutionary only at the expense of dispossessing most of the colonized people. That is, Bhabha reduces the social to the semiotic and remains lavishly indifferent to capitalistic management of differences. He may call for constant becoming but does not consider that people do not have equal capabilities to pursue this constant becoming.

In this paper, I use *infrapolitics* and *micropolitics* interchangeably. But it is helpful to keep in mind that there is a difference between them. This difference is situated in the different perspectives on power and counter-power:

a) *Infra* means below or beyond a particular limit of anything. *Infrapolitics* refer to a change in the nature of politics: in their everyday negotiations with authoritative forces, subordinate groups increasingly move away from any direct conflict with structures of

power. So, instead of appearing as directly confrontational, infrapolitics appear as evasively subversive.

b) *Micropolitics* is different from infrapolitics. Micropolitics refers to politics individuals would perform to attain power since power does not remain in any fixed center; it is embedded everywhere.

In line with the above distinction, *tactics* are practical acts which constitute the performance of infrapolitics.

Politics based on Power and Counter-Power: Micropolitics, Identity Politics and Coalitional Politics

The concepts of power and counter-power theorized by Foucault, Deleuze, Scott, Certeau, and Bhabha have gained the academic legitimacy to influence later scholars who recycle and reproduce these concepts to make the horizon of radical political imagination limited to the point of being ineffective. To exemplify the different modes of micropolitics offered by some of these later scholars, I will discuss two texts as part of a case study in order to understand concepts of power and counter-power celebrated and reinforced within academia. The texts are *Racial Imperatives: Discipline, Performativity, and Struggles against Subjection* (2012) by Nadine Ehlers and, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire* (2012) by Adria L. Imada. There are other relevant texts, texts like *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (2008) by Andrea Smith, which promote coalitional politics but which,—I would argue,—should also rather embrace the dialectic between micropolitics and macropolitics.

Nadine Ehlers, in her book *Racial Imperatives* (2012), uses Michel Foucault's theory of power and Judith Butler's account of performativity to understand how individuals become 'raced' subjects. Ehlers excavates the 1925 "racial fraud" case of *Rhinelander V. Rhinelander*. The case takes us to New York in the early twentieth century. A man named Leonard charged his wife Alice with fraud, accusing her of having lured him to wed her by concealing her colored identity. The jury, after going through the ritual of examining her body, which was stripped naked and paraded, gave the verdict in favor of Alice: she was *unmistakably* black. Leonard, in effect, was found to be "aberrant and deserving of legal and extra-legal reprimand" (3). For the jury, Leonard defied racial expectations, especially the imperative to maintain white racial purity. For Ehlers, both Leonard and Alice appear as subversive, as none of them cared to conform to the expectations of respective racial passing. Alice took shelter in a liminal space, in ambiguity, in an indeterminacy in which she is not conforming to the either/or kind of binary positioning along the racial line. By transgressing the border, she is affirming her positioning in a third space. She thus formulates a new potential for racial agency. Ehlers celebrates it as a transformative gesture.

To make this claim convincing, Ehlers goes for a Foucauldian back up, this time in the theory of power. Foucault's phenomenal claim that power has a capillary movement, that power does not have any center, and that it is moving and relational is emphasized by Ehlers (2012) rigorously, and she follows this direction only to foreground another Foucauldian claim that power is not absolute and resistance is immanent in each relation of power:

[p]recisely because power is not owned but exercised or deployed from multiple and contesting sites, and because of its contingency (it is reliant on bodies, locations, specific institutions, discursive avenues), the very exercise of

power always (and necessarily) produces unintended effects. That subjects are immanent within power networks, and transmit power, means that they can and do effect resistances that work to reverse, displace, contest, and revise the objectives of power (p.110).

Excavating the potential for resistance from the Foucauldian archive, Ehlers (2012) connects it to Butler's notion of the subject as a site of ambivalence as Butler argued that power at once acts on the subject and is acted by the subject:

Formed in power, the subject enacts the requirement of power. It is these requirements that constitute the subject, but the reenactment of this power operates in such a way as to conceal the prior the working of power. The subject appears, then, as if they were the origin of power, for these are seen as the subject's own power (p. 111).

The next step, which is the cornerstone of the entire effort—to foreground Alice's agency as revolutionary—is Butler's claim that in the recitation or continuous repetition of the performative, the very potential of agency looms large: “[a]gency is to be found in the possibilities opened up in and by the constrained appropriation of the regulatory law, by the materialization of that law” (p.111).

Here both Ehlers and Butler are investing in the Certeauian escape route of agency—which is also argued for by James Scott and Homi K Bhabha, in their respective projects, as they suggest appropriating the fissures, gaps and inconsistencies within the strategic control of any socio-economic and political dominance called hegemony. Ehlers fails to notice that the biggest problem with Alice's agency is that it segregates itself from the social or the collective. For one thing, how Alice's agency will help people struggling against racism is missing in Ehlers' project. Ehlers would have defended that this does not help resolve the structural crisis but this is decidedly individual resistance and hence a distinctive one. In fact, the cause of Ehlers' short-sightedness is her theoretical frame of individualistic *infrapolitics* and *tactics*. The negotiation with structures of power in this case is not directly confrontational; it is indirect, hidden, implicit, and evasive. So, it is helpful to critique the realm of the undeclared form of resistance. This realm is situated in more complex social realities than what Certeau implies. What Certeau marks as *agency* in the undeclared form of resistance is mere *happenstance* within a complex web of social realities in which the dominator/dominated dichotomy is not linear or one dimensional. Gramsci would have reminded Certeau that individuals in a social context can simultaneously occupy positions of domination and dominated in their different roles as husband or wife, worker or manager, rich or poor, white or non-white, et cetera, as Mittelman (212) argues:

In this connection, Gramsci reminded us that subaltern identities are embedded in complex overlapping social networks in which individuals simultaneously assume positions of domination and subordination (perhaps as a husband or wife, an elder or junior, a manager or office clerk, and a donor or recipient of aid).

Therefore, to address multiple configurations of power within complex social realities we live in, any project of resistance must engage with larger structures of power: racism, patriarchy,

capitalism, imperialism, and so on. Otherwise, it is not possible to imagine any interventional act, be it direct or hidden.

To apply this Gramscian understanding to Ehlers' project, Alice's resistance can be interpreted in a different way from Ehlers' intended reading. Alice wants to look white, as she wants to transcend the racial binary. But her becoming white, in her own terms, can be seen as transferring herself from the realm of the oppressed to the realm of the oppressor, again following the simplistic logic of Ehlers that mere transcending suggests agency. Alice's agency in this reading, then, appears to be a betrayal. It is helpful to keep in mind that the judge did not find this brand of agency threatening at all; he rather finds that Leonard's agency may dismantle the white texture of the society. In this way, Gramsci's observation regarding the flexible, unreliable, and simultaneous positioning of the oppressor/oppressed identity sets Ehlers' project upside down.

Similarly, Certeau himself is not ambitious enough to expect that his *tactics* would one day get transformed into common sense. But followers of Certeau such as Ehlers seem to believe that the trickledown effect of *tactics* would help develop "the war of position" (Gramsci: 292) — social organization in and through cultural hegemony—as Gramsci would like to say. But they do not notice that no *war of position* is possible without any attempt to connect the individual with the social. In a sense, it can be argued that the individualistic *tactic*, in fact, derails political dissent by emptying out any potential for the war of position. Certeauvian *tactic* does so by occupying the imaginaries of the individuals with a problematic fantasy of cherishing the subversive mode as an end-in-itself.

Adria L. Imada's arguments for infrapolitics in her book *Aloha America* (2012) is not as circuitous as that of Ehlers. Imada in her book introduces us to the hula performers who, between 1890s and 1960s, travel across the U.S to perform in theaters, commercial nightclubs, military bases and various other spaces. Their performances, as Imada argues, help construct a benign and feminine image of Hawaii. This representation in turn reinforces the colonizer-colonized binary as mutually desired. In this way, Imada shows how the hula circuits help develop an "imagined fantasy", a powerful imaginary that enables Americans to possess Hawaii physically, erotically, and symbolically. Imada's second objective is showing how the touring hula performances in the US incorporate veiled critique of US expansionism into their performances. While exposing the nature of this critique performed by the hula circuit, Imada uses the *infrapolitics* of Scott and the *tactic* of Certeau as frames.

The veiled critique of US imperialism accomplished by the hula circuit appears in many forms. One of them is "kaona", a hidden meaning embedded in the poetry the hula girls recite that often serves a counter-colonial archive of collective Hawaiian memory, preserving pre-conquest histories, epistemologies, and ontologies. Imada takes this hidden meaning or 'kaona' as reproduction of Scott's "hidden scripts". But "kaona", the hidden meaning, whether in poetry or performances, remains hidden, and unintelligible to the audience. In fact, it fails to transfer much dissent, if any, from the hula circuit performers to the larger community of people, especially the people who know nothing about the historical legacy of hula. As a result, the "kaona" remains encrypted in the event, and unintelligible beyond the special performers.

In line with James Scott's concept of "public script", or Certeau's "strategy", Imada finds a number of ways of getting Hawaiian women interpellated into the structures of colonial aggression. Women's bodily movements, for example, are made to provide a scopophilic pleasure to American audiences as they go on ascribing Hawaiians to a lower order of humanity. In effect, a kind of colonial script gets written on Hawaiian women and their bodies. Against

this, as Imada argues, the hula circuit unravels the “public script” by applying the *tactics* of “hidden script” in and through a number of counter-colonial activities. (In response to the public script that shows them as inferior and sexualized objects, the Hawaiian women assert “hula as a legitimate practice, and present themselves as modern Native women and cosmopolitan tourists” (Imada, p. 63). For me, this “hidden script” seems to be a romanticized and uncritical version of the channeling of the potential of dissent. Even though the hula preserves a rich tradition, none other than the hula girls care to know it. Worse, with their reception of modern American fashion and costume to, they are conforming to the taste of the imperialist against which their other counter-colonial *tactics* are aimed. This makes their counter-colonial stance merely casual, mere happenstance.

Imada finally claims that the hula girls “appropriate technologies such as studio photography and urban fashion for their own desires” (p. 64). In an attempt to counteract the sexualized representation of hula girls, they try to look decent, and dress elegantly. Also, they offer counter gazes in studio photographs to deny their objectification. However, what they are doing can be seen as a particular way of carrying their persona off stage. Their counter gazes may make them rational humans which in turn falsify their colonized representation as sexualized and subhuman puppets. At any rate, this way of asserting agency has its own logic and value, but a very limited one, mainly because it tells one to find a little dignified space within the ongoing *public script* or *strategy* instead of offering any *strong challenge* to it. Both Ehlers and Imada, much like so many other scholars in academia, in this way, continue to glorify *infrapolitics*. In doing so, they uncritically infatuate postmodern inclination towards fragments and micro-narratives which, in the end, serves the interest of the neoliberal capitalist (mis)management within whose ambience the *infrapolitics* originate and thrive in the first place.

Spatial Politics of Coalition Building

In contrast to fragmented resistance through either individualistic or mechanistically organized micropolitics, I also observe in strategies of resistance, attempts to form coalitions that transcend the horizontal categories: race, class, sex, gender, et cetera. Because of the urge to transcend, this, coalitional politics has radical potential. I will call it *spatial infrapolitics*, or *spatial micropolitics*. *Spatial infrapolitics* can be discussed with reference to two books: *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (2013) and *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (2008).

In *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity* (2013), Gaye Theresa Johnson shows how *infrapolitics* can go beyond the sphere of the individual and how it can be communal, social, collective and participatory. “Although racism persisted, resistance always existed”, writes Johnson, as she foregrounds anti-racist and egalitarian cultural politics between African-Americans and Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. She theorizes the *infrapolitics* practiced by the Black and Brown residents of Los Angeles as “spatial entitlement” and describes it as

“... a way in which marginalized communities have created *new collectivities* based not just upon eviction and exclusion from physical places, but also new and imaginative use of technology, creativity, and spaces. In many instances overlooked by social historians, everyday reclamation of space, assertion of social

citizenship, and infrapolitical struggle have created the *conditions for future success, in organized and collective movements*" (p. x). (Italics supplied)

Noticeably, *spatial entitlement* is unique in at least two ways. It prioritizes coalitional politics over fragmented politics. It seeks for imaginative and creative ways of unlocking spaces as a critical response to multiple segregation, separation, and exclusion within physical places. In this sense, it does spatialize *infrapolitics* as it attempts to establish the tripartite dynamics of time, place, and social being, as suggested by Henry Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*. In other words, *spatial entitlement* refers to collective struggles, not to any individualistic attempt to seize upon the cracks and fissures within a hegemonic condition, which latter is promoted by Certeau, Bhabha, and Scott.

Apparently, Gaye Theresa Johnson aligns her *spatial entitlement* with the *infrapolitics* theorized by James Scott. But importantly, Scott, unlike Johnson, does not provide any futuristic possibility of *infrapolitics*. Scott simply zooms in on the sporadic attempts of counter resistance among farmers in a Malaysian village. Those attempts are inconsistent, and haphazard, though Scott would have argued that they are "spontaneous", hence, "natural" and, thereby, free from the romance of revolution, and that the authority—in the imagination of the farmers—is too powerful to fight against. I strongly criticize this approach of Scott and Certeau as they are limiting political imagination here. They accept the status quo as inevitable, intact, irreplaceable, and unchangeable. This is totally against the spirit of the material dialectic of Marx and Harvey, as I explain in the next section, and it leads us to another important difference between Scott and Johnson. Scott's *infrapolitics* is bereft of any collectivity while Theresa Johnson mobilizes collective politics as a nucleus to reclamation of shared struggle among "the Blacks and the Browns". Against housing segregation in the ghettos, *spatial entitlement* creates new modes of coalition within a shared soundscape, as Johnson argues:

"[t]hey did not have to be in each other's physical presence to enjoy the same music at the same time as it was broadcast to them on radios in living rooms, bedrooms, neighborhood hangouts, and automobiles. These strategies and affinities speak to the power of popular music and of popular culture to envision and create new political possibilities" (p. xiii).

While Certeau, Bhabha, and Scott invest in fragmented politics, Johnson relies on coalitional politics. In today's multicultural, multi ethno-racial condition of spaces across the world, *spatial entitlement* promises a futuristic politics that stands against multiple forms of manipulation. Johnson's *spatial entitlement* "connects local articulations to international movements" (xii). I found "memory" as another important component in "spatial entitlement". To show how memory helps collective organizing, Johnson emphasizes the history of African-Americans in Mexico and the common struggle of Afro-mestizos. *Infrapolitics* here wants to transcend boundaries of one's own community in order to connect other possible coalition building efforts. In this sense, *spatial entitlement* has much more potential for organizing a social movement. In brief, Scott, Certeau, Bhabha, and Johnson focus on the everyday form of resistance, but what makes Johnson stand out is her investment in the politics of space. She goes on to articulate the significance of creating everyday space by mobilizing coalition here and now and projecting spaces towards future as she argues:

Struggles for freedom and equality currently engaged by multiracial social justice movements emerge from the enduring historical relevance of Black-Brown spatial struggles and coalitional politics. It is a past whose legacy has too much power to remain unacknowledged and unexamined, particularly as evidence of what cultural workers and community activists have already accomplished on the road to a just future (xxii).

Johnson's spatial entitlement thus relies on a legacy of struggle across ethno-racial boundaries to usher in a just future.

In a similar vein, Andrea Smith, in her *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (2008) emphasizes reframing issues for coalition building in an attempt to achieve support from unlikely allies. While Johnson shows likely alliances between racial minorities of black and brown folks, Smith emphasizes unlikely alliances in a recuperative move that seeks to work upon the stagnancy of political imagination, a stagnancy that situates Native Americans and Christian evangelicals as unlikely partners in the first place. It is often thought that Native Americans and white evangelicals would likely pursue different goals in their respective and necessarily separate activism. The source of such belief resides in valuing the ease in organizing activists from the homogenous groups centering on a single vector of differences: either race or class, for example. But such ease in organizing may prevent us from achieving larger goals: instead of placing demands within rights-based frames, we must attempt the reconfiguration of structures of power that always dictate terms of rights, pacify dissent here and there, and appropriate forms of resistance that become threatening—all to maintain the status quo of any tyrannical system. Therefore, it becomes a radical move as Smith promotes coalitional politics and not identity politics. Smith shows how both the Native Americans and the Christian Right can foreground pragmatic collaboration. As an example, she explains how Native environmental activists can go beyond their own communities and find allies among white progressive ecojustice activists. Smith rightly marks the danger in such alliances, as white ecojustice activists may appropriate the agenda of the Native environmental activists. But she is also careful to debunk the myth of appropriation, a stalemate reinforcing boundary drawing activism in both communities. She does so by proving examples of an innovative tactic: re-centering Native concerns in the context of the Christian evangelicals. As a case study, Smith shows how the coalition between the Christian Right and American Indians orchestrated a successful campaign across white and non-white communities. As a result, Exxon and Rio Algom were compelled to stop mining in Wisconsin, which pollutes water bodies and forests, sources for fishing and hunting for Native Americans.

Thus, reframing separate activism while taking initiatives for coalition building is what Smith theorizes as the 'politics of articulation'. She believes that mere representation of reality to outsiders and hope for support to arrive may reinforce a hegemonic condition instead of combating it. She thus emphasizes becoming an actor of social change. Based on the observation by Laclau and Mouffe, Smith argues: "our task is not to organize the revolution but to organize ourselves for the revolution; not to make the revolution but to take advantage of it" (xvii). Smith's politics of rearticulation depends on enthusiastic organizing of coalitions. Thus, it is different from Scott's spontaneous or natural form of resistance in the Malaysian farmers. Compared with Smith's project, Scott's *infrapolitics* reinforces hegemony instead of combating it.

“Native people are thought to be hopelessly mired in identity politics, concerned only about cultural particularities (xi)”, Andrea Smith observes. She argues that going beyond the conventional and fossilized notion of allies and adversaries is important for all of us, partly because we can rightly identify ourselves as playthings in the hands of biopolitical power-blocks within the neoliberal capitalistic system of management of differences, and mainly because we want to mobilize emancipatory politics as resistance to hegemonic forces. Transcending the fixed boundaries between allies and adversaries can open up a new vista of micro-politics, as Smith emphatically reminds us: “[i]n doing so, we might open ourselves to unexpected strategic alliances with groups across the political spectrum that furthers our politically progressive goals (xi)”. Basically, Smith wants to reconceptualize identity politics as coalitional politics. Also, she wants to move towards a new politics that goes beyond the left- versus right-wing politics. Using “religious and political configurations of Christian Right and American Indian activism (xi-xii)”, Smith rethinks “the nature of political strategy and alliance building for progressive purposes” (xii).

Thus, understanding the potential of *spatial micropolitics* confirms one thing: *spatial micropolitics* and *macropolitics* are not mutually exclusive but supplementary. Binary juxtaposition of them may create a “systemic vacuum” or intellectual blockade within which any initiation of resistance will be derided as inadequate. To prevent this intellectual blockade, it is important to recognize the radical potential of Johnson’s *spatial entitlement* and Smith’s *politics of articulation* as I have explained above. I will once again state that for Scott, Certeau, and Bhabha, *infrapolitics* is basically disconnected from any vestige of collectivity. For them, attempting to avoid the grip of any manipulative system is the only option left. Transforming the system is not the objective of their project. As a result, their *infrapolitics* ignores not only Johnson’s *memory* and *spatial entitlement* but also Smith’s *politics of articulation*. Scott, Certeau, and Bhabha make *infrapolitics* solely individualistic. In a sense, their micropolitics is one step behind identity politics and two steps behind coalitional politics, vis-à-vis the emerging necessities of a new kind of *infrapolitics* in our time.

III: Understanding Problems of Micropolitics: Toward a Dialectical Praxis

The reform-revolution dyad in academia plays out in the binary formation and parallel juxtaposition of micropolitics and macropolitics. As I want to go beyond the longstanding reform-revolution dyad and argue for dialectic between micropolitics and macropolitics within all acts of resistance, it is important to locate a theoretical configuration of the proposed spatiotemporal dialectic. Also, it is important to respond to the following questions: What is spatiotemporal dialectic? How is it different from Marxian and Hegelian dialectics? How does it help to conceptualize and advance the dialectic between micropolitics and macropolitics?

Among the different developments of dialectical frameworks, I have found David Harvey’s spatiotemporal dialectic much helpful. An understanding of this particular dialectic shows why micropolitics, infrapolitics, and identity politics are inadequate to challenge the intertwined systems of injustice in a crisscrossed web of neoliberal global capitalism, biopower, racism, sexism, ableism, patriarchy, imperialism, and so on. Also, an understanding of the spatiotemporal dialectic advances the dialectic between micropolitical and macropolitical resistance.

First, I will briefly compare the Marxian dialectic with the Hegelian dialectic. Then I will explain why I believe Harvey’s spatiotemporal dialectic can help us understand the problems in

infrapolitics, micropolitics, and identity politics. Marx was careful to explain the difference between the Hegelian dialectic, which is mystifying, idealistic, and metaphysical, and his version of dialectic, which is rational, historicist, and material. In his version of the dialectic, Marx rejects Hegel's metaphysical essence of history. In the 'Afterword' to the second German edition of *Capital*, he replaces Hegel's mystified form of dialectics with his own rational form. The rational dialectic "regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary"⁴.

Marx, therefore, emphasizes the historicist and materialist character of social realities and denies their natural or absolute character. This is very significant, especially because this rational dialectic would reject the uncritical and popular acceptance of the present status quo within the neoliberal capitalist system as permanent, absolute and invincible. Also, it encourages a spatiotemporal understanding of social phenomena. Because of this historicist and materialist aspect of Marx's dialectic, however, I do not agree with David Harvey when Harvey finds an "indifference to space and time" in Marx's rational dialectic (Harvey: 98). The historicist and materialist nature of Marxian dialectic does not have any conflict with the spatiotemporal dimensions Harvey attempts to develop. David Harvey, however, finds a privilege of time over space in Marxist dialectic as he argues:

The insertion of spatial consideration into most forms of social theorizing (dialectical and nondialectical) often turns out to be profoundly disruptive of how theory can be specified and put to work. Social theories' metanarratives (such as those provided by Marx and Weber) usually concentrate on processes of temporal change, keeping spatiality constant (p. 9).

Harvey's allegation against Marx about his indifference to space does not much hold when we consider Marx's critique of 'abstract labor'⁵ in capitalist economy in which the traces of qualitatively different labor from different times and places are wiped out as part of an inevitable process of profit making. In a capitalist economy, labor is made to appear as 'abstract' in the sense that both the laborers' 'concrete' or individual labor has only one value dimension, which is 'use-value', and their relationship to the products they produce are made disremembered or totally forgotten. Without this disremembering, no product can achieve 'exchange-value' or value as a commodity. The hazardous working environment in which garment workers work in Bangladesh or Vietnam, for example, are an integral part of the laborers' 'concrete labor'. But such contextualization of space, and laborers' risky working hours must be disregarded or shunted into oblivion in the profit making conditions capitalists must rely on. Thus, Marx's distinction between 'abstract' and 'concrete labor' evidence his awareness of variables of time and space.

Nevertheless, it is true—as Harvey confesses—that "Marx chose never to write out any principles of dialectics ... the only way to understand his method is by following his practice"(p. 48). Perhaps, this makes Harvey interested to develop spatiotemporal dialectic as more like an improvement upon than a negation of Marx's dialectic though he argues that an "[e]scape from the teleologies of Hegel and Marx can ... most readily be achieved by appeal to the particularities of spatiality (network, levels, connections)" (Harvey, 1996, 109).

In an essay titled "The Dialectics of Spacetime", David Harvey proposed two dimensions of the spatiotemporal dialectic: the first one consists of three definitions of space and time:

absolute, relative and relational. The second dimension, which he borrows from Henry Lefebvre, consists of another three different definitions: experienced, conceptualized, and lived. I will briefly explain each of the definitions of space and time, first within the first dimension:

- (a) Absolute: Absolute space refers to the realm of fixed and measurable place. Absolute time is also fixed, measurable and linear. No two objects or persons can be exactly at the same space at any given time and that is how absolute space and time are “socially exclusionary” (p. 99).
- (b) Relative: Whereas absolute space and time are all about the realm of fixity, stasis, and determination, relative spacetime is “the spaces of *process and motion*” (p. 100) (emphasis original). Space, in the realm of relative, cannot be perceived in isolation from time. Harvey thus refers to this as space-time. At this level, the boundary of absolute space and time conforms to the logic of indeterminacy and relativity. The concept of absolute time and place gets replaced by the idea of relative time and space. Individualist identity becomes relative and multiple identities.
- (c) Relational: In this realm, “space and time are internalized within matter and process” (p. 101). Space and time, in this realm, are not only simply correlational or simultaneous but also integrated and fused. Harvey wants to indicate this difference when he writes of relative “space-time” and relational “spacetime” differently, with different spelling.

To focus on the second dimension, I will both explain it and examine micropolitics against the spatiotemporal dialectic developed by Harvey and Lefebvre.

It is helpful to understand the spatial construction of our everyday realities as explained by Lefebvre in his book titled *The Production of Space* (1991). It is useful to outline Lefebvre’s phenomenological accession to the three dimensions of the production of space with the concepts of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived:

- I. Perceived space: space has a perceivable aspect that can be grasped by the senses. This perception constitutes an integral component of every social practice. It comprises everything that presents itself to the senses; not only seeing but hearing, smelling, touching, tasting. This sensuously perceptible aspect of space directly relates to the materiality of the “elements” that constitute “space.”
- II. Conceived space: space cannot be perceived as such without having been conceived in thought previously. Bringing together the elements to form a “whole”, that is, Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space presumes an act of thought that is linked to the production of knowledge.
- III. Lived space: the third dimension of the production of space is the lived experience of space. This dimension denotes the world as it is experienced by human beings in the practice of their everyday life.

Interestingly, both Certeau’s *tactic* and Scott’s *infrapolitics* emerge from their attempt at theorizing everyday life. But I argue that both Certeau and Scott could have benefitted from Lefebvre’s understanding of everyday life and social realities.

Lefebvrian lived space maintains a dialectic between the realms of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived. This dialectic is, in fact, one of the continual making and remaking of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived. Lived space or Lefebvrian social realities must be

understood as such as individuals influence and get influenced by historical and material forces—not only by structures of power such as capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, and so forth., but also by vectors of differences: race, class, sex, gender, ability, and so on. In contrast to Lefebvrian everyday realities, what Certeau and Scott provide as lived realities appear as static and exclusionary. They are static because Lefebvrian perceived space and conceived space in them are taken as non-susceptible to changes: the farmers and the poor would never conceive relative identities, and, thereby, acts of resistance beyond their secluded practices of concealed protests. Within the projects of Certeau and Scott, it is also impossible to recognize multiple roles of domination and subordination individuals carry on. They instead foreground the binary configurations of the powerful and the powerless but leave out what kind of interactions may happen within and across the marginalized. Hence, Colin Barker critiques Scott's idea of a 'hidden transcript' among the powerless as Barker argues, "Scott, in bending the theoretical stick against theories of the 'dominant ideology', risks treating the world of the hidden transcript as marked by simple unity and harmonious amity among the oppressed (17)."

The paper, at this point, undertakes a double-move: a theoretical exposure of the inefficacy of individualistic *infrapolitics*, and an attempt to spatialize *infrapolitics* to get it integrated into an emerging mode of macro- narrative as exemplified in the function of WikiLeaks and some other social movements grounded in collective *infrapolitics*.

First, I would like to show how *infrapolitics*—however self-celebratory it is—tends to be merely hurling a few stones—verbal or otherwise—of protest, gestures not even necessarily meant to elicit a direct response, over the thick wall said to separate the populace from the politicians. The proponents of such gestures seem to believe that the postmodern infatuation with mere symbolism of performance will suffice. But the politically empty nature of *infrapolitics* can be shown using the insights of the theory of space by Lefebvre. It can be argued that neither Scott's *infrapolitics* nor Certeau's *tactic* is grounded in a proper understanding of the elements of "order" and "chaos" in the spatial. What Certeau considers "chaotic" or revolutionary in *tactic* is, in fact, a mere whimsical continuation, an extension or a passive following of the same order of the spatial. To substantiate the argument, let us remind ourselves of Certeau's *tactic* again. To begin with, Certeau argues that

tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time--to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc. (p. 38)

In this definition, the transformation of a strategic arrangement into a "favorable situation" is no transformation at all, as it is too much dependent on two things: an uncertain wait for a fissure in the spatial configuration of a system and the innovative use of the imagination by an individual who would be applying the *tactic*. Furthermore, a successful application of the *tactic* may offer a temporary escape route, or a short-term relief, but one cannot expect any qualitative change in the system against which one is set to fight in the first place. The denial of this change emerges from the separation of the individual from the social construction of space and also from an inadequate understanding of the spatial construction of society.

The second allegation against *tactic* can be perceived from Massey's discussion of "chaos", and "order" in the spatial. Massey argues that

The spatial form was socially ‘planned’, in itself directly socially caused, that way. But there is also an element of ‘chaos’ which is intrinsic to the spatial. For although the location of each (or a set) of a number of phenomena may be directly caused (we know why X is here and Y is there), the spatial positioning of one in relation to the other (X’s location in relation to Y) may not be directly caused [...]. Thus, the chaos of the spatial results from dire happenstances juxtapositions, the accidental separations, the often paradoxical nature of the spatial arrangement that result from the operation of all these causalities (Massey: 303).

The operation of causalities is the process which authorities use to manufacture consent to maintain and reinforce Gramscian hegemony, a pervasive influence of structures of power within which individuals must situate themselves. While Gramsci wants individuals to form counter-power or counter-hegemony, Certeau’s *tactic* attempts to adjust itself to instead of questioning this operation of causalities or hegemony. Overall, Certeau’s *tactic* does not show any interest in the epistemology of the “chaos” (Massey), an integral constituent of hegemony which seeks to unsettle the *remainder of the hegemony*. Chaos is that potential factor of insurgency which may expose the tyrannical nature of the overpowering order, reasons, or causalities at work in an existing hegemonic formation. The function of the chaos, an exposure of the tyranny of the hegemonic logics and of the order, of the hegemonic logics (?) themselves can be conceptualized within Lefebvrian understanding of social realities, within constant making and remaking of the perceived, the conceived and the lived, as explained above. Therefore, we might conclude that the spatializing of *tactic* implies a radical reconceptualization of Certeau’s project of resistance along the line of counter-hegemonic struggles.

To elucidate the *spatialization of infrapolitics*, I would like to argue that WikiLeaks has created windows for the *surplus of the lived space* (Lefebvre) to “see” and develop a concrete understanding of the *remainder of the hegemony*, the constant renewal of the consent of the people, on which the appropriating systems, i.e., the state, the society, and so forth heavily rely.

The following diagram helps to clarify the argument:

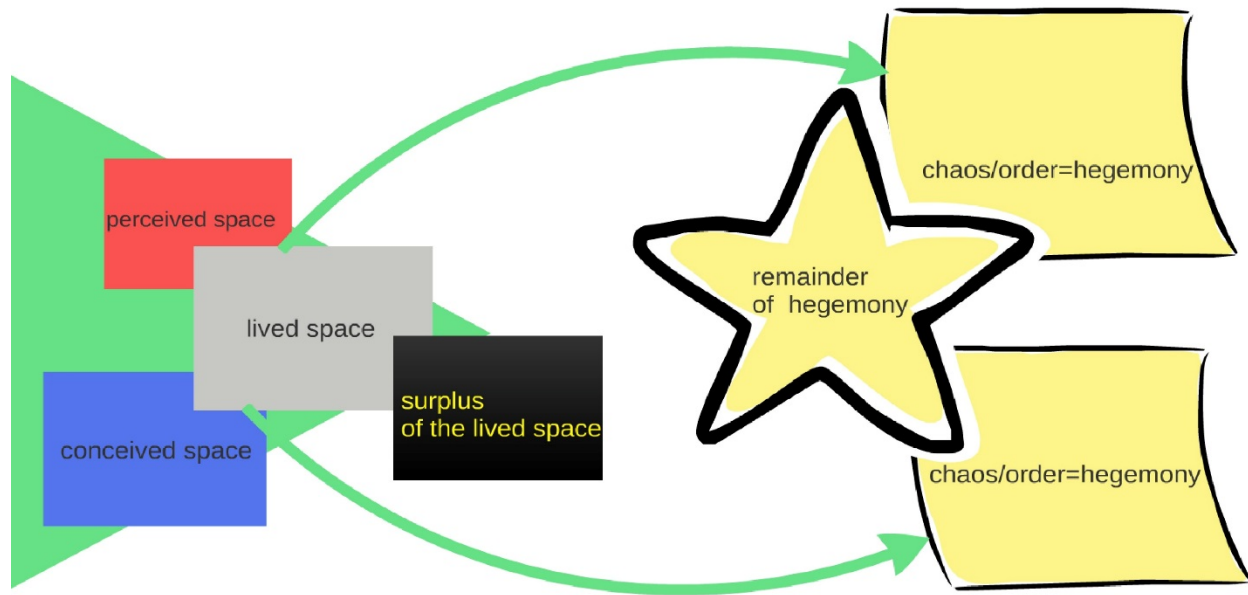


Figure 1.1: The Production of Space

The concept *surplus of the lived space* is developed by Lefebvre to refer to the realm of the inexpressible, the remainder, and the which cannot be exhausted by theoretical analysis. The *surplus* has a particular spatiotemporal relationship with the dialectic of the perceived-conceived-lived space, but it is easier to identify it as a temporal sequence, a result of reflection on the dialectic,+ as if the *surplus* comes after reflection. But the *surplus* is a constant or interactive aspect of the triad. Lefebvre argues that the *surplus* can be perceived by all but can only be communicated in and through artistic expressions. This *surplus* has subversive potential, but it often gets appropriated by the hegemony. In other words, this *surplus* is a perpetual prey to the renewal of the hegemony. As Gramsci explain in his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1917), hegemony is a pervasive ideological domination of the powerful class, domination not by force but by consent. The objective of hegemony is producing those versions of reality that people eventually accept as “common sense”, as “the general sense, feeling or judgment of mankind, more precisely, as the cluster of beliefs felt to be true by most people (Salamini: 83).”

In other words, the *surplus* is made victim to the constant attempts on the part of the hegemonic forces to renew, energize, and reinforce the manufacturing of consent. The hegemonic forces (mis)guide the *surplus* in the sense that they make sure that the *surplus* does not become threatening for, let alone antagonistic or hostile to them. In order to (mis)guide or misappropriate the *surplus*, the hegemonic forces are in a constant manufacturing of consent to the authoritative forces in the society. This particular aspect of hegemony, which attempts to achieve reproduction of renewal of consent, is what I like to call *remainder of the hegemony*.

WikiLeaks opens windows for all to *see* concretely the (mis)guidance of the *surplus* by hegemony. “They know it but they are doing it anyway” becomes undeniable to even to the hegemonic forces themselves (Žižek: 30). This new and concrete knowing destabilizes the

causalities or order within a tyrannical system. In other words, it inspires chaos or insurgency by delegitimizing consent within the hegemonic system. It may also be used for coalition building across vectors of differences: race, class, sex, gender, ability, and so on. Thus, it may lead to counter-hegemonic struggle or activism in an attempt to move from *the war of position* towards *the war of maneuver*, the war of position and the war of maneuvering being Gramscian *phases* on a continuum in which the first phase or *the war of position* refers to “a prolonged struggle for the adherence of the general population and the achievement of political power, generally without insurrection of armed struggle (Omi and Winant: 143)”. Coalition building within and across multiple vectors of difference should occur within the war of position. But this phase is not the end point since it would gradually usher in the war of maneuver, “ historical stage where everything is condensed into one front in one strategic moment of struggle for the purpose of opening a single victorious breach in the enemy’s defense (Ling : 12).” It is helpful to notice that *the war of position* is a struggle across different fronts in the society so that these different fronts can gradually get organized as one front and execute *the war of maneuver*, the violent overthrow of the tyrannical system in order to construct a just one.

WikiLeaks, as Julian Assange says, cannot make the revolution for people; it can inspire one. So, the function of WikiLeaks can be shown in the following diagram:

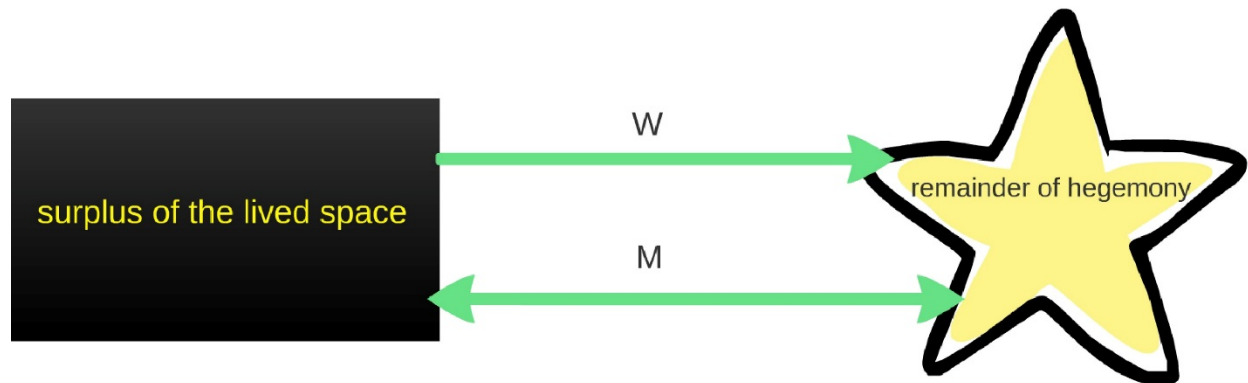


Figure 1.2 (a): The Function of WikiLeaks

The “W” stands for WikiLeaks and the upper arrow shows a one way direction from the “surplus of lived space” towards the “remainder of the hegemony”, meaning the lived space’s accommodation of a concrete understanding given by the latter. The letter “M” above the second arrow means social movement while the arrow itself indicates a two way process indicating that mere understanding will not be enough; people should initiate counter-hegemonic struggles. The world requires the involvement of the masses and spatial *infrapolitics* beautifully embraces this spirit of involvement. Assange’s interpretation of the function of WikiLeaks reflects this theoretical frame. He believes that WikiLeaks unveils the pretentious claims of the liberal ideologues by creating a situation which they are unable to deny (Brevini et.al: 66). This is what I would like to call the *movement* of the surplus of the lived space towards the *remainder of the hegemony*.

Badiou marks the uprisings in the 21st century as riots: immediate, latent, and historical. Immediate riot is immediate unrest protesting violence of the state. It is often the preliminary form of historical riot. It is participated in by a segment of the population. It is spearheaded by youth, often in clashes with the police. Immediate riot is full of tactical innovations: use of Facebook, Twitter, and other technologies for communication helps in forming quick assemblies.

Also, fire, drums, leaflets, temporary retreat through backstreets, slogans, the ringing of bells makes the assembly gradually bigger and lively. Despite use of innovative tactics, immediate riots have “inadequacies in discipline, strategic tenacity and moderation, when required, [...] (Badiou: 22-23).” The inadequate strategy is perceived when the immediate riot hardly gets extended beyond the original site of assembly. Like a blind force, it smashes things on its way and around it but cannot go beyond the level of weak localization. It fails to get people at different intersections involved. It fails to articulate any “universalizable intention” (Badiou: 23) beyond immediate rage and dissent. With strategic moderation, however, an immediate riot can pave the way for a historical riot.

Latent riots manifest quasi-riotous features: they tend to go beyond distinctive group belonging. One example of this is proxy strikes in which wage-earners go on strike, though they do not stop working. In fact, it is almost impossible for workers to stop work and go unpaid. So, people who do not work in that given factory or other establishment come up with an assembly, occupation, or strike with the agreement of the actual workers. What makes this riot unique is “a shared localization” (Badiou: 30), unlike the limited localization of the immediate riot.

A historical riot is “the transformation of an immediate riot” (Badiou: 33). Unlike the immediate riot, it does not extend by imitation but by qualitative extension. One sign of this extension is participation of people from all sectors: students, workers, intellectuals, family members, women, employees, civil servants, and even some police officers and soldiers, among others. Badiou argues: “a riot becomes historical when its localization ceases to be limited, but grounds in the occupied space the promise of a new temporality; when its composition stops being uniform, but gradually outlines a unified representation in mosaic forms of all the people; when, finally, the negative growling of pure rebellion is succeeded by the assertion of a shared demand, whose satisfaction confers an initial meaning of the word ‘victory’ (Badiou: 35).”

For Badiou, only the historical riot can end an intervallic period—a time when revolutionary ideas remain dormant—and pave the way for qualitatively different kind of organized politics. Badiou believes that Western World has not seen a historical riot in four decades. Therefore, the intervallic period of neoliberal capitalist control, the period from the 1980s to today, continues.

I would argue that Badiou’s historical riot occur within Harvey’s dialectical tension between absolute space, relative space and the relational space. Immediate riot occurs in Harvey’s absolute space:

“[...] an immediate riot is located in the territory of those who take part in it. [...] An immediate riot, stagnating in its own social space, is not a powerful subjective trajectory. [...] That is not to say that an immediate riot stops at one particular site. [...] [a]n immediate riot spreads not by displacement, but by imitation (Badiou, 23-24).

Spreading of immediate riot towards other cities, however, does not contribute to “qualitative extension” (Badiou: 34) which is required to bring forth the historical riot. Latent riot is also limited in demanding qualitative changes. Consequentially, both latent and immediate riot do not go beyond Harvey’s absolute and the relative spaces whereas historical riot can occur only within the dialectical tension between the absolute, the relative, and the relational. The entire process can be shown in a flow chart (see appendix). It is obvious that Badiou would accept the Marxian dialectic. Badiou analyses contemporary uprisings in historicist and materialist terms. He even considers these uprising as a repetition of history with a demand for more qualitative changes.

For him, the global popular rising “naturally resembles the first working class insurrections of the nineteenth century” (Badiou: 5). However, I believe that the dialectic of social movements for Badiou, as explained above, is more like the dialectic of Harvey than of Marx.

Micropolitics is *individualistic* or hyper-personalized. As individualistic, it remains trapped within the level of personal anguish of the “lived space” (Lefebvre). Though it is often argued that this personal anguish has a subversive potential, that subversive potential—within the scope of micropolitics at least—often gets appropriated by the “remainder of hegemony”. Scott and Certeau would argue for the *collective* dimension of micropolitics, offering their finding that many individuals together build a culture of resistance against systemic manipulation. For Scott, the poor peasants in Malaysia, for Chatterjee⁶, the poor slum dwellers in Kolkata, and for Certeau, the consumers as activists in the metropolis, for example, offer a collective insurrection against the manipulative systems of power: the landlords, the nation-state agencies, and the corporate capitalist forces. However, this micropolitical collective at best remains “mechanistically” collective. By mechanistically collective, I refer to Scott’s peasants, for example, who practice subterranean, collectively unconscious, and *decidedly* concealed practices of insurrection—which are identified and subsequently theorized as “hidden transcript” by James C. Scott. I have concerns regarding this “collective form of micropolitics as resistance” as it is routinely endorsed by the proponents and the followers of micropolitics. First, it remains within a kind of horizontal affinity-building effort, not ambitious enough to cross boundaries of class, group, caste, and other intersectional vectors. Consequentially, it replicates the logic and danger of the division of labor embedded in the capitalist mode of production.

But the very claims of going beyond “the realm of the personal” and “becoming collective” needs to be examined to understand the very nature and scope of the collective solidarity. To begin with, the collective in micropolitics is devoid of any organic orchestration of agency, as this sort of collective does not emerge or evolve from any urge to move towards the *dance of dialectic*⁷. I will explain the *dance of the dialectic* below, but first, I will explain *diving* and *dissent*.

It is helpful to recognize different modes of resistance within Harvey’s understanding of the dialectic between absolute space, relative space, and relational space. With the neoliberal capitalistic management of differences, individuals as “vulnerable constructs of biopower” are encouraged to compromise with all forms of systemic manipulation. This is the only mode of survival and progress offered by neoliberal capitalistic forces. We can call it “diving” into the system. Bhabha’s *mimicry* and *hybridity*, for example, are ways of making compromise through which diasporic communities in the metropolis get integrated with the manipulative system. No collective efforts are necessary. Individuals can attempt this “diving” and come out as successful.

The micropolitical collective or organizing, unless spatialized, remains at the level of “dissent” towards systemic manipulation but hesitant and incapable of radically challenging, attacking, and transforming the system itself. The urge to *transform* as opposed to the urge to *survive through compromise* can be felt only with an understanding of the *dance of the dialectic* which in turn is based on the understanding of the dialectic between *absolute space, relative space and relational space*. I will explain the dance of the dialectic at this point.

At the absolute level, we tend to think ‘present’ disconnected from past and future. Worse, we prefer to be ignorant of other aspects of space and time: the relative and the relational. But we need to recognize the dialectic between all three dimensions of space and time. Their relations are not hierarchical but they are in perpetual overlapping or in a constant tension. Spatial micropolitics (as in Johnson and Smith) have the potential to usher in the spatiotemporal

dialectic in our political imagination. Fragmented and fetishized micropolitics, however, prefers to remain in the absolute (as in Scott and Certeau) and the relative (as in Bhabha) only. A dance of the dialectic in this context would mean mobilizing resistance along the dimensions of the spatiotemporal dialectic towards revolution. In the context of our examples, it would mean mobilizing ‘spatial micropolitics’ towards Badiou’s ‘historical riot’.

The figure below gives an overview of my description of micropolitics herein.

Scott and Certeau	Foucault and Deleuze	Bhabha
Vicarious flight from Absolute to Relational	Relational can be reconfigured in the absolute	Working on the relative will reconfigure The relational.
Dissent	Dissent as Dance	Dive
Individualistic	Individualistic	Individualistic
Collectivity is mechanistic	Collectivity is linear	Collectivity is not necessarily required

Figure 1.2 (b): An Overview of Micropolitics As Described Herein

I consider all micropolitics charted above inadequate in the sense that they are indifferent to the spatiotemporal dialectic. Scott and Certeau decidedly limit their politics within the absolute. If their infrapolitics or tactics have any sense of collectivity, it is taken as natural as alliance of the oppressed which is more of a byproduct or symptom of the systemic oppression. It is more escapist and non-resisting than dissenting or confrontational. Bhabha’s mimicry and sly civility, in contrast, are simply adaptive. They consider merging with the manipulative power structures as a mode of avoiding the manipulation itself.

Situating macropolitics and micropolitics in a binary configuration as Deleuze and Guattari do is problematic as it is argued, “politics is simultaneously macropolitics and micropolitics (1987: 213).” But, while they emphasize simultaneity, Harvey and Lefebvre see a dialectic between the micropolitical and the macropolitical.

Deleuze reads dialectic as synthesis of contradictions or differences. To him, dialectic attempts to establish higher unity among diverse forces in social realities. Deleuze hence says, “What I detested more than anything else was Hegelianism and the Dialectic (Deleuze: 112). It does not want to synthesize anything but emphasizes constant becoming or unbecoming, which is also objective of their project. Deleuze considers desire as free-floating will power seeking to establish fragmented and random connection with material realities. Spatiotemporal dialectic recognizes this fragmented and random connectivity, but only in its absolute and relative aspects, and in the relational aspect the dynamic between the absolute, the relative, and the

relational becomes obvious. So, the spatiotemporal dialectic, with all of its integral aspects, reveals a constant interplay between stasis and dynamism.

Foucault and Deleuze imagine “dive” as “dance”. Deleuze emphasizes the molecular operation of desire and will-power as revolutionary as he says: “no revolution ever takes place without the investment of desire (Holland: 103).” Thus he finds the micro or the molecular as subversive. He also subordinates the macro or the molar to the micro or the molecular. Foucault, on the other hand, promotes the technology of the self as revolutionary: “Foucault saw individuals as self-determining agents capable of challenging and resisting the structure of domination (Besley: 21)”. Thus Deleuze and Foucault conceptualize counter-power and desire in the realms of the absolute and relative. They carry a kind of phobia about the relational as it would mean stasis and fascism for them. Hence neither Foucault nor Deleuze and Guattari can go beyond the project of personal growth and development and present any consistent politics of the social: “whereas Foucault failed to account for the legitimacy of radical politics, Deleuze and Guattari have no theory of why revolutionary desire is preferable over fascist desire (Best and Kellner:108).” Overall, it can be argued: micropolitics as proposed by Scott, Certeau, Bhabha, Foucault, and Deleuze builds on the absolute and relative spaces but carefully avoids relational space.

Notes

1. See Alison Kafer. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013:29.
2. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000).
3. See Sarah Lamble. "Queer Investments in Punitiveness". *Queer Necropolitics*. Edited by Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman and Silvia Posocco. New York: Routledge, 2014.
4. The quote in the question has been taken from the volume 1 of *Capital* by Karl Marx. See <https://www.marxists.org/subject/dialectics/marx-engels/capital-afterward.htm>
5. See Moishe Postone. *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 152.
6. See Partha Chatterjee. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia UP, 2004).
7. See Bertell Ollman. *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

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THE LIBERAL AS AN ENEMY OF QUEER JUSTICE

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Abstract

Liberalism as a historical mode of the political is the context in which the movement and ensuing struggle for queer justice emerged in most Western countries. The terminology, practices, tendencies, beliefs, ethics, laws, and patterns of political and social life which have been determined by this mode of the political, it is argued, are inimical to queer justice and render its achievement impossible. Liberalism as a mode of the political is approached from below, from knowledge gained in practical experience in queer groups which considered themselves revolutionary at least to some degree, and from the effects on such groups and on the lives of queer persons of liberal tropes and processes. The liberal mode of justice is contrasted to the revolutionary mode across five elements of the liberal idiom of gay and lesbian justice which have found their way into the thought and nomenclature of much of the gay leadership of the U.S., and even into queer organizations that purport to be radical or revolutionary. These idiomatic elements are: the liberal-religious idea of nonviolence as a means to justice; the idea that gay and lesbian persons have made great progress since 1969; the idea that academic liberalism in its various forms serves queer justice; the discourse of 'hate'; and the discourse of rights. In this examination, elements of a specifically queer revolutionism are brought forth. The essay argues that queer persons must take up the revolutionary mode of justice as our political template, and it adopts a revolutionary style of conveyance of ideas which repudiates, in its rhetorical character and out of necessity, the disastrously false civility and false objectivity of liberal discourse, adopting the revolutionarily appropriate character of a manifesto.

It is difficult to write about queer justice because it is difficult to know it. We are so far from it now, that we are only able to scent it, as if were borne by the wind in rare moments. So much of what is said to be queer justice does not feel like the rightness we feel in one of those rare moments, but rather like a nightmare of denial, fear, and desperation. I believe that no queer person believes in his or her heart that the liberal “program” for queer justice is a good one, but that fear, ignorance of alternatives, hopelessness, and attrition have led queer persons to a falsely hopeful acceptance of its sad so-called achievements. I aim to show in this essay why the program and goals of gay and lesbian, or queer justice¹ as these are articulated and acted out by persons in liberal states are shameful and sad programs which kowtow to ideas and practices inimical to queer justice, freedom, well-being, and life. This work, though informed by years of theory and academic involvement, comes primarily out of much experience working within queer organizations in New York, and is primarily written for those who will form and constitute queer organizations in the future. Thus, it is an exercise in queer praxis. Though the concept of revolution which I continue to develop herein and elsewhere could be considered significantly leftist and Marxist, the essay takes as prerequisite a critique the left presented elsewhere, in an essay that can be considered a concomitance to this critique of liberalism,² and ultimately is revolutionary on queer terms and no other.

This essay skirts the edges of academic writing, and compared to it, will seem more tendentious, more like invective. The reason is that the models of disinterestedness and deconstruction in liberal academic research and writing are, while valuable in certain ways, failing queer justice, and I do not believe that these methods can be followed or trusted any longer. The contention between liberal thought and models and proto-revolutionary organizations manifests itself in such problems as the question of whether or not to organize around a mission statement or a manifesto, which is parallel to the question of whether to be

reformist or revolutionary. Since I consider reformism bankrupt for queer lives, and since I aim to speak to those who might form or carry out the work of revolution, let this essay be a manifesto.

Liberals³ have traditionally been the enablers of and doormats for agendas of abuse of all manner and variety. None of these agendas could have gained a foothold with revolutionaries⁴, but when liberals have power, reactionary⁵ attempts are guaranteed success. Thus, the main function of the liberal is to shield and enable the carrying out of agendas of injustice. The real and operative agendas for queers under liberalism have as their either intended or unintended end annihilation, and nothing less. Liberals serve as the security forces and buffers for these agendas, virtually guaranteeing the ultimate success of their attempts.⁶ Only revolutionaries have the power to demolish these agendas, and only revolutionaries have both successfully and fundamentally changed the political landscape in the direction of justice. Once this has been done, liberals, who are by nature reformist and thus counterrevolutionary, then carry out the long process of negotiation with each other, during which process queer persons gain a little ground here, lose a little there, gain a lot here, and lose a lot there. Since liberals only at best pay lip service to the legitimacy of revolutionary and radical attempts at justice, but never take revolutionary or radical action, they are permanently limited in what they can change, in what they can achieve, establish, guarantee, and prevent, even as their negotiation with the enemies of queer persons only became a possibility because of the work of revolutionaries, such as those involved in such modern democratic movements as the women's movement and the gay and lesbian justice movement, the work of those who went beyond civil disobedience in action and beyond systemic liberal-theoretical confines.

'Nonviolence' as a Means Directive

The foremost deception of liberalism,⁷ purveyed in hypocrisy and cowardice, and one of the greatest impediments to real justice for queer persons, is the liberal's sometimes inexpress, sometimes express stance against intrastate violence as a political means. While pacifism exists across the spectrum of political progressivism, from liberalism through radicalism, liberals are disingenuous and lacking in integrity with regard to pacifism, while revolutionaries, as the actors of radical thought, view it in a more realistic way, in a way that demonstrates an actual belief in the real possibility of peace. Although some persons who identify as pacifist also identify as revolutionary, an absolutist commitment to pacifism *as a means* is not revolutionary, but rather a muddleheadedness and historical unawareness that is endemic to liberalism. As such it is the theoretical component of liberal nonviolence sometimes confusedly imputed to revolutionism by some of those who appear in revolutionary queer organizations. The action component of this religion-infused outgrowth of economic liberalism known as political liberalism is "civil disobedience", and together religion (that is, raising the Judaic cults to protected and hegemonic status in the realm of the mystical and in the attack on reason, science, and justice) and nonviolent resistance form, respectively, the theoretic and action-based poles of liberalism, thus keeping its thought base entwined with the mystical and irrational while keeping its action toward justice null and void. An example is found in the liberal idea of preacher politics wherewith Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated an illusory progress which led for African-Americans a doomed, and now neutralized Civil Rights Movement consisting of seemingly effective, but ultimately ineffective acts of civil disobedience within a liberal system, acts which led merely to a more comfortable imprisonment - to adjustments in the manner of abuse.

The rejection of revolution itself is bound up in this lack of integrity when it comes to pacifism, for many liberals reject revolutionary measures out of hand. This rejection of revolution often presents itself in the form of a "commitment to nonviolence". Never mind that the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States and other ultrarightist organizations either within the government or in bed with it, promote the peace movement because they are afraid of those seeking justice might actually achieve it.⁸ Even though revolutionary action is rarely violent action on the part of revolutionaries, but is rather in part everyday actions of refusal and education along with radical means that may or may not employ violence, the kneejerk equation of revolution with intrastate violence nullifies thinking and closes it out of

consideration in the mind of the liberal. This equation of revolutionary action with violent action is rendered disingenuous moreover, by two aspects of liberalism. The first is the fact, already mentioned, that liberalism was not possible historically without revolutionary violence. Stonewall, the cornerstone of the “gay rights movement” for the liberal gay establishment, was a thoroughly violent rebellion, and talk of it by liberal-conservative⁹ gays and lesbians (that is, those who fall for the false political spectrum manufactured by liberal state media) over drinks or coffee or at parties and other such social events inevitably retells the violent stories with relish and pride. The second fact is that those whom liberals support, the members of the liberal establishment and their parties and cronies and ideologues, are rapaciously violent warmongers. Here, the problem may be said to be one of integrity, or the lack of correspondence between one's professed values and one's actions, and that lack of integrity has very real manifestations in death tolls. For example, the war on Iraq and Afghanistan, which has claimed at this writing, and in a very conservative death toll estimation, 500,000 lives. One must ask whether the legitimization of such establishment warmongers and mass murders through negotiation, request, voting, and involvement in their fraudulent, manufactured, and mendacious debates in any way compatible with a stance of nonviolence?

One has also witnessed the disgusting spectacle of armchair mass murder by those in the United States who, in with varying degrees of awareness, identify with liberal state ideology, but who, unable to bring themselves to revolutionary action, and unable even to ally themselves with an actually progressive liberal party such as the Green Party for “strategic” reasons, identify with the more reactionary Democratic Party, which is directly responsible for the murder of 1,000,000 persons in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years¹⁰, and even more than this in Vietnam from 1958-1975¹¹, the plundering of the public treasury for corporate welfare handouts to those benefitting from this mass murder, the legitimization and waging of sectarian wars between the Judaic cults (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), and for the public and the private abuse, denigration, second-class citizenship, and murder of queer persons. The liberal sat in cowardly comfort and delusion, reading *The New York Times* and listening to *National Public Radio* as these and other reactionary media crafted a gigantic fraud in the form of a shockingly transparent exculpation of the Democratic Party and a legitimization of the most outrageous acts of abuse and murder, even as the self-identified liberal often (read: counterrevolutionary) pays lip service to “non-violence”.¹²

To make worse the murder and abuse committed by liberal state citizens from their armchairs, there is the moral high ground that liberals often attempt to take against revolutionaries when it comes to violence, in spite of the fact that it is only revolutionaries who are willing to take the real steps that are necessary to arrest violence immediately, rather than being dragged in the back door of violent situations by acquiescence, cowardice, and ignorance. By the time progressive liberals finish negotiating with conservative liberals and begging for “a place at the table”, a million people are dead, queers have gone from *de facto* to *de jure* second-class citizenship, and suicide rates for gay and lesbian youth are more than twice those of heterosexual youth, by a conservative estimate.¹³ Revolutionaries see what is coming and threaten murderers and abusers at the outset with immediate and severe consequences if they attempt to kill or abuse anyone, directly or indirectly, and revolutionaries back these threats up. The manufactured hysteria of the popular mind over revolutionism and the ownership of the narrative of revolution by counterrevolutionaries allows for a situation in which counterrevolutionaries preposterously attempt to take the moral high ground when it comes to an accounting of deaths from violence. For example, the false and incoherent concept of “terrorism”, which is, in our current historical circumstances, really warfare waged by those without the means to wage war in the style of nation-states, is shoved into the spotlight, while the very significantly more extensive slaughter committed under the legitimized liberal state method of international war, whether declared or undeclared, is supported by liberals either expressly, tacitly, or by equivocation. This is not to mention that hysteria about revolution causes critics of revolution to immediately conclude that creating severe, immediate, and deleterious consequences for those who abuse and denigrate queer persons necessarily means creating *violent* consequences. While liberals negotiated for thirty years for “shifts in spending priorities” in California so that poor persons could have easily accessible free meals, the freedom fighters of the Symbionese Liberation Army, which

began and ended in a lesbian love affair, accomplished this *in forty-eight hours* by forcing the hand of Randolph Hearst, with no one killed. The liberal now distances herself or himself from violence and disassociates from freedom fighters at the drop of a hat if violence is even mentioned or sensed. Exasperation with the combination of monumental historical ignorance and arrogance which this reaction demonstrates led Michel Foucault, whose work is the foundation on which queer theory is built, to say that the liberal establishment, in its normal everyday functioning through its institutions, is violence itself.¹⁴ Similarly, Naomi Jaffe of the Weather Underground described violence as being comfortable in the suburbs while outrageous crimes were being committed against the oppressed.¹⁵

The Liberal Idea of Progress Toward Gay Justice

A second way in which liberals stand in the way of queer justice is in their purveyance of the false idea that queer persons have made real progress in society since the Stonewall Rebellion (which was, again, a thoroughly violent rebellion). The disappearance of the gay movement and the hijacking of the queer political voice by conservative organizations such as Human Rights Campaign Fund and conservative individuals such as former New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and writer Andrew Sullivan, and by all sorts of “faith-based” political charlatans hiding their cowardice behind the power of churches, is held up by liberals as legitimate political representation. These traitorous representatives of queer persons uphold the legitimacy of the liberal establishment in many ways, but they themselves are illegitimate because they have been appointed by the enemy. One of the ways in which they serve as functionaries and buttresses of establishment frauds is in their attempt to erase historical knowledge from the minds of their “constituency”. Forty years ago, the gay movement in the U.S. and Britain was against marriage and it was considered an abusive and retrogressive institution, standing as it did and does as the pillar and imprimatur of the anti-gay establishment. The gay movement had power then, and all of the social traditions and practices that falsely propped up heteronormativity were actually called into question by large numbers of *straight* people. Revolutionary queer justice connects marriage and family, thoroughly rejecting both as pillars of the current political regime of heterosexuality.¹⁶ Aside from the general fact that most gay and lesbian persons who support liberal agendas for queer justice do so because they are ignorant of revolutionary ones, there is the fact that the liberal regime’s Family Values Campaign was, in its inception, intentions, and effects, thoroughly anti-gay. Success for queer persons in a liberal mode is then really a process of adjusting well to the anti-gay social agendas of our enemies and of, in a doomed attempt which comes out of ignorance and fear, adopting their manufactured values. Is there anything today that is more ridiculous to behold than the “family values” queer person?

There is also, within this liberal purveyance of the idea of progress, the idea that homosexuality is more often and more openly spoken about now than it was forty years ago, that this is *per se* a good thing, and further that this increased presence of homosexuality in the collective consciousness will surely lead to some kind of vaguely defined betterment of queer lives. The frequency with which one encounters an idea or a person, though, is not an indicator of the value or respect that one attaches to that idea or person.¹⁷ The knowledge of this is expressed in the idea of “toleration” within the classical liberal tradition, which recommends laws as necessary to protect persons in a limited way from abuse, without ever having to address culturally manufactured directives to and channels for emotions and feelings, which can only be changed by revolutionary means. Reformists love law, and liberals as a variety of reformist love the law and all derivations therefrom, such as rights movements. But the law is only a means to justice, and reformists continually confuse legal systems with justice. When a legal system is not serving to create justice for queer persons, or equality for any persons, and has in fact become our enemy, it should also be dispensed with *immediately*. Debates about the equality of gay and lesbian citizens are illegitimate and their appearance in a polity is the sign that the polity is malignant for queer lives. When a legal framework is built with its cornerstones in misogyny and heterosexism, no amount of reform will ever make it legitimate. There can never be any redemption for liberal legal systems of justice. Without the courage, love, anger, historical knowledge and respect which revolutionaries carry in their minds and hearts, queer persons, as victims of the liberal gay “leadership” of liberal societies are in

the absurd, sad, denigrated situation which these “leaders” have put us in, that of negotiating for our lives and equality as if this were some “good” involved in a barter, and as if queer equality were negotiable in any sense or in any circumstances, as if it were a market item or a legitimate question for political debate, akin to the question of whether or not to build a dam on a particular river, to build a playground on the east corner or the west corner. In fact, heterosexuals have no real rights to debate, question, comment on, or have opinions on queer lives. In our current historical milieu, heterosexuals have one right and one right only: to take up arms in the struggle for queer justice and to report for duty once they have learned how to use these arms. Any other “rights” heterosexuals might properly have would be determined by revolutionaries, both queer and queer identified (and, incidentally, what heterosexual in his or her right mind would not now identify as queer?) The legitimization of the questioning of queer lives exists because of confused liberal counterrevolutionism, and is legitimized by liberals with vague and inaccurate yet widespread ideas that queers have made real progress in Western “democracies” since 1969.

Because liberals rest their beliefs on a long and established modern tradition that includes eminent thinkers such as John Locke and John Rawls, one is tempted to assume that that this would itself ensure that the continuation of the liberal tradition is inevitable, or, more accurately, that its demise must be gradual. But this idea itself is part of the liberal delusion, which is a delusion with regard to historical fact and with regard to human psychology and political and social behavior, not to mention a lack of ability to see such figures as Locke and Rawls as, in part, translators of market-induced ideas. Besides the fact that revolutionaries believe in the necessity of the effectuation of *rapid* change, one can also point to the fact that people are influenced into changing their sociopolitical beliefs in a shockingly short amount of time, even with regard to contestations between liberals, and this influence is, in the main, a result of the propagandization of the people by media which support the liberal state.¹⁸ Most of the gay media in the U.S. are, for example, supporters of and propagandists for the Democratic Party.¹⁹ As such, these so-called gay media sources are anti-gay, and enemies of queer justice and freedom. Gay newspapers and magazines with large circulation work tirelessly to promote the Democratic Party, and, *eo ipso*, to perpetuate the power of the Republican Party, and every issue serves to legitimize a conservative political process stolen from the people by these two anti-gay, codependent, liberal state parties, a process which is illegitimate for all queer persons. The first tenet of a program of gay revolutionary justice in the United States is that the Democratic Party is anti-gay, illegitimate, and irredeemable. Any exception to this perspective has its roots in confusion, ignorance, and in the particular type of ignorance known as forgetting history. *Not* forgetting history is essential for revolutionary queer justice and for real progress. Revolutionaries like Subcommander Marcos of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional and artist Karen Finley are valuable in their placing of importance on memory, on not forgetting,²⁰ though the attack on memory by the counterrevolution is as rabid as the liberal delusion that forgetting is valuable as an element of the politics of conciliation and reform is persistent. But we will not forget. As the sign I held up at the delegates’ entrance to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston said, “*We’ll Never Forget the Democrats’ Compromises on Gay and Lesbian Lives.*” We as revolutionaries have a persistent memory, and indeed this not forgetting history is a trait of the revolutionary mind as much as is our refusal to compromise when we say that those who stand both for us and against us are our decided enemies. In the same way that the hallmark of the racist is the utterance of the words “I’m not racist, but...,” the hallmark of the liberal enemies of gay and lesbian justice is equivocation, which equivocation is measured in action and outcome, and not by intention, mealy-mouthedness, and double-dealing, all of which trade in memory for fake incremental progress.

Revolutionary memory also exists as a kind of Platonic feeling of recalling of something already known, or in the Nietzschean sense of a sort of primordial recognition of the soul, or, in the contemporary sense, in the immediate recognition of the rectitude of revolutionary arguments for queer justice, in the heartfelt knowledge that suddenly someone is speaking a truth that is already known but buried. People ask me, “What revolution?” and I answer them, “The one that’s right beside you,” and this response means that what was formerly known has been pushed by enemy forces to the outside of consciousness. The revolution exists in the minds and hearts of those who already know justice, inarticulate as it is in

the current milieu of queer life, in the minds and hearts of those who know the correctness of what is written here, and who, as they read, experience a feeling of recalling what they already knew, and of affirmation and exclamation, and of reclamation of a part of themselves pushed to the outside by liberal discourses of “justice”. It exists in the minds and hearts of those who exited the line of delegates²¹ at that 2004 Democratic National Convention and came to me with tears in their eyes and with contorted consciences, happy to find these fundamental doubts about the logic and value of liberal justice expressed in my sign.

The Academy as a Liberal Institution and 'Friend' of Queer Justice

The liberalism of the Western academy is a third obstacle to, and thus effective enemy of, queer justice. To the extent that the Western academy may be understood as liberal, it stands accused by revolutionaries of lacking integrity. One hallmark of the educated liberal is a lack of correspondence between theory and action when the action required for consistency is fundamental or dangerous. The academic attack on identity politics, which was begotten in part by Foucault's response to Nietzsche, presents a revolutionary path to queer justice with another essentially liberal problem and obstacle. The reality of the position of those making such attacks, whatever their purely theoretical value, is that they have not been able to translate themselves into real gains in justice for queer persons, no matter how much identity deconstruction and conversion of issues to pun, humor, and literary fodder has been theoretically directed by postmodernism. The fact that these critiques are expressed from within the walls of liberal institutions, where revolutionary *action* only gets tenure when it has been mollified and transmogrified into liberal respectability, and where the type of writing that calls people to dangerous or violent action when necessary does not get published anywhere that counts when it comes to the curricula vitae of academics, is important. Ironically, the very comfort zone of liberal academia and its favored theoretical tropes begins to slip away actually, as soon as its guarantor, revolutionary vigilance and action, is not taken as the path to justice.²² With regard to the permissible deconstruction of queer identity and its components within university curricula, one can argue that, even if one could succeed in ‘deactivating’ any queerness that has a broad and coherent identity using an always contingent episteme in which the deconstructed stands in the place of the known, would not something great be lost in such a process? Was there no value in the gay and lesbian liberation movement? In the Gay Liberation Front? In the Gay Left Collective? Was there no value in the fact that society was moving toward a collective gay identity in 1969, and not away from it? In other words, was not something great really lost in the loss of a gay movement? No amount of liberal-postmodern revision of identity will take away the real abuse and the real political loss that the loss of a revolutionary queer movement has been.²³ The liberal academic deconstruction of identity should remember its origins, which are firmly planted in anti-modernity, which anti-modernity is not at all benign. There is no way out through the back door. Even if, in an educated reality, deconstruction of identities has validity, such deconstructed identities exist no less actually within the realm of political and social abuse. One does not suffer less for being attacked as a lesbian because one has deconstructed one's sexual identity or, in the case of, say, the gay academician, because one has deconstructed sexual identity in general. Those in the process of personally questioning and deconstructing gender or sexuality are no less likely to be abused and degraded and left lonely and desperate. This salient fact could stand alone as a mandate for revolutionary justice as queer justice. Further, the working out of deconstructed identities cannot occur in a political milieu of oppression and abuse that is rather itself a byproduct of the malignancy of liberal thought on queer justice, a spectrum of thought and an academic attitude that nurtures postmodern deconstruction of identity and deconstruction of the modes of protest attached to what has now been “discredited” as identity politics, and the favoring of delusional ignorances as “art as protest” or worse, “performance as protest”. When these comprise the entire corpus of protest, they push out effective protest, and are fed by the ‘creativity’ and ‘queerness-as-not-necessarily-homosexual’ politics and all of their attendant petit bourgeois metatheories which, for all political purposes can be considered casuistries of disappearance.²⁴ The subsumption of same-sex desire under a new political theory properly comes *after* the gay revolution and after the liberal academy

and its petit bourgeois abstractions, and it comes dialectically; placing it before such a revolution is now the way to the grave for queer justice.

The great fear of liberal academic institutions is loss of state funding, and such a fear will allow for aspects of modernity, which have as their outgrowths and manifestations forms of political activity which are ineffectual for queer justice and non-threatening to the powers that be. Colleges and universities can produce “activists” because “activist” is an appellation given by the corporate media to what are merely responsible, (i.e. neutralized) citizens who are innocuous to the oppressor, but this appellation is of course readily accepted by liberals, who can always be counted on to be agreeable when it is imperative not to be so. Colleges and universities cannot, however, openly and intentionally produce or groom *revolutionaries*, that is, real and dangerous menaces to the powers that be who are not committed to non-violence, and colleges and universities themselves cannot take meaningful revolutionary stands against the government and society and expect to retain funding: end of story on the university’s liberal “openness” to all paths and possibilities. The only viable path to justice, and to actually creating a real community of mutual respect and equality in intellectual and scholarly life, is barred from a real existence in liberal institutions of higher learning, whose boards of directors are primarily comprised of bourgeois corporate welfare recipients who are often involved in interlocking directorates of persons with various degrees of separation from anti-gay abuse, and who, even in state schools, are beholden to Boards of Trustees which include deranged and maleficent anti-gay sociopaths whom the heterosexual regime of liberalism considers munificent. Such sociopaths include officeholders of the Catholic Church and fanatical privatization dogmatists who want to dismantle the state and turn it over to such profiteers as multi-billionaire Bill Gates, who hired as a “consultant” on gay “issues” (with hefty remuneration), the preposterous, business-suited, hillbilly charlatan and anti-gay crusader Ralph Reed.²⁵

The displacement of pain from queer loss onto academicized and often literary intellectual analysis is antidemocratic, apolitical and anti-justice. This kind of exercise makes sense only in a world where queer justice has already been achieved on the basis of a *collective* identity under oppression, a world where queer persons as they are understood as oppressed persons are leading society, not being dragged along by it or backed into a corner by it. Young queer persons, and indeed all persons, need inspiration and fire, not merely playful transmogrification of their identities à la petit bourgeois academic postmodernism, which tries to pass itself off as, or worse, take the place of, political or social progress. The feeling of justice inspired by dangerous action which is incompatible with comfort and success in the liberal establishment, a significant part of which is the Western academy, will know no end in the love-filled retrospectives and pride of future generations. How could deluded incrementalist negotiators and compromisers with our enemies *inspire* future gay and lesbian children, those coming up, those who will be looking at us? Liberal negotiation and the playing of good little boy or girl and begging vicious, ruined, psychologically unwell people for “acceptance” and rights, and trying to evade the problem in academic citadels in which evasive excurses and identity play abound may be a strategy for temporary survival and a way to lick one's wounds, but it is certainly no horizon, no fireball, no star in the sky, no source of pride. I agree with Dorothy Allison when she writes, “I need you to do more than survive.”²⁶

The Liberal Discourse of 'Hate'

A fourth enemy position which corrupts any progress toward queer justice is the liberal discourse of ‘hate’. The liberal gay leadership, the leadership legitimized by big money media, has purveyed confusion in the form of a discourse, and narrative of ‘hate’. The simplistic central idea of this discourse is that hatred of gay and lesbian persons is somehow the enemy of queer justice. There are many problems with this counterrevolutionary discourse, one of which is that whom one loves or hates is difficult to discern, partly because love and hate are probably different sides of the same emotion. In any case, these feelings are very difficult to discern, manipulate and control, especially via mechanisms of reform, and telling someone that hate is wrong is like telling him or her that the existence of rocks or minerals is wrong, as far as its effect. More importantly, all of the hate in the world cannot harm queer persons at all if the focus of a movement for justice and of a people and a government is on action, rather

than thought. Ironically it is here that one would expect liberals to pick up the idea of toleration in order to attack the problematic idea of controlling hate, that this has not been done. The liberal reliance on the law to achieve justice here shows a kind of lack of integrity in the form of an inconsistency in political philosophy. What matters, at least theoretically, in liberal legal systems is behavior, not feelings. One is entitled to have any feelings one wants toward another, as long as one does no harm to another. The problem with the liberal idea here of course is that it does not have the courage of its convictions, failing to stop dead abusive behavior, which behavior has severely deleterious effects on the queer psyche. I propose that the proper focus of revolutionary justice for queer persons is *abuse* and not "hate", and in this sense the revolutionary view can actually provide a correction in the form of greater consistency with liberal theory's holding that the proper focus of the law is on behavior, not on presumed feelings so that ironically, revolutionaries have the ability to supply, as it were, the courage of liberal convictions. Abuse, the proper focus of revolutionary justice, is the outward manifestation of which feeling it matters not. Laws, in their existence as pillars of the legitimacy of liberal society, cannot really change feelings, but revolutionary changes which are in essence radical programs and actions can change outward behavior, and create the social ideas and relations out of which laws are formed, in the spirit of a culture. In the same way that artists can change notions of light and color for generations of people, revolution changes feelings and creates new ones by clearing out the ground for the possibility of their existence, which possibility rests on absolute repudiation of falsely begotten and manufactured feelings. Laws are ultimately the work of solidification and justification of a homeostatic social order; justice is the work of revolution. Revolutionary justice comes first, and the law sets itself up in its light, as justice made manifest, codified, promulgated.

The liberal discourse of hate and hate speech is really a misbegotten and weak apologetics for queer persons, and one which serves us ill. What is it really that heterosexuals hate? What is at the bottom of the behavior that this discourse calls hatred of L.G.B.T. persons? The answer is that what heterosexuals who "hate" queer persons really hate is reality. They have staked their ideas of essence, personhood, the cosmos, nature, and of all of reality on one petty stupidity, on the gross aggrandizement of one picayune little corner of reality and on one paltry and false, idea: heterosexuality. The rage of heterosexuals is a rage against reality, and also against themselves for having believed so heartily and so fundamentally in the essentiality and universality of heterosexuality, and at the knowledge that they have been fools in their aggrandizing such a tawdry little idea into something omnipotent. What do nature, the universe, animals, plants, life, death, and time care about heterosexuality and its manufactured trappings? It is evident that they pay it no regard whatsoever.

For revolutionary queers however, what heterosexuals think is irrelevant. The revolutionary way to justice is through the enforcement of outward behavior that is respectful and pro-gay, and through social norms which could not include family values or the validation of false concepts like pedophilia. What do we care if heterosexists and those addicted to a false idea of life throw hissy fits over queerness in the privacy of their own mind, or of their own room? In other words, the reversal of the closet is necessary for revolutionary queer justice. A focus on action, on outward behavior, on abuse, is revolutionarily necessary on the way to queer justice. Without queerness as normative, there is no queer justice. There is no other way. Heterosexuality as a mantra and allegiance must be itself problematized and, insofar as it is synonymous with anti-gay behavior, closeted during the revolution, a revolution which will set up a society in which queerness is the norm. No self-respecting queer person has an ounce of respect for anti-gay heterosexuals. The liberal discourse of hate is effectively begging to be liked, to be loved, or to be not "hated". But do we want respect from people we do not respect, to be liked by people we do not like, to be loved by people we do not love, especially when these people have power over us, and use it against us? The liberal discourse of hate is effectively the enabling of abuse, rather than its being named and punished and ended. Whom heterosexuals *hate* is beside the point. Whom they *abuse* is the point.

Critique of Rights-Based Justice

The liberal discourse of hate is accompanied by a more pedigreed but perhaps no less problematic discourse of rights, which discourse I would like to suggest is a fifth liberal impediment to queer justice, and perhaps the most significant one. This discourse of rights, and the attempts to achieve justice out of this discourse, are respectively, a counterrevolutionary discourse and a counterrevolutionary system of rights assertions and laws which will not achieve justice for queer persons. I present here some of the problems with rights-based justice.

Rights-based justice is a doormat for the disingenuous and for those who are abusive to others in society. This is evident now in the U.S. for example in the widespread belief in the idea that the right to free speech is absolute and includes the right to publicly abuse other persons. Liberal rights law may well indeed not necessarily have this kind of intention at its inception, let us say, in some sort of “original position”²⁷, but its inception, of course, was already infected with heteronormativity and with the invisibility and derogation of homosexuality, and no one has yet figured out how to get to an original position that is free from this. Free speech is now the club used by the neoconservative liberals to beat gay and lesbian people to death publicly through the legitimization of debates on our lives and equality. Further, consistent with the extreme cynicism, mendacity, and manipulative practices of the neoconservatives, who incorrectly consider themselves outside of liberalism, but whose retrogressive positions and whose very possibility have been produced by liberalism, liberals have been placed in the position of having their own clubs used to beat their own sentiments and precepts to death, and have been forced into yet another immoral and reprehensible activity, that of debating the public abuse and denigration of queer persons under the idea of the right of free speech.

Similarly, under the idea of “freedom of religion” lies the idea of the right to believe in and to practice any religion one “chooses”. The beginning and end of this fake tenet of justice is the support of parasitic, demeaning organizations which publicly abuse queer persons and which are inherently against the existence of certain persons and which are allowed to publicly slander and libel fellow citizens with not only the sanction of the liberal heterosexist regime’s rights-based justice, but with its support in the form of state welfare for religions (as long as the religion in question is one of the Judaic cults, that is). Religious organizations pay no taxes and are handed beneficial and lucrative duties and opportunities of the state, such as the administration of food and shelter programs and schools, and are thus allowed to pose as supportive of the citizenry, when in fact they are vicious parasites preying on the life of the people, and illogical, unsound ideologues who engage in and legitimize such philosophastry as debates between “faith” and reason and who attempt to ignore history to preposterously reinvent themselves as “pro-gay”. Revolutionary practice is the refusal to abide liberalism’s immorality of disingenuousness and dehistoricization, all along the spectrum of suffering from inconvenience to death. Thus, neither my boyfriend nor I, nor any of our friends, even when starving and trash-picking for food last winter, would allow ourselves to go to the church-administered “public” food banks in New York City.

A second and related problem with liberal, rights-based justice is that private organizations, even when these organizations are truly public and have great public influence; e.g. influence on social life and opinion, control over elections, political advocacy and manipulation, exist as entities with rights under law. The assertion of rights by such organizations gives them far greater power than would have an individual (a real person) asserting the same right. Individual persons, in the liberal system of law, are entitled to the same rights as “anyone” else to speak their minds and to have their opinions heard; they have just as much right to be heard as massive media conglomerates which can control and manipulate public opinion through their massive wealth and their ownership of the apparatuses of information, the means of the production of ideas. Liberal jurisprudence considers this kind of fake and preposterous equality to be just and condones, for example, the organized crime of usurers (banks), and those practicing the protection racket (the insurance industry). Through liberal legal fictions of personhood and other rights within the liberal legal system, such parasites and criminals are given much greater and unequal power as citizen-entities, and in turn this power cripples the possibilities for queer justice. What good are, for example, lawsuits tried before juries when these juries consist of propagandized slaves

manufactured by the media and other conglomerates, which corporations share equal rights with jurisprudentially equal individual persons? These slave-making corporations, in such a system, then enjoy a second order power in the power given by proxy to their fabricated slaves, who then in turn can claim the citizen's rights and duties of serving on juries and voting, thinking that they are free and independent thinkers, when in fact their entire personhood effectively exists as a second order, disseminated insurance against any attack on corporate and reactionary rule. The Mormon Church, as a corporate funding and propaganda syndicate, recently convinced a population de-educated by corporate pirates and their liberal intellectual mentors that public anti-gay abuse in the form of initiatives and referenda on our lives was a moral voter's right and duty.

At the more general level, and to bring to bear again the persistent memory of revolutionaries, I would argue that this is again the problem of petit bourgeois scholarly abstraction posing questions from its own hermeneutic circle of injustice. Throughout hundreds of years of liberalism and during its development, the best gay and lesbian persons could hope for was invisibility and life in hiding under the fear of death. Can such a jurisprudential, political, and societal record be excused, forgiven, reformed? To say that it can be is to again buy into the liberal immorality, irrationality, mysticism, and fear that are the liberal rejection of revolution and of totalizing critique. The deeper level of the problem, which in the hands of liberal scholars is always perverted and misunderstood, is the fact that sexuality *i.e.* woman, as a *problématique* within consciousness, has been a mainstay of liberal societies. Queer justice then as inextricable from feminism and from sexual justice, as a feminist process of the unproblematization of femaleness, is *prior* to bourgeois liberal justice and is the future *precondition* of political ideation and development. In a similar regard, the Sexual Revolution and the revolutionary components of the Women's Movement are as important or more important than the other democratic revolutions, whose sexual freedoms tended to get co-opted by the normative discourses, theory, and legislation of heteronormative liberal systems. In this historical process, gay men stand as the possibility of woman's existence on her own terms, and also the political prototype of male sociopolitical existence in a world freed from heterosexuality as an outgrowth of chauvinism and the abuse of women.

As the function of revolutionary economic justice is to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat, the function of revolutionary queer justice is to bring about the dictatorship of queer desire, and to this function any legal or jurisprudential theory and practice must always be subservient. Philosophy, says Alain Badiou, is the "creation of new desire"²⁸ and Miguel Abensour says that utopian visions are the "education of desire."²⁹ Our desire is not for the sustenance of the frauds, cynics, and manipulators of liberal justice, but rather for the outrageous justice of full queer freedom, which necessitates the absolute death of heterosexuality as a political regime. The end of a liberal rights discourse as an avenue to justice is the freeing of an epistemology from its prison-world of heteronormativity, a world of the shunting of the creation of queer desire and its de-education thrive; a world where the legitimization of the "opinions" produced by the fabricated and delusional heterosexual political regime result in opinions which are buffoonishly issued *ex cathedra* in the form of heterosexual masturbation disguised as judicial pronouncements³⁰ about our legality or (special) "rights" or issued in the guise of scholarship, as when the political is "comprehended" within the terms of the heterosexual political regime, resulting in such formulations and legitimizations of the perverted straight mind and its opinions as occurs in the reification of "the politics of disgust"³¹ and further assertions and legitimizations of abuse, which, to revolutionary queer ears, and despite their trappings of offices and honors, or the sanction of the academy, always sound shockingly ignorant and delusional.

A third problem with rights-based justice is that it promotes slow justice at best. Liberal-identified persons love incrementalism, and the idea that one must struggle for years to achieve justice by whittling away at a legal edifice with lawsuits, lobbying, rhetoric, and campaigning; along with it goes the idea that it is acceptable to force abused groups to fight for their rights, just as everyone else is presumed to have done. Along with the fact that this incremental and pro-establishment approach to justice does not work (e.g. the Civil Rights Movement was a failure for African-American persons, and for all person in the U.S., having recently had its most cherished legislative accomplishment, the Voting Rights Act, gutted; gay and lesbian persons in 2013 have the same rights and protections at the federal level of the U.S. that

we did in 1969 – none), there is injustice at its core and foundation. That core injustice is in the fact that the established groups, social or demographic or identity groups such as heterosexual, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant males did not establish their initial right to govern and to abuse using these methods, but rather by force, fiat, theft, and manipulation. These privileged and entitled groups in their existence as such then put the lie to the viability of reformist and establishment justice, even as most of them, not surprisingly, support its methods and avenues. After all, what have they got to lose? These rights-based approaches to justice will not threaten their power, and if they seem to be threatening to do so, the people can always be de-educated, defunded, programmed, and manipulated into believing that these tactics have worked, even as the “success” of such approaches is laughable to anyone who is aware. In such a vein, we now witness the pitiful sight of L.G.B.T. victims of liberal propaganda, who believe in the idea that (i.e. hold tenaciously and desperately to the manufactured opinion that) we have made progress in the area of justice because gay persons are now more prominently featured in the media and in public conversation, even as we L.G.B.T. persons are only present there as pawns in the game of heterosexual opinion and preference or as clownish caricatures or stereotypes provided to amuse heterosexuals and to play sometimes amusing, sometimes annoying, sometimes reviled, but always ancillary roles which flavor their prosaic existence.

A revolutionary queer discourse, which is only revolutionary if it includes concomitant action, does not adopt such well trodden doormats for the disingenuous as rights-based laws, but rather creates its own discourses, and undoes the discourses and verbiage of the disingenuous and mendacious, against whom liberalism always seems naive and hapless – at its very best a day too late and a dollar too short for justice. As queer revolutionaries we recognize that the liberal system of rights-based justice has become a system for the upholding of the most cherished right of social reactionaries, of cowards, and of those whose ethic is an outgrowth of their resentment: the right to abuse others. The mind of the modern conservative, with liberalism as both its progenitor and protector, is most enraged when the conservative’s right to abuse others is questioned or curtailed, while meanwhile the person under liberal hegemony is compelled by liberal thought and its heritage to take these disingenuous attempts to abuse others seriously as liberal justice. The liberal system of rights has now been thoroughly undermined in its intent and exists primarily and preponderantly as a system of the legitimization of public abuse for queer persons. The liberal state’s system of justice is a reactionary state of crying, whining, full-time conservative victims whose victimhood consists of impediments to their right to abuse, with liberal, rights-based justice serving as a facilitator for their always disingenuous, always guileful abuse and manipulation, and for the reclamation of this right to abuse, *the most protected right of the liberal state*.

A final problem with rights-based justice worth mentioning is the way in which it privileges positive law over negative law, and the freedom to do something over the freedom from something.³² If rights-based justice were neutral on this question, or balanced (i.e. with as many specific prohibitions in favor of queer justice as against), then it might be capable of serving justice, but this is not the case. Rights-based justice, in order to be effective, would have to have to make assertions of justness and fairness negatively, assertions such as: “No heterosexual has any right in any circumstances to use heterosexist or heteronormative language or language abusive to queer persons, under penalty of loss of office, employment, pensions and other benefits, of freedom or of life. All branches of the government at all levels and in all jurisdictions must prosecute all such known offenses, and shall at no time and in no manner have the right to excuse themselves from such prosecution. Mandatory sentencing rules are in effect for conviction for such offenses and judges’ rulings will be monitored.” Rights-based justice asserts the right of everyone to be treated with respect, with recognition, with civility, and with decency, and this is all well and good enough, but the final shortcoming of the liberal mode of justice is that, in its rights-based justice system, this right must be asserted, and this implies always and from the beginning the chance that there is a *need* to assert this right and to have it asserted also by courts and officials, but no real and true movement toward the alleviation of abuses or of the creation of the conditions under which such an assertion or even promulgation of rights would be unnecessary. The elimination of the *need* to assert a right is what revolution brings about and that which it calls justice. The assertion of positive and specific rights (e.g. the right to assemble for a redress of grievances), aside from the fact that

such a right can be rendered meaningless by disingenuousness and cynical disrespect for the law itself on the part of those in power (e.g. contracted “protests” in which the police serve as a theatrical production company which manages the props and staging [i.e. barricades and blocks] for a futile and invisible street protest), then contains already a presumption of the possibility, and even the likelihood, that abuse and disrespect will occur. Revolutionary means and ends tolerate no abuse, and a revolutionary state does not end until a new, i.e. queer, society exists, one in which not only have sentiments and beliefs which are inimical to gay and lesbian justice and to lesbian and gay well-being been extirpated, but also one in which their very possibility has been removed.

¹ In this essay I use 'queer' and 'gay and lesbian', and sometimes 'L.G.B.T.' rather interchangeably, and do so consciously and purposely because of the necessity for unity among those who conceptualize and describe our community differently, and also in order to work toward the disallowance of the cooptation of the concepts 'gay' and 'lesbian' and 'L.G.B.T.' and 'queer' by liberal discourses of justice. We need unity.

² Terror Show Bandito, 'Gay and Lesbian People And The Organized Left' *Gay and Lesbian Revolution* Blog. (<http://evolution10000.blogspot.com/>).

³ In this essay, 'liberal', 'liberals', and 'liberalism' all refer to classical political liberalism, especially as it is manifested in the U.S. today. The 'liberal' about whom I write is the person who thinks and acts in accordance with liberal-reformist ideas, with political and economic liberalism's implicit and express theories and ideas of justice. This term then would include most citizens and residents of contemporary liberal polities, whether they act and think these liberal ideas wittingly or unwittingly.

⁴ In this work, 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' are understood as both part of a radical lineage and as properly distinguished from 'reform' and 'reformist'. Radicalism is understood to be related to revolution in the same way as liberalism is related to reform. I propose to understand radicalism as not merely a term used to describe the degree or depth of a belief, argument, or philosophy, but rather as a tradition within political history, a tradition with a particular substance and a particular character. This substance or character of radicalism is one of progressive democratization, a valuation of democracy which sees it as a goal or precondition, one which aims at or which has the effect of increasing sociopolitical consciousness historically and in individuals and societies, or the attempt at such or the belief in such increase, and one which works against, or is intended to work against abuse and exploitation. I understand revolutions to be, properly speaking, only the result of *radical* ideas, philosophies, and plans. Revolution is then the actualization of radical ideas. The radical idea base alone is not enough to define revolution and the revolutionary however. What is revolutionary is also actively engaged in attempts to overthrow the current *political* system by changing its fundamental bases and content *rapidly*.

⁵ I use the term 'reactionary' in the basic sense of 'politically conservative', and thus here, though it is interchangeable with 'rightist' and 'right-wing', it is also helpful in its ability to serve as a second order antonym for 'liberal', when 'liberal' might be distinguished from 'conservative' merely for the purposes of explanation, even as this essay argues for a first order amalgamation of the concepts of 'liberal' and 'conservative' into one term, 'liberal-conservative', a term which better demonstrates how one of the characteristics of revolutionary thought is the necessary amalgamation of these concepts and their actors. Even this spectrum of liberal to conservative is of course fraudulent in the more important first order sense that all conservatives are liberals within the historical-political stage which has come to be known as liberalism. The term 'reactionary' here also carries the sense which is articulated in Alain Badiou's elaboration of its modus operandi (see for example Quentin Meillassoux's succinct description of Badiou's idea of "reactionary novelties" in Meillassoux, Quentin 'History and Event in Alain Badiou'. *Parreschia* No. 12, 2011, 1-11; trans. by Thomas Nail, and Badiou, Alain. "What Is Philosophy?" Part I, YouTube.)

⁶ The Green Party of the United States, for example, in its very acquiescence to the propriety of systemic avenues to reform within liberal polities, such as elections and civil disobedience, and the exclusivity of its system-sustaining program for political change, legitimizes this system of acquisition of political power, even though it has been created unfairly and unjustly, and even though these avenues to reform have been a dismal failure. The lack of a revolutionary program or intention for the armed takeover of the government and of a developed understanding of oppressions as systemic forces the Greens, as a party exemplar of liberalism, into an effective role of support of the system and its impossible processes of coming to into positions of power which would disallow the public abuse of queer persons. Thus, the Greens' very existence within the electoral and civil disobedience system supports the

legitimacy of this system and helps to corral effective opposition into pacific cooperation, thus actually abiding and securing this governmental system's ongoing abuse of queer persons.

⁷ My focus here is on political liberalism, which can properly be seen to emerge out of economic liberalism and to be its social and civil manifestation, however misbegotten any liberal development of a political idea base out of the non-comprehension of dialectical materialism may be. This focus on political liberalism over economic liberalism is parallel to my focus on sexual class over economic class. Part of this argument is that the left has failed gay and lesbian persons partly by its diminution of the importance of the historical results and outgrowths of the material conditions of life and the relations of the forces of production, the left having mistakenly focused only on the earliest origins of inequalities that are found in property relations, and not on the specific developments that arose from these original property relations as living forces in themselves which dialectically shape revolutionary identities and actions, and which must be addressed alongside, *and even prior to*, their origins. The most salient of these developments are now those which are essentially developments having to do with rectificatory justice for queer persons, the negative process of which is the setting up a thoroughly deheterosexualized queer future. This is now *the* nodal apogee of historical-dialectical movement and awareness. See note 1.

⁸ For an overview of some of these organizations and their interconnections, interconnections which point up starkly the existence of liberalism as a doormat for the ultraright, see Barker, Michael. 'Co-opting Intellectual Aggressors. The Progressive Face of the C.I.A. Swans.com 11/17/2008 (<http://swans.com/library/art14/barker08.html>). Relevant also is Parenti, Michael, 'The Nobel Peace Prize for War' michaelparenti.org, 2012 (http://michaelparenti.org/nobel_peace_prize_for_war.html)

⁹ The "conservative" "positions" on queer lives that I write of here are positions that are fundamentally a product of liberalism, and the neoconservative reaction itself, though thoroughly illiberal in its self-understanding, is entirely itself a product of the petit bourgeois mind of "liberal" society, and, at the popular level, revolutionaries must amalgamate with regard to liberalism and conservatism within more or less classical liberalism, refusing to differentiate between them. See also note 4 *supra*.

¹⁰ On Iraqi civilian deaths alone resulting from the American insurgency into Iraq, see Burnham, Gilbert et al. "Mortality After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey." *The Lancet*, Vol. 368, October 21, 2006 (Online Version), 1421-1428, which puts this number at over 600,000. Virtually all estimates of deaths caused by the U.S. insurgency are incorrect because they wrongly accept 2003 as the date when an invasion of Iraq began, rather than the correct date of 1990, when continued bombings of Iraq by the U.S. and a destabilization and "regime change" campaign which, inter alia, pitted Shi'ites against Sunnis, began. On deaths in Afghanistan, see the various reports to the United Nations of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, published on the Mission's website semi-annually.

¹¹ On deaths resulting from the U.S.'s Vietnam War, see Hirschman et al., 'Vietnamese Casualties During the Vietnam War. A New Estimate.' *Population and Development Review* 21 (4) 1995, 783-812.

¹² The liberal stances against violence which are most salient here are those which I have seen sabotage potentially effective actions in radical queer groups and in other groups from within. Exemplary in this regard also is the Occupy gatherings, in which a confused amalgam of liberalism and radicalism existed, with pacifism being buttressed by liberal rhetoric and voiced by those with no experience in radical politics and by those who had not endured and who were unwilling to endure the violence against the nonviolent which comes with a sincere commitment to nonviolence. See Yassin, Jaime Omar, 'Two Kinds of Non-Violence', *The Electronic Intifada* Media Watch Blog, Post of 2/19/2012 (<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/jaime-omar-yassin/two-kinds-non-violence>)

¹³ Russel, Stephen T., and Kara Joyner. 'Adolescent Sexual Orientation and Suicide Risk: Evidence From a National Study.' *American Journal of Public Health* 2001 August; 91(8):1276-1281.

¹⁴ There are many articulations of Foucault's idea of violence being inherent in the rationalities of the political as it has developed in modernity. See for example Carrera, Sergio, et al., eds. *Europe's 21st Century Challenge: Delivering Liberty*. Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: 2010, p. 243.

¹⁵ *The Weather Underground* Sam Green and Bill Siegel, Dirs., 2002

¹⁶ The idea of heterosexuality as a political regime is taken from Monique Wittig. See Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, p. xiii.

¹⁷ This is because political acts and policies, that is, the political context of intergroup relations, is more determinative of these intergroup relations than any particular internal group dynamics or any intergroup relations considered separately from the sociopolitical power context. See Marilyn B. Brewer, 'The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations: Can Research Inform Practice?' *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1997, p. 203; Ulrich Wagner et al. 'Social and Political Context Effects on Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Attitudes'; Wagner, Ulrich

et al. *Improving Intergroup Relations: Building on the Legacy of Thomas F. Pettigrew* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008, pp.195-209.

¹⁸ For a specific example of this in a U.S. senatorial election see Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. *Dirty Politics: Deception, Distraction, and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 97-98. I personally experienced an overnight change in opinion which was brought about by liberal state media in France in 2007. On the night of May 2, 2007, during the French presidential debate between Ségolène Royal, the candidate of the Parti Socialiste, and Nicolas Sarközy, the candidate of the Union Pour Un Mouvement Populaire, I visited several *tabacs*, stand-up bars and smoke shops in which many persons traditionally gather to watch these debates, in Paris. I talked to persons in each *tabac* and overheard comments and crowd reactions to the debates that night. The overwhelming consensus of the *tabac* audiences during and immediately after the debate was that Royal had done far better in the debate than Sarközy. Later that night at home and the next day I watched and read the French liberal state media's coverage of the debates, which declared that Sarközy was the clear victor. Going around to the same *tabacs* on ensuing nights, it was clear to me that the French liberal state media, which had bombarded the French with what was really a public relations campaign on behalf of Nicolas Sarközy had spun opinion out of its natural and initial impressions. Every person I spoke to in these same *tabacs* on these ensuing nights insisted that Royal had not made a good showing, and that Sarközy had "won" the debate, which opinion was clearly and patently contrary to the overwhelming consensus of these and comparable viewers' initial opinions.

¹⁹ I name as four prominent examples *The Advocate* magazine at the national level, *The Washington Blade* in Washington, D.C., *Gay City News* in New York, and *Frontiers* magazine in Los Angeles.

²⁰ "Memory is how we call justice here." Memory has been a frequent them of Marcos, and in the preceding quotation he even equates it with justice. See in 'To The Relatives of the Politically Disappeared' in Hayden, Tom, ed. *The Zapatista Reader*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002, 310. For Finley on not forgetting, see, for example Hart, Lynda. 'Reconsidering Homophobia: Karen Finley's Indiscretions' in *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*. London: Routledge, 1994 89-104. I encountered Finley's profound and uplifting statements about not forgetting and not forgiving in her performance work called 'Shut Up and Love Me' at the Westbeth Theatre Center in New York City in the summer of 2001.

²¹ None of these were delegates themselves; the delegates were already too invested in the power structure to give attention to fundamental doubts.

²² This is true in more ways than one. The initially radical uprisings and acts that gave rise to gay justice did not and do not arise from within the liberal academy. In addition to this, liberal institutions are able to use their co-optation of radicals and revolutionaries as, ironically, evidence of their true progressivism. See in this regard James, Joy, and Edmund T. Gordon. 'Activist Scholars or Radical Subjects?' in Hale, Charles, ed. *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship* Berkeley, CA: U. of California Press, 2008, p. 372; Rand, Erin. *Risking Resistance: Rhetorical Agency in Queer Theory and Queer Activism* Diss. U. of Iowa, 2006, pp. 74-75.

²³ Not to mention the question of the priority of homophobia as even 'pre-structural', that is, as even more fundamental than the objects and subjects of poststructuralism. See Crimp, Douglas, 'The Boys in My Bedroom' in *Melancholia and Moralism. Essays on A.I.D.S. and Queer Politics* Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 2002, p. 216. Rereferenced from Danbolt, Mathias, 'Front Room - Back Room. An Interview With Douglas Crimp' *Trikster* No. 2, September 2008. (<http://trikster.net/2/crimp/1.html>)

²⁴ Although I differ from her perhaps in not seeing rights as a viable central element of a revolutionary program for justice, Catherine MacKinnon describes well the desolation of abused lives that goes on while the favorite pastime of petit bourgeois victims of liberalism and their students theorize. One could easily, as is often the case with feminist texts, substitute the word 'queer' for 'women' in MacKinnon's words: "In the early 1970s, I (for one) had imagined that feminists doing theory would retheorize life in the concrete rather than spend the next three decades on metatheory, talking *about* theory, rehashing over and over again in this disconnected way how theory should be done, leaving women's lives twisting in the wind." MacKinnon, Catherine, *Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 62.

²⁵ Strauss, Steven, 'The Robber Baron as Lord Bountiful. Bill Gates and the Capitalist Philanthropy Scam' *Freedom Socialist* (Online Version) August, 2006 (<http://socialism.com/drupal-6.8/?q=node/649>)

²⁶ Allison, Dorothy. 'Survival Is The Least Of My Desires' in *Skin: Thinking About Sex, Class, and Literature*, New York: Firebrand Books, 1994, 216.

²⁷ I refer to the idea of the 'original position' in the liberal political philosophy of John Rawls as expressed in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) and subsequent emendations thereto, an idea which has wide currency among scholars and students of political theory.

²⁸ Badiou, Alain, *What Is Philosophy? Part I* Videotape of Lecture at the European Graduate School, 2010 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6FQkTajudY>)

²⁹ For Abensour's concept of the 'education of desire' described in English see Nadir, Christine, 'Utopian Studies, Environmental Literature, and the Legacy of an Idea. Educating Desire in Miguel Abensour and Ursula K. LeGuin' *Utopian Studies* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2010, pp. 24-56.

³⁰ There are many examples. One is Antonin Scalia's opinion in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992).

³¹ Nussbaum, Martha C., *From Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

³² My conception of positive and negative freedom here is not the same as the well-known conception of Isaiah Berlin, and in fact is quite different, with 'freedom from', in my own conception, associated with negative laws and considered a negative freedom incorporating the idea of freedom from restraint, which freedom from restraint Berlin accords to 'positive liberty'. For Berlin's idea of positive and negative law, see Berlin, Isaiah. 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

PRAXIS WITH SELF-ADVOCATES: EXPLORING PARTICIPATORY VIDEO AS RADICAL INCREMENTALISM

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Abstract

In this article, the authors report selected findings from a larger study where self-advocates¹ from the disability rights movement created a series of short videos as part of a participatory research project. Self-advocates subsequently integrated these videos into a greater community organizing initiative with public screenings and digital methods of distribution. While the research process of this study has been published elsewhere (Sitter 2012), this piece will explore the idea of bridging participatory video, a collaborative research methodology, with community-based advocacy initiatives. The authors contend that this presents an opportunity for radical incrementalism in which to create a praxis driven predominantly by the voices on the margins versus the academic elite. In this article, a link to one of the videos is also included alongside participant reflections on the research process.

This article has three main parts: It begins by locating participatory video research within radical incrementalism. The authors then consider modes of advocacy in the disability rights movement and their relationship to social inclusion, suggesting that research should build on - and align with - the theories informing the relevant advocacy strategy. The participatory research study is then described with the intent to highlight the joining of scholarship and advocacy in the post-welfare state. Participant reflections further demonstrate how this praxis contributed to mobilizing support, developing a shared understanding of rights, and supporting collective social action.

Radical Incrementalism and Participatory Research

Radical incrementalism describes advocates pushing for fundamental change, recognizing that while change will be in the form of modest improvements at best, these gains can improve conditions for future incremental changes (Schram 101). Radical incrementalism has been used to describe Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward's strategy of combining research and activism (Schram 101). In the 1960s, Piven and Cloward worked closely with welfare rights activists in the United States. These scholars advocated the use of their crisis strategy as an ideal way for people living in poverty to accomplish a form of social justice, i.e. a national guaranteed income policy. While there is little consensus as to the factors that make advocacy successful, Bakan and Kobayashi note that Piven and Cloward are credited for encouraging scholars to recognize connections between social movements and socio-political circumstances so as to determine possible conditions for social change (53-54).

Since Piven and Cloward's work with the welfare rights movement, the idea of radical incrementalism has brought forth debates as to the strategies that best address social reform and the rates

¹ The term self-advocate is explored in the following sections, but broadly defined, it refers to persons with developmental disabilities advocating on their own behalf. In this article, participants are also referred to as "self-advocates."

of progress that are potentially achievable (Bakan and Kobayashi 53). The term “radical incrementalism” has since been applied to collaborative, community-based research approaches that strive for social change (see Shdaimah, Stahl and Schram). It calls for research grounded in community, and is based on the premise that potential accomplishments that evolve from the research may contribute to improving “the lives of the oppressed and marginalized and create conditions for...improvements in the future” (Schram 51). Schram also points to the potential of participatory research methodologies, suggesting that while activist scholars Piven and Cloward serve as one model for radical incrementalism, participatory research that is action-based is another:

It is research that is grounded in the community that takes its cues from people on the ground who are actively involved in struggle against the constraints that limit their capacity to live better. Participatory Action Research sides with these people, adopts their value orientation, seeks to work for and with these people in order to empower them to better fight the power they are challenging. Participatory Action Research seeks not to treat the people on the ground as passive objects of study but as acting subjects. (131)

Approaches to research that are participatory-based draw heavily on Freirean pedagogy, while collaboratively working with community members (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher and Morton 448). Change in this context is not necessarily characterized by large-scale alterations to policies and systems; the dynamics of the research efforts, as experienced and understood by those involved in a collaborative and action-oriented research study, are critical in developing a deeper understanding of radical incrementalism. One such example of a community-based approach grounded in praxis is participatory video.

Participatory Video

Over the last 50 years, individuals have appropriated film and video through a participatory framework to communicate a counter-hegemonic discourse that challenges mass media’s legitimization of dominant political ideologies. Participatory video (PV) is considered a participatory research method for individual, group and community organizing (White 64-66). The process involves people coming together in a group setting to develop videos about a topic or issue of concern. Through group exercises with the technology, people develop basic skills and no previous knowledge about filming is required. As community groups film reality from their perspective and subsequently share the videos in public spaces, the process enables people to become conscientized about personal and community needs, and thus has the potential to bring about social and political change (White 64-66).

History of Participatory Video

The genesis of appropriating film as a participatory method is dated back to the 1960s in Newfoundland, Canada. The socio-political context represented the welfare state period where social policy was guided by ethical liberalist ideology. The idea of a welfare state meant that government financed, organized, and delivered varying levels of healthcare, housing, education, income support, and social services (Rice and Prince 55). The history of Canadian social policy in this period “is less about sweeping reforms than about ordered change” where social policy makers proceeded with a broad conceptual framework that defined societal issues which also guided the range of government actions (Rice and Prince 66).

During this period, the Centralized Program developed by the Newfoundland Department of Welfare was succeeded by a joint federal-provincial operation entitled “The Newfoundland Resettlement Program.” By offering monetary assistance, the objective was to encourage households to relocate to growing centres as government deemed they offered more viable economic prosperity (Pitt). As a result, a number of Newfoundland communities disappeared, and many resettled workers were displaced from their traditional livelihoods of fishery (Pitt).

Fogo Island, Newfoundland, was a small island comprised of fishing communities slated for resettlement, with more than 60% of the population depending on income support (Ferreira Ramirez and Walmark 2). There were also approximately 5000 people living in 10 communities that were in relative isolation from one another (2). These communities lacked a collective voice, an effective communication channel with the government, and a forum from which their ideas could be heard and considered (Crocker 126).

Don Snowden, from Memorial University, and Colin Low, a film maker from the National Film Board, assisted the community in producing a series of short films surrounding the community's views on their life, circumstance, and economic marginalization (Ferreira Ramirez and Walmark 2-3). Creating a model for participatory video, these films were collectively produced by the communities through a cycle of filming, editing, and discussion (2-3). Once completed, the films were screened to policy makers. One of the outcomes included the people of Fogo successfully resisting government resettlement while also organizing a fishing co-operative (Crocker 66). According to Crocker, "it cannot be denied that the filming process played a large role in opening up channels of communication both among island communities and between the island and the government" (66).

As a means of challenging the resettlement policy, the people from Fogo shared what constitutes social justice from their own perspective. However, in order to contextualize efforts of social change, we must consider both the temporal and socio-political climate as well as the change focus of the respective social movement. Prior to introducing the research study, further context of the disability rights movement and the strategies guiding advocacy initiatives are provided.

The Disability Rights Movement

The disability rights movement (DRM) was founded on the transformative politics of the 1960s and was inspired by the civil rights movements around the world (Barnes 207). As a social movement, DRM is characterized as international in scope that aims at self-empowerment and consciousness-raising while also offering a critical evaluation of society, "and can be seen to focus on the quality of life of a particular section of society" (De Vlieger 1267). The DRM challenges stigmatization and marginalization of disablement by mobilizing a "sense of collective identity" through recognizing that disability is a social issue (Chivers 310-12). Premised on the social model, it is the understanding that the social and physical barriers prevent people from full participation in society (313).

In the DRM, the focus of full participation in society is closely informed by notions of citizenship (Barnes and Mercer 17; Morris). Citizenship is a set of practices (judicial, political, economic, or cultural) that define a person as a competent member of society (Turner, "Citizenship and Social Theory" 2). Turner has further differentiated between judicial and social citizenship, noting "judicial citizenship is the possession of civil and political liberties, while social citizenship is the enjoyment of the social and economic benefits of members of a nation-state" ("Citizenship and Civil Rights" 264).

The relationship between citizenship in the social realm and one's ability of full participation is critical in conceptualizing social justice: Social structures and policies that restrict or ignore the rights of disabled people often lead to discrimination and exclusion, creating disabling barriers for social citizenship (Disability Rights Promotion International). While people with disabilities may have the right to receive support and resources, the underlying values informing how these resources are distributed may be either a benefit or a disadvantage (Goodlad and Riddell 49). For instance, if framed within a charity-based model, people are often not afforded the right to define the services they need (Turmusani 6). DRM advocacy approaches associated with social citizenship are also worth considering and the extent to which these strategies focus on dismantling attitudinal and social barriers to achieve social inclusion compared to an emphasis that a person with a disability conforms to an ableist worldview.

Advocacy

Advocacy refers to "the actions taken to express one's view, to further a cause or belief, and/or to exercise rights" (Colon, Keys, and McDonald 42). Different models of disability guide different advocacy

foci and approaches toward social action (Colon et al.) where persons with disabilities, temporarily able-bodied persons and/or allies also take on different roles in the process. For persons with developmental disabilities, the two prominent approaches are citizen advocacy and self-advocacy. Each approach originated from different ideological positions. As this participatory research study discussed in this article focuses on the advocates with developmental disabilities, the following sections explore the history, characteristics, and rationale behind these two approaches.

Citizen Advocacy

Citizen advocacy focuses on allies taking leadership roles in supporting people with disabilities (Walmsley 24-28). Developed by Wolfensberger, the guiding principles include one-on-one relationships where a citizen advocate is in a volunteer capacity and is partnered with a person with a developmental disability who is referred to as “the protégé” (Flynn 30). Citizen advocacy “highlights the need for advocates genuinely to understand and represent the interests and views of the represented person, and acknowledges that achieving change can be a long-term process” (Flynn 30-31).

Along with self-advocacy, citizen advocacy, which played a role in supporting the independent living movement, was instrumental in the deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities in Western societies, and continues to have a prominent role among parents and family members advocating on behalf of their children with disabilities (Flynn 30-31).

Citizen advocacy evolved out of normalization, later referred to as Social Role Valorization (SRV) (Walmsley 26). SRV represents temporarily able-bodied people advocating for improvements for people with disabilities, where the focus is primarily to reverse the consequences of social devaluation. However, the theoretical foundation of SRV is problematic when considering the overall focus of the DRM: from a SRV position, people with disabilities are encouraged to conform to an ableist worldview in order to achieve acceptance from a society. It also places the responsibility on persons with disabilities to adapt to society in being asked to strive toward a potentially unachievable way of being.

Another concern with citizen advocacy involves the historical role of temporarily able-bodied individuals making choices and decisions on behalf of people with disabilities. Scotch and Schriener further explain this concern:

Many people have challenged the legitimacy of political representation by anyone but those who themselves have disabilities. These advocates question whose interests actually are advanced by nondisabled service providers and contend that only people with disabilities should speak on their own behalf. Such issues of representation have been applied to parents or other family members of disabled individuals. (1271)

These scholars contend that citizen advocacy is wedded to a charity-based approach toward disability advocacy, which has resulted in histories of persons with disabilities being excluded from discussions that impact their lives.

Self-Advocacy and Participatory Research

There is an affinity in participatory and action-based methodologies building on and aligning with self-advocacy. Whereas research from a post-positivist framework privileges researcher’s knowledge and expertise, participatory and inclusive methodologies value participant’s knowledge while recognizing that they are experts in their own lives (Mmatti 15). According to Mmatti, “as a matter of human rights, social justice, and respect for human dignity, persons with disabilities ought to participate in processes that shape their lives” (17).

Recent studies have explored participatory approaches that combine the use of video in disability research (Ignagni; Okahashi; Sitter). Video provides opportunities for the outcomes of the research to be accessed in non-academic spaces. For instance, Ignagni described the participatory video documentary *The Freedom Tour*, directed by self-advocates that documents “the struggle to end the institutionalization

of persons with developmental disabilities” in Canada (“The Freedom Tour” 67). Ignagni’s rich analysis of the filming process considers how participatory video can facilitate social action within the broader community (68-70).

Participatory video also holds the potential to combine self-advocacy efforts with research, where persons with disabilities are actively involved in the research process. In considering participatory video as a form of radical incrementalism, the authors report on a version of a 12-month participatory research study where adults with developmental disabilities collaboratively developed a series of short videos to explore the topic of sexual health as a human rights issue and subsequently shared the videos as part of a broader advocacy campaign.

Research Study: The Right to Love

In Western societies, people with disabilities are often perceived as asexual (Hingsburger and Tough). Crawford and Ostrove (182) emphasize that individuals with disabilities often lack resources, information, services, and support in areas of developing and maintaining positive, healthy relationships. Research studies have found that high rates of poverty, segregated institutions, silent histories, cultural values, and social stereotypes have a critical role in sustaining barriers to sexual rights for adults with developmental disabilities (Gill; Kelly, Crowley, and Hamilton; Pan and Ye; Richards, Miodrag, and Watson; World Health Organization). Findings in a Canadian research study about healthy sexuality for people with developmental disabilities stress the need for self-advocacy strategies in the area of sexual health, especially as it relates to education, support and acceptance (Hingsburger and Tough).

The Right to Love Advocacy Group

In response to these growing concerns, a group of adults with developmental disabilities in Western Canada formed an advocacy group in partnership with two community organizations: a sexual health resource center and a local organization that provides support to the disability community to develop solutions around personal and social justice issues that impact their lives.

This collaborative initiative, entitled “The Right to Love” involves working toward healthy sexuality with the goal to create an environment that supports the rights of people with developmental disabilities to develop positive sexual lives and intimate relationships. Similar to the approach advocated by Hingsburger and Tough (2002), the Right to Love group aims at challenging pejorative attitudes about sexuality and people with developmental disabilities. The group hopes their work will educate publics and raise awareness about the connections between healthy sexuality and quality of life while highlighting the need for further support services regarding the sexual health for people with developmental disabilities.

Background

One of the co-authors of this article had worked alongside the local organization for persons with developmental disabilities in several video projects. There was an interest in using video to mobilize support and educate publics on the dimensions of sexual rights. Therefore, a main goal was to engage with video as an advocacy tool in a collaborative approach. This was conceptualized through one of the guiding research questions that involved exploring participatory video as a form of radical incrementalism in the context of advocacy. The Institutional Review Board from the local university granted ethical approval and written consent was subsequently received by participants.

Theoretical Framework

The theories informing this participatory video research project included the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), Freirean pedagogy and critical disability theory. The ICF defines disability as “the outcome of the interaction between a person with an impairment and the environmental and attitudinal barriers he/she may face” (qtd. in Mulcahy). This definition holds a strong approach to the social model and also acknowledges the personal experiences in

disablement. Freirean theory stresses the role of raising critical consciousness through community-led learning and praxis (Fleuri 103-11; Wallerstein and Duran 27-52). Critical disability theory is “a theoretical framework for the study and analysis of disability issues” (Hosking 1). As a member of the critical theory family that merges both critical legal studies and critical theory (Pothier and Devlin), critical disability theory represents an integrated approach to critiquing disabling structures to achieve social, political and economic change (Meekosha and Shuttleworth 49).

Process

A total of nine adults with developmental disabilities and three allies involved in the advocacy group participated. Data collection occurred over 12-months that involved 2-hour meetings approximately every other week for 4 months, and monthly meetings during the initial stages of distributing the videos as part of the larger Right to Love campaign. Filming occurred outside of these meetings. Over this 12 month period, the research process involved self-advocates co-creating 14 short videos (5-7 minutes in length) about the dimensions of sexual rights as experienced and understood by people with developmental disabilities. Emergent themes included barriers to sexual rights, needed supports, and silenced histories. The participants subsequently incorporated their videos into their larger advocacy campaign. The following is one of the participatory videos created in the research study by self-advocates, entitled “The Right to Love Group” (Disability Action Hall).²

<http://ow.ly/L1PrH>

As film-collaborators and community educators, participants drew on their own opinions, knowledge, and experiences in constructing the messaging of disability and sexual health. The following sections highlight excerpts from the research process as well as reflections from the participants regarding their experiences of being part of the study, where participant reflections further demonstrate how this praxis contributed to mobilizing support through dialogue, developing a shared understanding of rights, and supporting collective social action amongst self-advocates.

Mobilizing Support Through Dialogue

Several participants indicated that watching the interviews during editing also solidified a shared understanding of some of the issues. For instance, in one video, a participant states that he hopes his story will help audiences understand that “people with disabilities have sex and funny stories just like everyone else, and they happen in funny, unique and challenging ways.” After viewing within the group, another participant commented that this story resonated with him on a number of levels: “what you had to say struck a chord, especially when you talk about the sharing of stories and the fact that we all have stories to share and that’s often not realized” (Participant).

While participants viewing video clips during the editing process also served to strengthen connections within the group, the act of collaborative distribution presented opportunities to create new connection with others, “by distributing our films, and working together, our voices become louder and stronger. We’re also developing relationships with others in and outside our group” (Participant). Self-advocates also thought the videos acted as a catalyst to mobilize greater support:

I see the potential in a greater way to approach our other issues. Problems are often kept internal in our community. Getting it out there to the larger community to understand it, for the government to listen, to help us, because now it becomes larger than a couple of complaints. (Participant)

² As the videos can be accessed publically, the names of the participants have been removed from this article.

Judkins' research about intergroup dialogue indicates the possibility of dialogue leading to "social action that builds a strong sense of community and an avenue toward more just and equitable structures" (33). Similar to Judkins' claim that intergroup dialogue can be an effective approach to educating people about "the individual and systemic factors of discrimination, inequality and oppression" (34), the process of screening participatory videos that highlight the barriers to sexual rights - and the supports needed to address these barriers, as defined by the self-advocates - opened up a pathway to critical discussions with a variety of publics:

Working together, we become a stronger voice. And distributing our video makes it accessible for people to know about our histories. Our problems are often kept internal to our community. Using film gets it out to the larger community. (Participant)

This comment further reflects the importance of power arrangements in the advocacy process, where public screenings also afforded participants a level of recognition as experts in their lived experiences.

Shared Understanding of Rights

Behind the camera during post-production, participants strategized how to craft and present their final messages through a visual medium. Part of this process involved exercising a collective capacity in defining and explaining the concepts explored through video. For instance, during one editing session, participants thought it imperative that the films include the vision statement of "The Right to Love" and a list of 10 core messages created by the group:

Participant 1: This list is 10 messages from everyone. We're the ones saying we have the right to love, to have children, the right to make mistakes. We define the parameters of what "rights" mean.

Participant 2: And the mission and vision statement we made as a group fits into why we're going to film. It says: "we want [our city] to be a place where everyone can have the right to love."

Participant 3: This film is a vision about human rights of disabled people's rights to love.

Participant 1: And film's a great tool to spread the word. I think we can be as radical as we want. But we want the world to know. We talk about: "let's get love out of the classroom and onto the streets where it happens."

Participant 3: That's right! Education! Education!

Participant 1: It's getting people revved up! Not being ashamed and not being told "no."

While in the end, participatory video provided a medium to share key messages, the filming process also created a space where self-advocates learned from each other. As one participant states:

What I liked about filming was that it portrayed an example of the right to love of disabled people and the rights we are allowed to have... Doing the film, gives you more of an idea of the rights that we have. So, that's how it is. I learned about my rights in making these films and listening to the stories we all shared. (Participant)

Collective Action

The process of developing, editing, and sharing the videos contributed to reframing the topic of sexual rights from the perspectives of self-advocates. Self-representation through video fostered spaces both in front of and behind the camera that broke the silence of disability and sexuality as a taboo topic. Through distribution, advocates used film to honor their own voices and the voices of people from the

disability community while challenging paternalistic conceptions of disability and sexuality. The videos further represented people defining their own experiences while supporting the self-advocacy framework. As explained by one participant: “through our stories, there’s a human piece that comes out, and a lot of times that hidden by statistics, or other people’s voices” (Participant).

The *Right to Love Group* video also includes repeated emphasis of people with disabilities standing alongside other efforts from marginalized groups to secure similar rights. Such an example first appears in the opening sequence where a self-advocate in the film clearly states: “Everyone has the right to love. It doesn’t matter if you’re gay, straight, disabled, non-disabled, everyone has the right to love.” This is further reiterated throughout the video in scenes where self-advocates march in Gay and Disability Pride Parades, as well as in the final narrated sequence where a self-advocate declares the following:

This film celebrates the right to love. We believe everyone has the right to love. Whether you’re a pet owner, a person with a disability or not, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual – everyone has the right to love. (Participant)

Thus the video not only reveals an awareness of other marginalizations, but also exhibits genuine solidarity across multiple groups. This form of intersectional understanding, along with the connections with other movements as demonstrated in the video, also play an essential role in the form of radical incrementalism that is at work in this movement: To make contiguous and impactful incremental change requires considerable support both from within and outside a given movement, and the multi-modal approach that the Right to Love group takes up offers an important model to that end.

Discussion

A central aspect of participatory video involves working together to co-create an environment with the group that honors and values different ways individuals come to know and experience the world. In this study, creating and distributing participant-generated videos opened up spaces that honored knowledge derived through lived experiences. There are considerations worth noting. Engagement in this form of research requires an extensive time commitment with all involved. With rapid mobile advancements and growth of digital platforms, engagement with video and visual media require minimal resources compared to five years ago. However, knowledge of collaborative and participatory approaches amongst researchers, as well as technical skills, are required, to ensure the technology does not overpower the process itself.

As a form of radical incrementalism, participatory video bridges scholarship and activism through a participatory research methodology. Arguably, participatory video also minimizes the risk of adopting a paternalistic approach to social justice: by providing community groups opportunities to appropriate communication tools such as video, these individuals are defining and communicating what constitutes social justice from their own perspective.

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‘CAPITALISM A NUH’ WI FRIEN’

THE FORMATTING OF FARMING INTO AN ASSET, FROM FINANCIAL SPECULATION TO INTERNATIONAL AID

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Abstract

This paper deciphers the formatting of farming into an asset by tracking the modalities by which financial calculation is enabled across different sites of agency. The first focus of our analysis is commodity futures markets, which have witnessed spikes in prices in 2008 and in 2012. In the paper, we look at these hikes as the outcome of endogenous dynamics, caused by the changing makeup of market participants after 2000, which turned futures markets into resources for hedging commodity index-linked derivative products. We subsequently analyse the increasing reliance on financial actors placed by public development agencies that channel funds through private equity initiatives to acquire and invest in farmland. To complete our analysis, we set our contribution alongside the alternative represented by food-sovereignty, which offers the promise of heeding to the needs engendered within the peasant milieu, as opposed to subjecting it to extrinsic quantitative metrics.

I. Introduction

‘Capitalism a nuh’ wi frien’ is a line from the bitter recollection in song by the Rastafari dub poet Mutabaruka (2002), who laments the dismal predicament of Jamaican farmers as a result of the ‘structural adjustment’ policies imposed through the stick of conditional loans by the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s. Specifically, these reforms opened national agriculture to competition from abroad, and particularly from (heavily subsidised)¹ exports from the United States (Black 2001). As a consequence, many local farmers were pushed off the land for the inability to find a market for their products which, unlike American imports, did not benefit from the same subsidies. Therefore, the ‘wi’ who are not befriended by capitalism, in Mutabaruka’s sorrowful lyrics, refers primarily to the rural population, and especially smallholders, who get to witness the uneven nature of capitalist development from the short end of the stick. While the Jamaican experience does not form the focus of this paper, it is worth opening with because it is paradigmatic of a process of paring down the institutional net keeping ‘traditional’ socio-economic ecologies alive, and of supplanting these by means of a forcible formatting in accordance with market mechanisms that often leave those previously involved in a richer tapestry of exchanges (beyond the calculative logic of economic efficiency) in an even more vulnerable and precarious position. The goal this paper seeks to achieve, then, is precisely to further the understanding of such a process.

At its heart, we argue, this ongoing ‘great transformation’ in the agricultural sector entails the imposition of a monologic rationality that ignores network effects and ecological dynamics that give meaning and resilience to different local arrangements: this is something that has originally been described by Polanyi (1944) as ‘double movement’.²

Indeed, building on Polanyi’s reading, one could even go as far as to argue that the imposition of a calculative economic logic to relating—among people as well as with the material ecology enabling life on the planet—is implied by the very etymology of the word ‘capitalism’. ‘Capital’ literally means ‘pertaining to the head’, which in turn is often taken to mean ‘more prominent’ (Harper 2015). This synecdoche, whereby one part is taken to dominate the whole, reflects an orientation to the head as the

seat of personality (Cannan 1921, 469). Today, the appropriateness of a similar act of simplification is at the very least objectionable, particularly in contrast to new directions in social psychology (Malafouris 2013; Noe 2010), whereby it appears highly problematic to isolate the development of personality from the vitality of the body and the encounter with a living materiality. If anything, then, the very rhetorical origin of the word signals an attempt to square life in an overly simplistic and linear format, which is deeply inadequate to express its textured complexity. ‘Capital’ subsequently finds application in economic lingo as a metaphor: if the head is (poorly) understood as the most important part of the body, financial capital represents the quantitatively most important part of a debt, on the basis of which interest is compounded (Cannan 1921, 470).

In view of this, *the very linguistic roots of the word ‘capital’ imply a process of calculation*. And calculation necessarily presupposes the abstraction of different units for it to be carried out, such as capital as opposed to interest. The transformation worked upon social and ecological relationships as they are downgraded to ‘capital’ is equally reflected in the use of the word ‘externalities’, to refer to qualities that ‘do not matter’ in an exchange transaction, precisely because they are left out of the process of calculation (Latour and Callon 1997, 6).

The contradictions of capital-ism applied to farming, then, begin to appear in their monstrosity. This is because, on the one hand, farming stands for an ecology of social and material relations, forged in the co-production of human agency and living nature, and held together in an inextricable mangle of feedback loops (van der Ploeg 2009, 23–26). On the other hand, the pretence to subject farming, so understood, to the calculative practices that characterise capital-ism requires instead the artificial isolation of spaces to enable control and channel investment, on the basis of which financial calculus may subsequently be enabled. The extrication of the inextricable for the purpose of calculation is therefore at the root of a number of vigorous tensions permeating the world of farming as it is formatted into an ‘asset’ capable of attracting investment.

In light of the above, this paper aims to describe some of those contradictions and to facilitate an emergent understanding of some of the forms that the process of subjecting agriculture to financial calculation and quantitative accounting takes today, through the prism of two significant examples: financial speculation and international aid on matters of agricultural production and ‘development’. In order to pursue this inquiry, in section II we aim to decipher the passages by which the privatisation of commodity trade has made financial markets the principal channel to procure insurance (through contracts named ‘futures’) against price fluctuations. Financial markets have subsequently been hijacked by actors looking at commodity futures as mere devices on which to pin an intricate process of hedging liabilities arising (not from food production and exchange, but) from the offering of derivative products. This process, as the accompanying discussion of the unstable endogenous dynamics of financial markets shows, is all the more unsettling in the face of the increasing reliance placed on these by public law bodies to deliver rural development goals. The third section is devoted precisely to an examination of this latter phenomenon and, specifically, to a case study conducted by the second author on the provision of development financing by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The contradictions of this strategy become all the more apparent as one considers the work of scholars such as Visser (2014), whose research casts doubt on the financial viability of investment in land beyond the narratives and symbolisations produced within the in-group of investment brokers.

Following this discussion, we suggest in the concluding section that a possible alternative to the top-down ordering of agriculture according to the extrinsic logic of assets and investment can be found in the paradigm of food sovereignty (Forum for Food Sovereignty 2007; La Via Campesina 1996). Specifically, by re-focusing attention and intervention away from an analysis informed by extrinsic benchmarks and towards participatory practices and localised struggles for resilience, food sovereignty embeds a phenomenological sensitivity for approaching matters of food on terms derived from within the entanglements in which farming is materialised in concrete instances and living communities.

II. Financial speculation on agricultural commodities: a qualitative appraisal

In the summer of 2014, a big piece of news for those interested in food politics was India's veto over a proposed agreement, to be concluded within the framework of the World Trade Organization, on 'trade facilitation measures' (Express News Service 2014). The agreement was meant to regulate a number of sensitive issues, mostly related to customs infrastructure and procedures, which are liable to affect trade between WTO members. As it often happens with international agreements, however, exceptions and exemptions are as important as the rules being agreed to. In Bali, which is where the 'trade facilitation' negotiations were happening, the bone of contention happened to be India's request for a permanent exemption from further trade liberalization of its public stockpiling and distribution system for food staples (Bose 2014).

In fact, the centerpiece of India's food security infrastructure is the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This is a public body, established in 1964, that acts as a cross between a marketing board, a food bank and a subsidy scheme (Damodar 2010). It stockpiles grains and other food staples (which it buys at controlled prices that give farmers some protection against fluctuations). It then uses this reserve to distribute grains at times when market prices become too high, both as a way to bring those prices down (this is what a marketing board does) as well as to ensure access to essential dietary staples (the 'food bank' aspect). In other words, the FCI is like a public insurance mechanism against the fluctuation of food prices. To set this problem in the context of the broader discussion undertaken here, the FCI can then be understood as an instance of distancing agricultural production and consumption from the operation of market mechanisms, when these would risk undermining the livelihoods of farmers or poor consumers. The issue in Bali, then, was whether India should be allowed to keep the FCI indefinitely, or whether it should gradually phase it out, in order to leave free reign to private actors.³

But what exactly does the free reign of private actors on matters of trade in agricultural commodities entail? Are there cases that can vouch for (or warn against) it as a viable substitute to publicly-administered schemes like the FCI?

Privatised insurance markets against price fluctuations; The fiasco of 2007-08

To address those questions, this section explores how financial markets, now the private insurance mechanism *par excellence*, have worked directly against the goal they are purportedly seeking to address. Specifically, rather than dampening price instability, they have enhanced it due to their propensity to trigger self-reinforcing speculation. In order to make this seemingly technical discussion accessible to a broad audience, the section includes an extensive review of the functioning of commodity *futures* markets for a non-specialized readership, as an aid to comprehension of the broader point: that, when public price-control mechanisms like the FCI are taken out of the picture, farmers (especially smallholders) are at risk of being left at the mercy of price fluctuations. The consequences, for farmers, are particularly challenging, and often sufficient to push many off the land. For instance, they might decide to err on the side of caution and sow more from one year to the next, so as to preserve their overall income even in the case of falling prices (by selling more). The sad irony of this strategy is that, as many farmers simultaneously do the same, they can create a glut that depresses prices even further, producing the very conditions they are trying to shelter themselves against. Desperate to secure sales for their crops, farmers will also accept whatever prices will get them an income (Newman 2009, 550). In other words, they will be more eager to bend to the dictates of more concentrated brokers and processors further along the food supply chain. In the absence of a public insurance system like the FCI, in fact, those who can—typically farmers more integrated in global commodity chains, leaning towards extensive mechanization and scale of agricultural production—are left with the option of purchasing private insurance (Breger Bush 2012, 8). And that private insurance, when it comes to crops, is called a *future*. Futures are agreements for the sale or purchase of commodities (like many food staples, e.g. grains) at a fixed price, for future delivery. These agreements are in turn exchanged as standardized positions on regulated exchanges, the largest of which are located in the US (Kerckhoffs, van Os, and Vander Stichele 2010, 4). Because they are traded

on regulated and centralized exchanges, futures prices are considered reliable indicators of the conditions of the markets for the concerned commodities, even by operators who trade those commodities on spot exchanges (i.e. everyone who buys and sells agricultural produce, such as wholesalers), since futures prices are meant to reflect information more complete than would be available on fragmented spot markets (Peck 1985, 73). In this sense, even if only a few farmers can directly transact in futures, *all* farmers are affected by fluctuations in the prices of these instruments.

The fact that futures are exchanged in standardized form means that one does not directly enter into an agreement with a specific party. Instead, buy and sell orders are matched by a clearinghouse (Peck 1985, 6–7). Indeed, one way to think of the functioning of futures markets is to think of them as like the more familiar stock exchange (Troester and Staritz 2013, 25) where, however, what is exchanged is not stocks, but rather commodities with a pre-determined delivery date.⁴ This means that there are as many different ‘prices’ as there are available delivery dates to choose from. Like a stock exchange, futures markets can also be subject to endogenous dynamics (i.e. patterns of trading emerging from the combination of motives, institutional arrangements, and the technological and analytical equipment of market participants, rather than from exogenous factors such as the available supply or demand of the goods being traded) that can—under certain conditions—make their functioning a ticking time-bomb.

Indeed, economists like Hyman Minsky (2008, 230–8) have, for instance, long suggested that a lot of what happens in a financial market need not necessarily be explained by appealing to fluctuations in supply and demand, understood as external variables that are simply reflected in price dynamics. Sometimes, instead, markets cause by their own functioning the problems that neoclassically-trained economists subsequently try to pin on fluctuations in demand and supply.

In the case of commodity futures, the beginning of the story lies in the changing structure of commodity futures markets after the approval of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act in the US in the year 2000. A commodity future, as anticipated above, is a contract for the sale or purchase of a standardized commodity (including many food staples) with a future delivery date. The regulated markets for commodity futures basically generate a price for a given maturity date, by matching standardized buy and sell orders. The effect of opening a position on the futures market is not—like on a stock exchange—to acquire ownership of the underlying asset, but simply to freeze the price at the level it stands, for a given future delivery date. This is where the original insurance function stems from, since an open futures position insulates the transaction from the dynamics of the spot (immediate delivery) market because, on maturity, the exchange will be performed at the previously agreed price, not at the spot (current) price. An alternative to holding a futures position till maturity, however, is to determine one’s exposure before taking delivery, by opening at a later time the opposite position (for the same delivery date), presumably for a different price than had been previously fixed on the original order. This means that opening and closing positions on the futures market, for a given delivery date, at different moments in time can result in profits or losses. Because standardized futures contracts are not entered into with a specific party, if one submits a ‘buy’ order it is always possible for that investor to determine his or her exposure, by putting in a ‘sell’ order for that same delivery date, and vice versa. Of course, if ‘buy’ and ‘sell’ orders for a particular delivery date are put in at different moments in time prior to delivery, it might be that one might sell for more than he or she bought (a profit-making strategy called ‘going long’), or that they will buy for less than they originally sold (a strategy called ‘going short’) (Garner 2010, 25).⁵

Prior to the 2000 Act coming into force, participants in this market (especially when it came to agricultural commodities) were either commercial operators who needed to insure themselves against price fluctuations, or arbitrageurs, who merely sought to profit from temporary price variations, while being subject to precise position limits (Kaufman 2010, 30–31). After 2000, however, the Commodity Futures Modernization Act allowed unregulated over-the-counter derivative transactions on commodities (thereby opening a market for financial products indexed to the price of commodity futures, as described below), as well as containing the so-called ‘swap-dealer loophole’, whereby parties hedging a financial position could trade on the futures market like ‘commercial’ operators engaging in it for operational needs (such as to insure their produce against price fluctuations), thereby being exempt from the stricter position limits for speculators (Ghosh 2010, 78). Both of these are relevant for what was to follow.

As a consequence, in fact, after 2000 a new type of investment scheme became ubiquitous, which has since become known as ‘commodity index speculation’. In its original OTC form, it consists of a swap contract between the swap dealer (typically an investment bank, like Goldman Sachs) and an institutional investor, like a pension fund, with money to invest. The swap would be used to simulate (financially) the (actual) ownership of commodities. This would initially require the institutional investor to pay the dealer a lump sum. In exchange for it, they would be credited at contractually-stipulated dates with the variations in value of their simulated investment in commodities. The way this ‘virtual’ ownership of commodities would be simulated is by taking as a point of reference the value of a commodity index. This is a figure obtained through a mathematical formula that averages the price of different commodity futures, weighted by the percentage of different commodities that have been included in the index (Masters and White 2008, 9). Let’s take for instance a hypothetical index including grain, gas and oil futures in equal percentages. This would translate into a number that would track over time—in equal measure relative to one another—the price of gas, grain and oil. The reason for choosing the futures price specifically stems from the assumption that futures prices are a reliable indicator of the proximate fluctuations in spot prices, so that investing in commodity futures is more or less equivalent to buying the commodities themselves, if all one is looking for is to simulate commodity ownership from a purely financial standpoint (Frenk and Turbeville 2011, 8). To return to the swap contract, the dealer would then—at fixed dates—have to transfer the variation in the value of the index between any two contractually stipulated settlement dates.

However, once the dealer takes the obligation upon him-/herself to deliver a cash flow that reproduces ownership of a basket of commodities, it would then make sense for them to procure insurance against fluctuations in the prices of those commodities. And the way to do so is to join commercial operators (trying to insure themselves against risks related to their business, e.g. as grain traders or producers) on the futures market: this is how the link between an OTC derivative transaction—the swap—and the futures market is first established. What is significant to note, here, is that swap dealers enter the same insurance market as commercial operators, to cover themselves against the fluctuation of commodity prices. This entails, in turn, that their trading strategies will be responsive (not to events pertaining to the actual production and exchange of commodities, but) to the peculiar characteristics of the financial risks they are insuring themselves against, as illustrated below.

This, in fact, is where a crucial issue arises, namely that, while a futures contract by definition has a time-limited duration (because it is subject to a delivery date), the sort of obligation that the swap dealer enters into with the institutional investor can in theory be open-ended. In other words, the swap dealer can synthesize ‘ownership’ of commodities over an unspecified length of time, and they would ‘insure’ themselves against the risk entailed by this financial obligation by opening futures positions, which however expire at a certain date in the future (Frenk and Turbeville 2011, 8). So the tool (commodity future) used to insure the swap dealers’ financial risks is not built to cover the entire span of the risks—from indefinite exposure to commodity price fluctuations—that they are trying to shield themselves against.

This creates a discrepancy between:

1. The length of the obligation of the swap dealer towards the institutional investor through the swap contract on the one hand, and
2. The length of a standardised futures contract on the other, through which the swap dealer may try to insure their financial risk.

This discrepancy poses the need for periodical rollover of any futures positions that have been opened by the dealer to hedge the swap. In other words, it’s as though the swap dealers had to keep renewing their insurance coverage, upon its expiry date. The way they do so is through a particular trade called a rollover, which involves closing one’s exposure on futures nearing maturity, and opening an interest in the next-expiring batch.

A rollover requires first of all to open the opposite position (say ‘sell’) on a given maturity date, to the one that an operator already holds. In this way, the original undertaking (for example, ‘buy’) cancels out with the new one. This is followed by opening a new position (e.g. ‘buy’) for a later delivery date. So, if I enter into a commitment to buy grain for delivery on the 2nd of February, I can later enter into another

one to sell grain for delivery on the 2nd of February, so that my two positions cancel out and I don't actually have to take physical delivery. Subsequent to that, I may then wish to 'roll over' my exposure to the futures market by submitting another commitment to buy grain for delivery on March 2nd.

This, in fact, is what a swap dealer would be doing, since they would typically hold a number of positions containing the undertaking to buy for delivery at a fixed date into the future (say February 2nd). As that date approaches, the swap dealer would undertake to sell the same amount for delivery on February 2nd, so that its obligations would cancel out. When this happens, however, what a third-party observer would see would be a sudden surge in 'sell' orders for the given commodity as the delivery date of February 2nd approaches. For these 'sell' orders to clear with matching 'buy' orders, it is likely that the price they will attract will be lower than it would otherwise have been outside of the rollover period (Troester and Staritz 2013, 25).

Symmetrically, as the swap dealer rolls its position over into a later-expiring future, it would issue a 'buy order' with a later expiry date (say March 2nd). For this surge in 'buy' orders to clear with matching 'sell' orders, the commodity will draw a higher price than it otherwise would outside the rollover period, when sudden surges in 'buy' orders would not normally occur.

The fact that these rollovers happen at regular intervals, for contractual reasons (insuring the risks stemming from a commodity index swap) and not to reflect fundamentals in the underlying commodity market muddles the informational value of futures prices. Furthermore, the periodical price-depression of near-expiring futures (as swap dealers close expiring future positions) and price-inflation of later-expiring futures (as swap dealers open new positions on the buy side) tilts the structure of futures prices towards contango (see also Frenk and Turbeville 2011, 15–17; Russi 2013, 50):

The declared purpose of forward trading and of futures markets is to allow for hedging against price fluctuations, whereby the selling of futures contracts would exceed the demand for them. This implies that futures prices would be lower than spot prices, or what is known as *backwardation*. However, throughout much of the period from January 2007 to June 2008, the markets were actually in *contango*, in which futures prices were higher than spot prices. This cannot reflect the hedging function and must imply the involvement of speculators who are expecting to profit from rising prices. (Ghosh 2010, 78–9).

Many commentators of neoclassical formation have denied that this sort of price structure—even if induced by the activity of commodity index speculation—could ever have any repercussions on spot prices, which they suggest only reflect *present* (not anticipated) scarcity of a commodity, based on standard demand and supply interaction (Irwin, Sanders, and Merrin 2009, 379–80). On this reading, the rise of grain prices becomes something to ascribe exclusively to increased meat consumption, draughts, and competition between edible crops and biofuels, all of which directly affect supply of the relevant commodities (Clapp 2012, 130; Ghosh 2010, 72–73).

However, as buyers and sellers on spot markets take into account the signals coming from the futures market, those sellers with access to storage facilities might decide to hoard, whereas interested buyers, anticipating a rise in prices, might try to stockpile today to shelter themselves from rising prices in the future (Frenk and Turbeville 2011, 9). Hence, a price structure induced by the periodical rollover of futures contracts seems capable to affect spot prices as well, even though any ownership on the part of the swap dealers themselves would never be more than 'virtual' as they close off their positions and never take delivery. As a consequence of contango in the futures market, instead, 'real' scarcity could and did in fact ensue on spot markets in the 2007-08 period (during which time futures markets were precisely in contango), sparking protests and 'hunger revolutions' around the world (Holt-Gimenez and Patel 2009, 6 see also Figure 1 below): this—as mentioned at the beginning of this section—is because, while the main futures markets are centralized in the United States, they are used worldwide as a reference for spot trading as well.

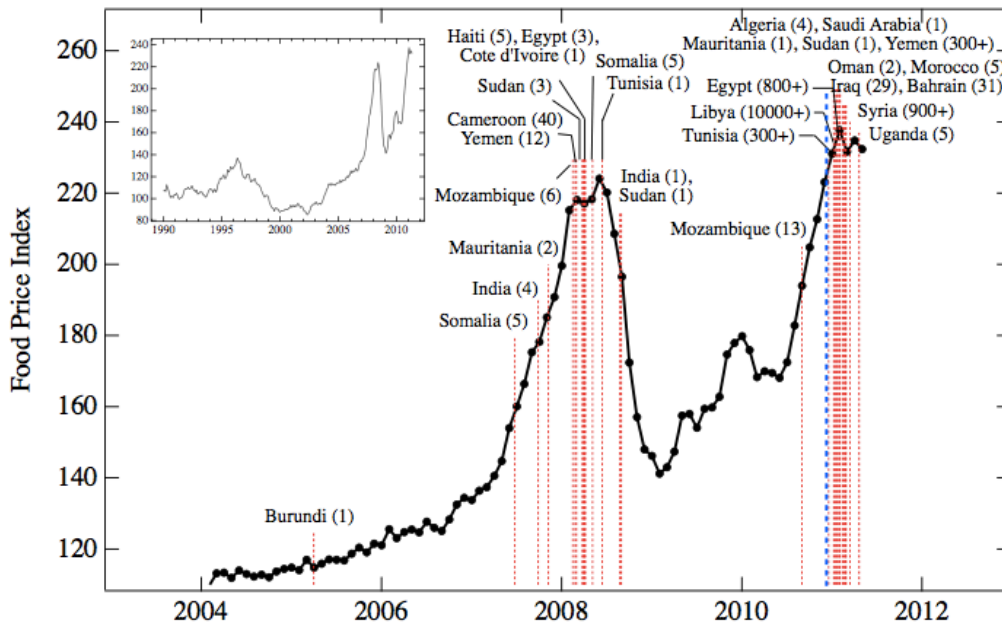


Figure 1 Time dependence of FAO Food Price Index from January 2004 to May 2011. Red dashed vertical lines correspond to beginning dates of food riots. Source: Lagi et al. (2011, 3)

Add to this that commodity-indexed financial products became particularly attractive as investment opportunities, particularly after the dotcom and subprime bubbles. As Minsky (1982) has observed more generally, the rush to a particular asset in a bull market reinforces in and of itself the upward price spiral in a way that is not dissimilar to what happened in the futures market for agricultural commodities. Where, as more money was poured into commodity index investment, an increasing proportion of futures trading symmetrically started to take place to hedge the liabilities of dealers of commodity-linked products (rather than to provide insurance against price fluctuations for operational purposes). An estimate by Masters and White (2008), which they obtain by integrating the Supplemental Commodity Index Traders (CIT) reports filed with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) along with data about the composition of commodity indices disseminated by swap dealers like Goldman Sachs and UBS and closing futures prices as reported by Bloomberg (Masters and White 2008, 49–51) suggests that, in 2008 for example, an average of 41% of futures trading was being undertaken in connection with index speculation (Masters and White 2008, 34).⁶ The increase in the percentage of futures trades being undertaken in connection with speculation would eventually cause a self-reinforcing loop whereby, as more and more commodity investors engage in ‘automatic’ rollovers, the contango-inducing dynamics that these rollovers perpetuate would become stronger. This drives up futures prices even further, increasing the appeal of commodities as an investment, and eventually leading to an increasing amount of trading that takes place to hedge commodity index-linked products, thereby giving rise to a self-reinforcing loop of investment driving futures prices higher through contango-inducing rollovers, and higher futures prices begetting more investment. In addition to this, contango-inducing dynamics were further exacerbated by other speculators, such as money managers, who positioned themselves so as to profit from the rollover. If, in fact, market participants who are not involved in hedging commodity-indexed products anticipate that the near-expiring future will trade for less in response to a predicted surge in ‘sell’ orders from swap dealers during the rollover period, they may adopt a strategy of ‘going long’, by selling before the rollover period and buying (for less) during that subsequent phase (Frenk and Turbeville 2011, 23). However, as several operators simultaneously trade in anticipation of the rollover, this can create another ‘mini-surge’ of sell orders that lengthens the span and breadth of contango-

inducing trading.⁷

An interim conclusion

What the above illustrates, then, is how financial markets are prone to self-referential dynamics that can become an independent contributor to the fragility of the economic system as a whole (in this case, the resilience and durability of farming production). Beyond asking for more financial regulation, this observation is of use in the economy of this paper to revitalize a critical stance towards ‘development’ policy. Indeed, the provision of insurance to farmers through (privatized) futures markets has them trading alongside speculators who equally engage on those markets for an ‘insurance’ purpose, even though it is to insure themselves—not against the risk of not being able to sell crops for a decent price (as is the case for farmers), but—against the liabilities entailed by their financial offering to their customers. This ushers the question of *why farmers have nothing but the financial casino to turn to, in order to hedge the risk of fluctuating prices for their produce.*

Our suggestion is that this is because of a mixture of neoliberal-inspired development policies and an international regulatory framework that limits state intervention (as undertaken through schemes like the FCI), for example under the programmatic objective of ‘trade liberalization’ pursued by the WTO (Robbins 2003, 32–37 & 136–37). As a consequence of these measures, in fact, a number of public law consortia and marketing boards like the FCI have been abolished, even though they used to help stabilize prices by carefully monitoring production and stockpiling reserves.

Despite two consecutive surges in the price of food staples, in 2008 and then again in 2012 (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2012), due to the qualitative dynamics just described, the idea that treating farming as a source of assets to be mobilized and traded on financial markets still has an enduring hold. For instance, Irwin et al. (2009) approach the commodities futures market by means of apodictic theoretical definitions, as a site for purchasing insurance against price fluctuations, even against the qualitative evidence presented earlier that suggests how the makeup of participants has drastically changed in favor of commodity speculators and money managers, so as to have significantly distanced futures trading from that original purpose. Following their line of reasoning, it is still possible to cherish comfortable neoclassical assumptions about the theoretical usefulness of financial markets for farmers.⁸

III. The pursuit of ‘development’ through finance

Despite the poor track record of mixing questions of farming and rural development with the quantitative logic of financial calculus (Romero and Van de Poel 2014), the dominant (however unwarranted) attitude increasingly appears to be that the former are better served through the channels of finance and the private sector. International finance institutions such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the EU Directorate-General for External Policies are among the strongest proponents of this approach (Griffiths et al. 2014; Konig, da Silva, and Mhlanga 2013; World Bank and IMF 2002). Alongside the discussion conducted in the previous section, the extent of the contradictions that this policy stance generates is also evident in the worrisome experiments of public-private partnerships (PPP) for rural investment.

Readers may be aware that public-private projects are not a novelty in the development framework. Often in the past has public money been used to leverage private capital and build large-scale infrastructure (so called ‘mega-development projects’) that the public donor identified as needed or required. However, the post-2008 bailout of the financial sector and the consequent expansion of public indebtedness have produced a shift in the way in which private and public funds are combined, including in the development sector. The current way of undertaking PPP, ‘whereby some of the services that fall under the responsibilities of the public sector are provided by the private sector’ (PPPIRC 2014) represents a new and controversial strategy overtly aimed at lifting rural livelihoods by means of financial leverage, short-term private accumulation, and a hope in long-term trickle-down effects generated by privately-led economic growth.

Rural transformation through private equity investment

An interesting case in point is the role of the European Investment Bank (EIB), a financial institution established in 1958 under the Treaty of Rome as one of the components of the then European Economic Community's infrastructure, with the mandate to undertake investments to support the policy goals pursued by the latter's members. Originally committed to finance projects implemented within Europe, since the first Yaoundé Convention of 1963 the Bank's mission has been extended so as to encompass the financing of operations outside the EEC (now EU), whenever these would align with its goals.⁹ A simpler way to think about it is as a vehicle for long-term public investments coherent with the EU's internal and external policy. However, the public purpose behind the very birth of this institution is heavily tested when it comes to the most recent strategies and investment in agribusiness and agroforestry, and especially as far as the reliance on financial actors is concerned. For instance, one way investment in these sectors is currently being carried out is by allocating public money (not to specific projects, but) to agricultural investment funds, among which 'equity and private equity funds represent the largest share, both in terms of capital base and number of funds' (Miller et al. 2010, xvi). Private equity funds are corporate structures that buy a stake in commercial ventures, from which they feel they will be able to obtain an operational profit or a capital gain. In the field of agriculture, these funds' managers have shown a growing interest in the sector, and they have been exponentially criticized because of the adverse impacts that their interventions can generate, mainly on issues of food security, environmental protection, access to land by local communities, protection of biodiversity, and lack of accountability. Moreover, there are mounting concerns about their focus on producing for the international market, the creation of formalized food chains that drive small-scale farmers out of business and the way in which workers are treated. As far as the re-organization of food production and distribution is concerned, funds that receive public money typically invest both upstream and downstream in the food chain, with a clear preference for existing large-scale agricultural ventures (or for scaling up smaller operations by means of contract farming), financing the production and distribution of hybrid, genetically modified, improved and patented seed varieties (which in turn make farmers chronically dependent on the companies producing these), the provision of machinery, the enlargement of monocultural and industrialized plantations, as well as post-harvest marketing operations, distribution and integration in the global (export) market (Miller et al. 2010; Romero and Van de Poel 2014). In other words, most of these projects funnel money into plantation-style rural ventures that impose chronic dependence on external technological inputs or 'global' export markets, contributing to a 'chang[e] [in] the distribution of power and influence over the governance of the whole food system' (Clapp 2014).¹⁰ Moreover, a recent review of the EIB's project loans and equity portfolio conducted by the second author has revealed that agriculture and forestry investments that the EIB supports in the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Region (ACP) are often tantamount to diverting productivity from food crops to biofuels or transforming communal forests into sources of carbon credits, two other emerging areas of interest.¹¹ If this seems anything but peasant-friendly, it should be no surprise. Equity and private equity funds, after all, are known to have as their purpose to reap a profit from whatever investment opportunities they perceive (Romero and Van de Poel 2014). The fact that a public-purpose institution decides to delegate them its decision-making powers as to where to channel public funds, however, is less comforting.

Land grabbing: When public funds encounter financial capital

Possibly riskier than direct investment in private equity funds, however, is the creation of hybrid public-private institutions like the Global Energy Efficiency Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF), which was recently established within the EU framework through an endowment of €112 million from the European Commission's Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO), the German Ministry of Environment and the Norwegian Ministry of Development.

Advised by the EIB, GEEREF is presented as an innovative fund-of-funds aimed at 'catalyzing private sector capital into clean energy projects in developing countries and economies in transition'

(GEEREF 2014). Officially created to balance the public objective of climate mitigation with the private interest in high returns, the fund is structured in such a way that public funds offset transaction costs, providing a subsidy towards private returns. To use the words of the European Commission, the fund is shaped to leverage private investments by providing ‘patient capital’, i.e. it ‘would accept lower returns thereby lifting returns for the private sector, accept longer investment or repay periods thereby addressing the issue of large upfront investments, and accept higher transaction costs thereby facilitating private investment in small- and medium-sized investment projects’ (European Commission 2006). Additionally, there are two further characteristics of the GEEREF that require critical engagement.

First of all, although the fund was originally financed with public money only, it ‘is currently seeking a similar amount of private capital from private sector investors, to bring the total funds under management above €200 million. The first private capital commitments were signed in the end of 2013 and fund-raising efforts are ongoing’ (GEEREF 2014). By doing so, the fund itself will soon become a public-private partnership, and not only a source of public money to invest in private activities. The decision to open a development fund to private capital can produce an expansion of its operations, but may also produce the privatization of the fund, i.e. an increased interest in return on investment rather than in its development effectiveness, and the need to compete with other funds on market terms in order not to lose private capital.

The second characteristic of GEEREF is that it works as a ‘funds of funds’, in the sense that it channels its own financial resources into still other funds. In much the same way as pension funds and large institutional funds do, GEEREF’s funds are allocated to other investment vehicles rather than to specific projects. More precisely, it looks for ‘private equity funds which focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in emerging markets’ (GEEREF 2014). Rather than having direct control over the final project receiving the investment, GEEREF management enters into an investment agreement with the target fund, whereby guidelines and obligations are identified. Once the agreement is concluded and the investment undertaken, GEEREF becomes a client, with rights and obligations that derive from its share in the fund rather than hinging on its specific role as a development investment fund.

The acceptance of private capital and the fact that GEEREF invests its resources in funds rather than in specific projects are justified on the basis of the higher leverage that this strategy produces. However, its semi-privatization alongside the multiplication in the number of private intermediaries that invest in the same target funds and are mainly interested in the investment’s rate of return, can lead to problematic consequences. Beginning from the widening gap between the developmental purpose of public resources (in this case provided by DEVCO alongside Germany and Norway) and the search for profit when target funds decide what projects to finance. The risk is that the contractual obligation to reward private investors will push the development aspect of the fund to the background of the financial objective. A project with a deeper developmental impact would thus be chosen only if it is equally or less risky *and* equally or more revenue-generating than a project with a lower development impact.

In addition, while the EIB as a public institution has a degree of accountability, GEEREF—as a quasi-private fund-of-funds—immediately becomes less transparent and distant from the ‘real life’ of development projects. For example, one of the target funds uses the generic term ‘biomass’ to describe possible areas of investment, and when the second author of this paper interviewed one of its managers, he was told that the fund may invest in projects that are already operating and where residual agricultural products could be burned or fermented to generate energy. However, the same person added that the fund may decide to establish its own plantation for harvesting fuel-crops, and that it could equally invest in projects that require the acquisition of the land or that are undertaken on leased land. Neither option would be outside of the investing agreement concluded with GEEREF, and although the latter’s opinion would still be sought, it would have a merely consultative weight without invalidating or vetoing the investment so pursued. What this example demonstrates, in sum, is that the legal construction of the fund is such to allow a wide variety of investments and developmental impact, spanning from supporting situations where food-waste is transformed into energy to cases where land is leased or purchased,¹² subtracting it from food production, and cultivating energy crops. The investment guidelines and the decision to incorporate the EIB environmental guidelines certainly represent soft-law tools that may

orient the target fund in its investments, but can hardly offset the confidential nature of several investments,¹³ nor offer an immediate platform for complaint and redress to affected local communities.

All these features aptly embody the contradiction of having to harmonize pro-development public policies with the need to earn a return for private investors. As public money trickles down to other funds, especially through a vehicle like GEEREF, the final destination of the initial investment is further removed from its developmental goal, along with any possibility for open scrutiny or public accountability.

Agricultural investment as zero-sum game

The extent of the paradoxes inherent in the financialization of agricultural development emerges in full when one considers that not only is investment in land-based projects, undertaken with public money, often at odds with the development of a resilient tapestry of small and diverse producers (and, therefore, runs counter the needs of small farmers and their communities); it is also a poor decision from a financial standpoint. In this sense, Visser (2014) offers a valid contribution to support this point. His research takes a critical look at the hiatus between the hype of financial actors about large-scale investment in farmland and concrete practices on the ground. His findings are extremely interesting as they uncover how many brokerage firms overstate the possibility to reap sensible returns from an investment in farmland. Except for a few countries like Romania, in fact, it is debatable that demand for farmland is actually undergoing a runaway increase all over the world (Visser 2014, 6), so it hardly makes financial sense to invest in something for which there might not be as much demand as expected. When investors realize this, however, it is often too late, and they may choose to try and ‘turn around’ the productivity of the plots they invested into. The large-scale, heavily technified farms they end up building, however, are often so dependent on external inputs and on unstable markets for their final outputs that, for every ‘success story’ touted by investment brokers, there are often many more bankruptcies (Visser 2014, 15–16). To think that some people’s pension money may be funneled into ‘investments’ that near the logic of the Ponzi scheme (particularly as regards the over-optimistic expectation of profits) is inevitably saddening but, at the same time, revealing of the fact that those profiting from the formatting of agriculture and food into investment assets are rarely those either on the originating (the pensioners with savings invested in such ventures) or on the receiving end (the farmers displaced from ‘grabbed’ land) of the investment. The real gain from formatting rural livelihoods into investable assets arises from the formatting itself which, like a zero-sum game, is merely a facilitation of asymmetrical transfers of wealth, from which those involved in the rewiring of agriculture into an investment product are ultimately set to profit, at the expense of farmer livelihoods and of the small savers who may take part in risky endeavors of which they may or may not have full awareness.

IV. Food sovereignty against asset-making

To summarize, in this paper we have tried to sketch a picture of the effort aimed at rearranging farming according to the calculative logic of capital, by translating the rich complexity of this world (take, for instance, the intricate web of social and ecological relationships feeding into the production of agricultural commodities) into ‘assets’ (such as a financial instrument benchmarked to a commodity index) on which an investment calculus can subsequently be pegged. Specifically, in section II, we have endeavored to illustrate how one way this process has been effected is through the curtailment (through a mix of development policies and market-friendly international agreements) of public price-control schemes that acted as a form of collective insurance. Because of their abolition, farmers have been left at the mercy of price fluctuations or, otherwise, they have had to resort to futures markets as a form of private insurance. However, as a consequence of the liberalization of futures markets, which opened their doors to speculators, their insurance function has been thwarted or, rather, directed to the aims of financial houses offering products connected to commodity index speculation. The end result has been the

production of boom and bust dynamics that have not only caused these futures markets (originally meant as an insurance against price fluctuations) to engender those very fluctuations but, at a more grounded level, the disruption of rural livelihoods by ruining small producers (thereby adding to the mass of the landless rural poor), as well as the deprivation of consistent sections of the world's population of affordable access to staple food.

In the third section, we have subsequently expanded to consider the increasing reliance on financial markets (however unpredictable they have proven time and again to be) for the purpose of channeling development aid. If the original idea is to create chains of investment vehicles blending public and private capital, so as to increase the leverage connected to each public euro directed towards development policies, the practical execution results in a hand-out to money managers, expanding the grip of financial calculus on farming, while using 'development' as mere window-dressing. What is worse is that, even as a form of investment, the acquisition and exploitation of farmland through similar forms of private equity and venture capital rarely matches the hype and the expectations pinned on it. The rush to farmland appears to be less warranted 'on the ground' than it is on the glossy brochures of brokers. In this sense, therefore, the profit from the formatting of farming as an asset is not so much to be reaped from the investment (which would require the latter to be profitable in the first place), but at the even earlier stage of re-arranging the food chain in such a way as to enable control and extraction of value in what is substantially a zero-sum game. The stealth form of accumulation by dispossession¹⁴ that this process leads into adds credibility to scholars like Van der Ploeg, who speak of an 'imperial food regime' in the sense of an increasing arrangement of 'the social and the natural world through the assembling of resources, processes, territories, people and images into specific constellations that channel wealth towards the centre' (van der Ploeg 2009, 236).

The focus in the previous two sections on the *creation* of conditions of dispossession, uneven development and marginalization that is entailed in the formatting of farming as a profitable form of investment has the merit of moving away from abstract speculation on the seemingly invariant structures of capitalism and to suggest instead an appreciation of its historical unfolding. In this sense, our contribution should be read alongside the work of scholars such as Cox and Gunvald Nilsen (2014), who historicize the development of capitalism through the dialectic of social movements from above and social movements from below, each vying to 'make history' by entrenching particular forms of relationships and dependencies that direct and constrain possibilities for future development, so as to support the social reproduction of those groups whose livelihoods are invested precisely in those relationships and dependencies. However, even when the conditions in which we come to operate are not of our own choosing, for instance by virtue of their imposition from above, recovery of the temporally-unfolding dimension of capitalist relations sheds light on the possibility of alternative orientations and possibilities for life. Life in a historically-determined medium, in sum, is not mere subjection to the conditions forced in a top-down fashion, but also possibility for struggle and emancipation, towards the expression of needs generated within a subaltern group (Cox and Gunvald Nilsen 2014, vii & 100).

To contextualize this insight in relation to the world of agriculture, then, it is necessary to scavenge for alternative paradigms, through which to unearth hitherto overshadowed possibilities for intervention that can address several of the shortcomings discussed so far. One possibility we wish to discuss is encapsulated by the notion of food sovereignty (Forum for Food Sovereignty 2007). Moving beyond a purely quantitative idea of ensuring access to enough food (food security) (McMichael 2014a, 934 & 937), food sovereignty stresses the production of social economies of food that reflect the needs of those that live in close contact to the land. In this sense, food sovereignty is really the shorthand for a process view of rural development, one centred on participation and autonomy, as opposed to a normative and abstract pre-setting of *desiderata* to be achieved. One of the more lucid illustrations of the difference that a food sovereignty-informed perspective brings to the world of farming is the one offered by Van der

Ploeg. In *The New Peasantries* (van der Ploeg 2009, 23–26), he suggests how the view of farming from within the everyday practices of smallholders around the world is one informed by the co-production between human agency and living nature. More than that, despite the misleading image of backwardness that even classical Marxism has to some extent projected onto peasants,^{15,16} the peasant condition is actually an intense field of multi-directional negotiations: with the vagaries of the environment, and its enduring reproduction; with the vernacular innovations and know-how through which to improve one's material condition and add to the resilience of the life of the farm; and finally with the state apparatuses and market forces that constrain possibilities for development and spark the search for transversal solidarities and new alliances.

By heeding to the strivings and developmental possibilities originating from within the practice of (smallholder) agriculture, the paradigm of food sovereignty embodies a radical alternative to the attempt to streamline farming according to the monologic order of connectedness embodied in the calculative logic of capital-ism. Instead, it offers a more phenomenologically-informed alternative, insofar as it unearths possibilities for appreciating the needs of rural development from *within*,¹⁶ rather than by the use of external proxies mediated by financial markets or by government agencies (with the distinction between the two—as shown in this paper—becoming increasingly blurred).

The paradigm of 'food sovereignty', as a shorthand for 'a peasant perspective' (McMichael 2014a, 935) for 're-envisioning the conditions necessary to develop resilient and democratic forms of social reproduction, anchored in sustainable management of food systems by land users' (McMichael 2014a, 937),¹⁷ has however been recently criticized by Bernstein (2014). Bernstein's critique follows a line of argument that is not dissimilar to that which can be used to corner other pre-figurative political experiments: that they lack a macro-programme for displacing what it is that they criticize (Barrington-Bush 2014)—in this case, asymmetric agrarian relations under capitalism (van der Ploeg 2014, 1019). By the same token, however, the Occupy movement might appear no more than a meager encampment in a New York square. The novelty of the food sovereignty approach, we suggest, lies instead in it being an 'organizing idea',¹⁸ as an orientation through which it becomes possible to make out the outlines of an emerging form of life as it shines through incipient shoots and situated experiments (McMichael 2014a, 952; van der Ploeg 2014, 1000). In this sense, it is a vision that foregrounds particular possibilities for further action: from a focus on agroecology (Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2014, 991–92) to the pursuit of autonomy through the distancing from asymmetrical market relations (van der Ploeg 2009, 114), to the revival of neglected areas of concern within Fordist agriculture, such as land productivity and endogenous peasant innovation (van der Ploeg 2014, 1002–3). When viewed as a paradigm that informs a practical-moral stance towards situated struggles, 'food sovereignty' can be a productive concept that can unlock, not a grand-plan as hoped by Bernstein, but a piecemeal directionality through which to navigate particular instances of injustice, in the bid to carve out alternative trajectories of development (McMichael 2014b, 8; McMichael 2014a, 938).

What this feeds into, in the end, is a collective effort at increasing participation in the definition of economic processes so as to produce arrangements more responsive to the needs of subaltern rural populations, through an array of different strategies, from everyday disobedience (Scott 2012, 11–13) to the shortening of the food supply chain via direct producer-consumer connections (Brunori, Rossi, and Malandrini 2011) or the development of co-operative forms of enterprise (Agarwal 2014). Similarly, food sovereignty in practice can also mean the imagination of new forms of communal ownership of assets (Lewis and Conaty 2012) and more generally the development of legal and institutional arrangements²⁰ that do not work to pry open the lifeworld of rural peasantries in order to rewire it according to a market logic—as in the examples discussed earlier in the paper— but, rather, that respect and align with the many-layered sensitivity (towards ecological and social complexity) that informs peasant production.

Notes

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¹ The asymmetry between the ‘liberalization’ imposed on so-called developing countries and the subsidy schemes still in place in the West is, of course, one example of the double-standards at the heart of development policy more generally (Mattei and Nader 2008). With respect to subsidy schemes, the problem endures to this day under the aegis of the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture (Clapp 2012, 73).

² Shotter (2011) offers a more general formulation of the problem of imposing an external framework to explain and control particular forms of life, as opposed to accessing their internal complexity.

³ Whether the commitment of the Indian NDA-led government towards farmers is sincere or not is, however, still an open question (see Sharma 2014).

⁴ With the crucial difference that no ownership is exchanged at the time of opening a futures position, unlike it happens for transactions on a stock exchange. Hence, one need not own any commodities at the time of opening a position in order to promise to sell them at a future date—the settlement of the claim being suspended until delivery comes due.

⁵ A numerical example can help clarify the point made in the text. One could commit to future purchase of grain at, say, \$100, and then make a profit by exploiting subsequent price fluctuations that allowed to undertake a future sale at, say, \$105. Such a strategy of buying low first and selling high later, which profits from rising prices, is called *going long*. Alternatively, one might equally attempt to sell before buying. This is possible because futures contracts simply entail an obligation to buy and sell at a future date, and do not require ownership of the physical asset at the time on entering the contract (so long as one does not hold them until delivery comes due, when the physical commodity comes into play). Hence, an arbitrageur can first take on the obligation to sell grain for a future delivery date, and subsequently—when the price of the relevant commodity future might have decreased—open a position on the buy-side. In the end, the two obligations cancel out and all the arbitrageur is left with is the profit from selling high and buying low—a strategy called *going short*.

⁶ Troester and Staritz (2013, 24–25) discuss some of the challenges inherent in extrapolating the weight of index speculators from the different kinds of reports issued by the CFTC. The reports used by Masters and White, the CIT, might sometimes leave out some index speculators, because ‘the first classification of a trader is continued in the statistics. Hence, if a commodity trading house first hedges physical wheat transactions but later also engages in speculation without hedging interest, the second trade is still accounted as a commercial trade’ (Troester and Staritz 2013, 25).

⁷ It is perhaps less fruitful to try and pin causation of the surge in food prices on this or that group on the basis of econometric regressions, so as to determine whether it’s the fault of index speculators or of money managers, as it has been attempted to a certain extent in some literature, such as UNCTAD (2011). We deem it more appropriate instead to look at the combination of their respective trajectories of

intervention that, as in the instance just described, can compound each other giving rise to unexpected and self-reinforcing price dynamics (Bradford De Long et al. 1990). Unlike arbitrageurs, money managers trade purely based on price fluctuations, without regard to fundamentals (Staritz 2012, 12–13). As a result, any incipient price trend—whatever the origin—becomes an opportunity to profit from market movements: the ‘roll window’ described here being just one example. Some money managers have even resorted to market manipulation to simulate trends around which to enter and exit the market over an extremely short span of time and profit from the fluctuations so generated (US Attorney’s Office Northern District of Illinois 2014).

⁸ In a more recent paper by Irwin with different co-authors, despite finding some econometric evidence that rollover activity has a contango-inducing bias (Aulerich, Irwin, and Garcia 2013, 32), they do not directly engage with the qualitative argument offered here (and which that paper aims to challenge!), whereby a contango bias is built into the market by the discrepancy between the hedging needs connected to commodity index-linked products and the time-limited horizon of futures as a hedging strategy. Instead, they merely look for an alternative explanation drawn from neoclassical literature in financial economics to which to ascribe the matching econometric effect. They are then able to conclude that this alternative conjecture is sufficient to demonstrate that the practice of commodity index trading as such does not have a measurable impact on price dynamics on commodity markets (Aulerich, Irwin, and Garcia 2013, 37). Where their argument comes up short, we suggest, is in their attempt to explain away any findings that are consistent with the qualitative process presented here, by taking what is ultimately a choice of theoretical paradigm as evidence that commodity index trading must be neutral towards price dynamics on the futures market.

⁹ A sense of the geographical reach of the EIB’s operations can be obtained from European Investment Bank (2012).

¹⁰ Clapp utilises the ideas of ‘distance’ and ‘distancing’ as formulated by Friedmann (1994) to describe the two impacts that finance has in the construction of the global food chain. In particular, she claims that ‘it increases the number of actors involved in global agrifood commodity chains and, second, it abstracts food from its physical form into highly complex agricultural commodity derivatives that are difficult to understand for all but seasoned financial traders’ (Clapp 2014, 2). On this point, see also Friedmann (1994), Kneen (2002) and Princen (2002).

¹¹ The review was commissioned by Action Aid International and was conducted in April 2014. See also EIB (2013). The link between EIB investment and the carbon credit market was previously exposed by various NGOs in connection with the Lurio Forestry case in Mozambique and New Forests Company in Uganda (Grainger and Geary 2011).

¹² The acquisition or lease of land for non-food related projects are often listed as practices of ‘land grabbing’, even under the Tirana Declaration’s (International Land Coalition 2011) conservative definition of the phenomenon.

¹³ The lack of transparency was flagged as early as 2009 in a report, otherwise extremely supportive of the fund (Behrens 2009).

¹⁴ On the concept of accumulation by dispossession see, e.g., Harvey (2004). Ferrando (2013) further specifies it in relation to land grabbing.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the peasant condition in various strands of Marxist thought, see Bernstein (2001).

¹⁶ Peasant agriculture is not defined by the physical or economic extension of a particular farming operation; instead, it has to do with the techniques involved. Small-holder ‘peasant’ agriculture embodies for instance a co-productive approach to farming, as the outcome of a fine-tuned, responsive negotiation between human agency and biological conditions. This is in opposition to an engineering view, tending to the reproduction of factory-like standards of control through the aggressive use of technological implements to change a field’s ecology to prime it for agricultural production. In this sense, Ploeg’s (2009, 125 ff.) discussion of ‘farming fast’ and ‘farming gently’ is illustrative of precisely this distinction.

¹⁷ For a more in-depth discussion of the emancipatory possibilities that phenomenology can offer to social science, see the general remarks offered by Ingold (2012).

¹⁸ In this sense, ‘food sovereignty’ stresses the need for autonomy and self-determination. A need that is better served by peer relationships of support and mutual adjustment, as opposed to contractually locked strategic games. This difference is well exemplified by public-public and public-community partnerships (Transnational Institute 2014), in antithesis to the public-private partnerships criticized above.

¹⁹ On the concept, see Bortoft (1998).

²⁰ This can be one articulation of what Mattei and Nader (2008, 202–11) characterize as the ‘people’s rule of law’, in opposition to an ‘imperial rule of law’.

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PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS VS. PARTY BUILDING IN THE POST-SOVIET CONTEXT: IDEOLOGY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN LEFT-RADICAL GROUPS IN UKRAINE.

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Abstract

I wrote this paper 10 years ago based on my MA thesis. Many things have changed since that time. The left groups mentioned in the article do not exist anymore. Some of their activists are still active politically but many are not part of radical left politics any more. In addition, now I am more skeptical of the postmodern theories of ideology I tried to use in the paper. If I were writing a similar analysis now, I would try to develop a more materialist and a more complex approach to ideologies and their effects on practical politics. However, the paper seems to be pointing to a much wider question than merely the problems of two small Kiev-based radical left groups. The radical left movement in Ukraine is slightly larger now, involving hundreds, not dozens, of activists, but it still lacks any strong organization and remains completely marginal politically. But it is not just a matter of the Ukrainian left. The recent waves of popular struggles in Europe and in Arab countries persuasively showed how anarchist suspicion of disciplined organizations and strategy politically disarms the movements. If lacking strong political organizations even massive mobilizations are at best able only to overthrow the old elite, while allowing the seizing of power by traditional "opposition" parties, which in reality block any prospects for fundamental political and social change. SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain may push progressive movements into an understanding of the need for political representation. Of course, these new left parties will need not just electoral but also political successes in implementing their programs in order to fix a shift in the contemporary radical left toward organized political strategy and away from an obsession with horizontal prefiguration.

In this article I point to some important problems of prefigurative political groups. Prefigurative politics implies identification of the means of social change with its ends. This solution of the means-ends dilemma may lead to strategic inflexibility and the reduction of activity oriented to a wide public, and to the withdrawal of activists into their group. These problems become especially evident when prefigurative groups are weak and recently founded, when they specify radical social change as their end, and when they are acting in a "hostile" social environment. I demonstrate this in the case of two left-radical groups in Kiev, Ukraine. Facing hostile public opinion produced by the discredit of left-wing rhetoric by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the decrease of the living standards of the Ukrainian population and therefore, a shortening of the available amount resources for activism, and, finally, from the lack of an activist political culture, the left-wing movement was (and still is) coping with the problem of primary mobilization of resources and membership in order to transcend the limits of marginal subcultures and to put its agenda into the public discourse. In this situation a Trotskyist group "Robitnychy Sprotyv" (RS, "Workers' Resistance") attained larger outcomes in membership and material resources mobilization than an anarchist group "Tigra-Nigra" (TN). I will argue that the cause of such a result was the different general strategic solutions contained in revolutionary Marxist ideology and in anarchism¹ that were grounded on opposing solutions to the means-ends dilemma. With regard to outcome, the ideology of the

¹ The general strategic solution for revolutionary Marxists (as Trotskyists call themselves) is the building of the workers' party and the struggle for the state power that is the tool for the socialist transformation. The general strategic solution for anarchists is prefigurative politics: social change through the change of their own behavior and realization of the main principles of the new society 'here and now'. I want to stress that both left-radical movements have the same goal – stateless and classless social order based on self-government and social property. The notions of "communism" and "anarchy" have a very similar, if not the same, vision of the future society.

Trotskyist group was more favorable as an instrumentally rational strategy, whereas the anarchists' ideology assumed value-rational, expressive and spontaneous political behavior that turned out to be less favorable for resource mobilization.

In addition, I analyze the general mechanism of ideological influence on strategic activity. Very often scholars working in social movement studies explicitly or implicitly neglect ideological beliefs of the activists in the explanations of processes and outcomes of their activity. Particularly, those researchers who have worked within classical paradigm of "mass society" / "collective behavior" were more interested in the social-psychological functions of the ideologies of individuals with certain psychological characteristics, and considered all ideologies almost interchangeable, despite the explicit differences in their contents².

The alternative "resource mobilization" / "political process" paradigm, which became popular in the 1970s, emphasized the rationality of social movement activists; within it culture and ideology were considered from an over-instrumental perspective, as a certain type of "frame" (Snow et al. 1986), "repertoire" (Tilly 1978: 151-66) or, generally, "tool kit" (Swidler 1986) for the achievement of a social movement's goals. Usually the choice between different practices from a "repertoire" or between different 'frames' was considered the result of rational calculation in the context of objective structural opportunities. In the meantime, the outcome of the growing interest in the role of ideological beliefs within the "cultural turn" (started by the theorists of so called "new social movements" in the 1980s) is mostly theoretical manifestos with an "ideology matters" leitmotif (for instance, Zald (2000), Oliver and Johnston (2000)) and a few single empirical studies (for example, Dalton, Recchia, and Rohrschneider (2003)). Still, there is a lack of knowledge on specific mechanisms of the influence of activists' ideology on the processes in social movements; it is necessary to investigate ideological influence not only on strategic decisions, but also on their outcomes.

In the first part of this article I build a theoretical schema (mechanism) of the influence of ideology on strategic activity, synthesizing the relational approach to collective action by Emirbayer and Goodwin with the theory of ideology by Laclau and Mouffe, while also taking into account the emphasis of the "new social movement" theorists on the importance of collective and personal identity. Resting on research on the resource mobilization process and outcomes of two left-radical groups in Kiev, I then demonstrate how different ideologies in different ways open and close structural opportunities and methods for social movement activists.

Ideology and strategic activity: The mechanism of influence

As was mentioned above, the "cultural turn" in social movement studies was started by the theorists of the so-called "new social movements" (Touraine, Melucci, Habermas, Inglehart are among the most prominent). These theorists labeled as "new" the social movements of the "late capitalist" or "post-industrial" society (e.g. feminist, environmentalist, gay and lesbian, peace movements), which, according to them, in a number of issues (ideology, social base, motivation for participation, organizational structure, political style) fundamentally differed from "the old" movements (first of all, from the labor movement) (Dalton, Kuechler, and Bürklin 1990). Although the thesis about the fundamental "newness" of those social movements has been very often exposed to harsh criticism (Calhoun 1995; Pichardo 1997; Scott 1990), the attention to scantily explored cultural processes, and to deep motivation to participation (activists' collective and personal identities) in contrast to over-irrationalist and over-instrumentalist approaches to analysis of culture in earlier paradigms is very important.

² According to the paradigmatic expression of Eric Hoffer, "When people are ripe for a mass movement, they are usually ripe for any effective movement, and not solely for one with a particular doctrine or program ...all mass movement are interchangeable. One mass movement readily transforms itself into another. A religious movement may develop into a social revolution or a nationalist movement; a social revolution into militant nationalism or a religious movement; a nationalist movement into a social revolution or a religious movement" (1951: 16, 18).

Obviously, in arguing that the behavior of activists is substantially determined by activists' identities, researchers could not stand on a primitive definition of identity - on, as it were, a one-word answer to the question "Who am I?" It is clear that identity, for example, the identity of a worker, may have both radical ("I am one of the exploited proletarians; we can improve our lives only fighting together for our rights") and conformist ("I am an employee in a corporation and I should work hard in order to step-up") interpretations. Therefore, the identity of "worker" itself, regardless of the context of the meanings and beliefs in which it is used, does not say much of anything about the behavior it presupposes. To state the opposite means to be trapped in essentialism, and this is indeed one of the main accusations against many "identity politics" proponents (Somers 1994:610-11).

To solve the problem of essentialism and to take into account the socially constructed nature of identities, theorists of the "new social movements" expanded the meaning of the concept of identity. For instance, according to Melucci (1996:70-71), the concept includes three levels: 1) cognitive goals, methods, and field of the action definition; 2) a network of the active interrelations among actors; 3) a certain level of the emotional investment because of which individuals feel as parts of the whole. However, such wide definition leads to the situation when even on the cognitive level "collective identity" becomes an equivalent for the concepts of group culture or ideology. Being aware of the danger of limiting the collective identity concept only to boundaries and members of a group, theorists of the "new social movements" extend it to include "a fixed content of meanings, frames of interpretation, and normative and valuational proscriptions that exercise influence over individual social actors" (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994:28). Besides the fact that excessive extension of the concept's meaning narrows its explanatory capacity, in this particular case it leads to abolishment of the boundaries between the concepts of individual and collective identity, and to the impossibility of applying these concepts in the explanation of different levels of activists' motivation to participation in social movements (Stryker 2000:26). I argue that a more adequate solution to the problem of essentialism lies in emphasizing the relational nature of any identity (Somers 1994). It is impossible to analyze the influence of identity on human actions without considering the belief system in which an identity is embedded and within which people see the sources of the meaning for behavior rationalization³. In this case identity is conceptualized not as an equivalent for ideology, but as a social-psychological mechanism that motivates a person to orient him or herself to a certain ideology (ideologies) among all belief-systems with which he or she is familiar.

In this case one should approach ideologies from a relational point of view and consider them as "cultural structures" or "conceptual networks" (Somers 1995a; 1995b), or as constituents of the "cultural context of action". According to Emirbayer and Goodwin's definition, the cultural context of action "encompasses those symbolic configurations or formations that constrain and enable action by structuring actors' normative commitments and their understanding of the world and of their own possibilities within it" (1996:365). Together with social-structural and social-psychological contexts (that are relatively autonomous), the cultural context constitutes the objective structure for action that restricts and directs human agency.

The approach to ideology as a cultural (symbolic) structure or network is based on an assumption that symbols, concepts, and beliefs in a cultural context of action are combined in clusters that have a certain structural logic (it is important that this logic is unique and cannot be reduced to the logic of interaction in social-structural or social-psychological networks). Therefore, the task of a researcher is to analyze persistent structural relations between symbols, concepts and beliefs within cultural networks. It is important that in each particular situation a person orients only to some symbolic networks or structures (among an infinite number of actually existing ones), and in this analysis the significance of identity as

³ I refer to Castells in the understanding of identity as the process of prioritization of the meaning sources (Castells 2004:6-7).

one of the mechanisms⁴ activating the logic of certain symbolic networks among all known for a particular person becomes clear⁵.

Thus I have defined identity as a mechanism of the influence of ideology on human behavior. To finish the construction of the theoretical schema it is necessary to consider two additional links: that between ideology and identity and that between identity and behavior.

In the definition of the link between identity and ideology I will use the term “articulation” proposed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Their theory of ideology is very close to the relational approach of Emirbayer, Goodwin and Somers. Laclau emphasizes the impossibility of existence of meaning independent from symbolic structures (or discourse). Concepts are floating signifiers that in different discourses may have different meanings, but what is more important is that within one discursive network the floating signifiers acquire meaning that is equivalent to all other components of the network (Laclau 1996:208). For example, the concept of “freedom” obtains completely different meanings in a “socialist” chain of equivalences (“freedom-equality-solidarity”) from those, which it obtains in a liberal discourse of “freedom-individualism-private property”. Articulation, as Laclau and Mouffe define this process of partial fixation of meaning⁶, creates a so-called nodal point (Lacan’s point de capiton) that is constitutive for any discourse or ideology (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:113). On the level of the structure of ideology a nodal point is analogous to identity since it signifies shared meaning of the components of network and at the same time differentiates the concrete network from other similar symbolic structures (Zizek 1999:104-5). Thereby, the articulation process constructs a unique source of meaning and connects it with the individual identity of a person.

The mechanism of authenticity explains the relation between identity and behavior. Gekas (2000) considers authenticity as a sort of self-motive referring to an “individual’s strivings for meaning, coherence and significance” (p. 101). Motivation to maintain authenticity causes activists to avoid activity (or inactivity) that contradicts the ideologies in which their identities are articulated, since these are mutually challenged in cases of discrepancy between real behavior and the ideological orientations. This authenticity mechanism is then the last component in the explanation of the way ideology limits the number of available ways of action and structures behavior of its followers.

I consider the solution to the means-ends dilemma then as one of the “axioms” (van Dijk 1998:49) that structure ideological beliefs and activists’ behavior through the aforementioned mechanism. Besides the fact that concrete tactical and strategic decisions embedded in ideology (for activists, these constitute their repertoire of action) are grounded on such axioms, these general principles can also directly structure activist behavior.

4 I stress that identity is only one of the motivating mechanisms of symbolic network selection as long as it is obvious that a person may orient his or her behavior on certain symbolic structures without identifying him/herself with them. As, for example, when an advertiser orients on tastes and beliefs of the target group that are interesting for him or her only within the context of profits. Within the realm of social movements this is the situation in which activists frame goals and tasks of their movement for different groups of potential resource providers. I suggest that it is the presence of identity mechanisms that differentiates the effect of ideology from framing processes. For more on difference between ideology and framing see Oliver and Johnston (2000) and Westby (2002).

5 Unfortunately, there is a tendency among scholars-relationalists to neglect the importance of motivating mechanisms. For example, Somers, while analyzing the reproduction of the meta-narrative of Anglo-American citizenship theory in works by Habermas and Parsonian political culture researchers, does not give any idea why these theorists must have oriented to the logic of this meta-narrative (1995b:263-67). It is as though Anglo-American citizenship theory were acting “through” aforementioned scholars independently from their will and theoretical or ideological preferences. Recent attempts by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) to build a systematic relational theory of social movements also pay almost no attention to level of motivation.

6 It is partial because any concept even as it acquires new meaning within a chain of equivalences does not lose its specificity, a specificity that is guaranteed by its inclusion in other discourses that in this way become the external “objective” environment for this particular symbolic network (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:113).

There are two extreme solutions for the means–end problem, one of which corresponds to the value-rational action and the other of which to instrumentally rational action, according to Weber’s classification. The solution that emphasizes identity of means and ends corresponds to the value-rational action, i.e. direct realization of the ultimate goal. Means contradicting the central values of the ideology are considered at the least ineffective, and at the most blasphemous. In the reverse order the solution that sharply separates means from ends is related to the instrumentally rational action. It presumes the construction of a hierarchy of intermediate goals, which must be realized step-by-step; for the realization of more urgent goals it is possible, and sometimes necessary, to use means that contradict more distant goals. The means are selected exclusively according to their efficiency, not on the basis of their correspondence with the ultimate values⁷.

I claim that in the case when a social movement organization (SMO) sets radical, systemic transformation of the social relations as the ultimate goal, the instrumentally rational solution of the means-ends dilemma will be more favorable to strategic activity than the value-rational solution, since it allows for use of all opportunities within the System (in the widest meaning of the word, including “systemic” ways of behavior). Further, the emphasis on spontaneous action provides reasons not to use even those means for strategic activity that are compatible with the ultimate values of the “good” society.

In the next part of the article I will present an empirical illustration supporting this hypothesis. I will demonstrate how the instrumentally rational solution of the means-ends dilemma in the ideology of a Trotskyist group “Robitnychi Sprotyv” had been favorable for larger outcomes in mobilization of material and human resources when compared to the solution of an anarchist group “Tigra-Nigra” whose ideology assumed a value-rational solution to the problem.

Ideology and resource mobilization of Kiev left-radical groups: Research results

This section is based on the analysis of 32 semi-structural in-depth interviews, the majority of which I conducted during April–May 2004 with current and former members (by the time of the fieldwork) of “Robitnychi Sprotyv” and “Tigra-Nigra”. Moreover, I rested on my own observations, observations that I made during public events, internal meetings, and in personal communications with activists of both groups. I conducted interviews with almost all key persons of both groups present in Ukraine at the time of the fieldwork, although among my respondents were “ordinary” (less active) members. A profile of the respondents is provided in the Appendix. For the analysis I used documents from the web-sites of RS www.antiglobalizm.net.ua, www.workres.kiev.ua and TN – tn.zaraz.org⁸, from “The Left Vanguard”, which is the newspaper of the Committee for the Workers’ International (formerly the Ukrainian branch of the RS) in the Community of Independent States (CIS)), and internal documents from electronic mail-lists workres@yahoo.com, kinoclub@yahoo.com, cwi-ua@yahoo.com, and from the personal archives of some activists. The information collection and analysis were made along the following dimensions: outcomes of human and material resource mobilization; ideological beliefs; strategies that were used for human and material resources mobilization, the way these strategies were caused by the ideologies, and other factors (first of all structural) that could also influence resource mobilization outcomes.

⁷ It is important to mention that according to Weber instrumentally rational action is not identical with material interest satisfaction: “choice between alternative and conflicting ends and results may well be determined in a value-rational manner. In that case, action is instrumentally rational only in respect to the choice of means” (Weber 1978:26). The difference between instrumental rationality and value rationality lies on the level of the structure of action, not on the level of its substantial content.

⁸ Unfortunately, by the time of writing of the article (the fall of 2005) all web-sites stopped functioning, since both groups did not exist anymore. The documents that were placed on the web-sites which were referred to in the article can be provided by the author on request.

Background and outcomes

Both RS and TN had their roots in the leftist environment that appeared in Kiev, as well as in many other Soviet cities, in the last years of the U.S.S.R.'s existence. General liberalization of the political regime at the end of the 1980s opened political opportunities for public agitation and the founding of informal associations (Butterfield and Sedaitis 1991). For certain youth, both Trotskyism and anarchism were attractive “third ways” between Soviet “socialism” and market capitalism (Interview no. 29:5; interview no. 13:1).

Because of the size limitations of this article, I will not herein present a detailed history of Kiev leftist organizational transformations⁹. I will mention only the most important stage in their development - “The Leftist Youth Association” (“Live obyednannia molodi”, LOM), which was founded by Kiev State University students in 1993. LOM had united several factions of activists representing all left-radical tendencies in Kiev, from anarchists to Stalinists critical of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and, including Trotskyists (the germ of the future “Robitnychi Sprotyv”). Approximately at this time the Trotskyists became members of one of the international Trotskyist organizations, the Committee for the Workers’ International (CWI).

In 1995 LOM ceased its unified activity because of ideological and personal conflicts (Interview no. 29:5-6; interview no. 13:7-8; interview no. 31:1). It is necessary to mention that among the former LOM factions only RS maintained its organizational continuity and had existed with the same name until 2004. Starting from 3 people in 1994 RS had grown to have a membership of 29 at the first half of 2003 in Kiev and at one time had more than 70 members in 14 Ukrainian cities (Interview no. 2:2; interview no. 29:22). Approximate membership dynamics are presented at Figure 1¹⁰. In addition, in the first half of 2003 the Kiev RS group had more than 100 so called “contacters”, i.e. people who were not formal members of the organization but who were included in its informational network, while the most promising of them were purposefully “worked on” by the activists trying to persuade them to join the organization. The annual budget of the organization in the last years of its existence was \$6,000-\$7,000 (interview no. 2:7)¹¹.

Anarchist Initiative “Tigra-Nigra”, although it had the same origins in LOM, proceeded along a completely different historical path. The former anarchist faction acted as the student trade union “Direct Action” for several years after the disintegration of LOM. In 1997 five former LOM activists founded “Tigra-Nigra”, where activity of the same 15-20 Kiev anarchists’ had been concentrated (Interview no. 2:10). However, in 1998 the TN activists suffered repression from the Ukrainian Security Service (USS)¹². The scale of repression was shocking for activists: “In those days we lived in an ivory tower, in the world of illusions and so on, and then we met the reality and it struck us very violently...” (Interview no. 21: 4). By 1999 the membership of the group had decreased to 2-4 people (p. 1).

9 For more on the leftist movement in Ukraine at the beginning of the 90s see Dubovik and Skrozitskii (1995) and Fedorov (n.d.).

10 I asked one of the senior members (who at the same time was one of the actual leaders of the organization (respondent no. 2)) to indicate the number of the RS members in each year starting from 1994. Afterwards other senior activists confirmed these figures. I could not use the meetings’ protocols as the majority of them were lost after the organization’s collapse.

11 In this case I could rely only on interviews. RS had financial documentation, but on least one occasion it was purposely destroyed (Protocol of RS meeting in September, 2002, p.1; “Otchet o poseschenii Kieva (Mai, 2003)”, p.3). Moreover, the group did double-entry book-keeping, creating fake financial reports for CWI; this was the consequence of their financial resource mobilization strategy.

12 TN joined the series of protest actions of the radical greens in April and May 1998 against the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development that was going to give a credit to Ukraine for building of new blocks of the nuclear reactors aiming to substitute for the closed Chernobyl nuclear station. Under the pretext of “the damage to the international image of Ukraine” USS interrogated anarchists and environmentalists, threatened them, searched their apartments, Seven persons got short-term imprisonment (Fomichev 1998; Rainbow Keepers 1998).

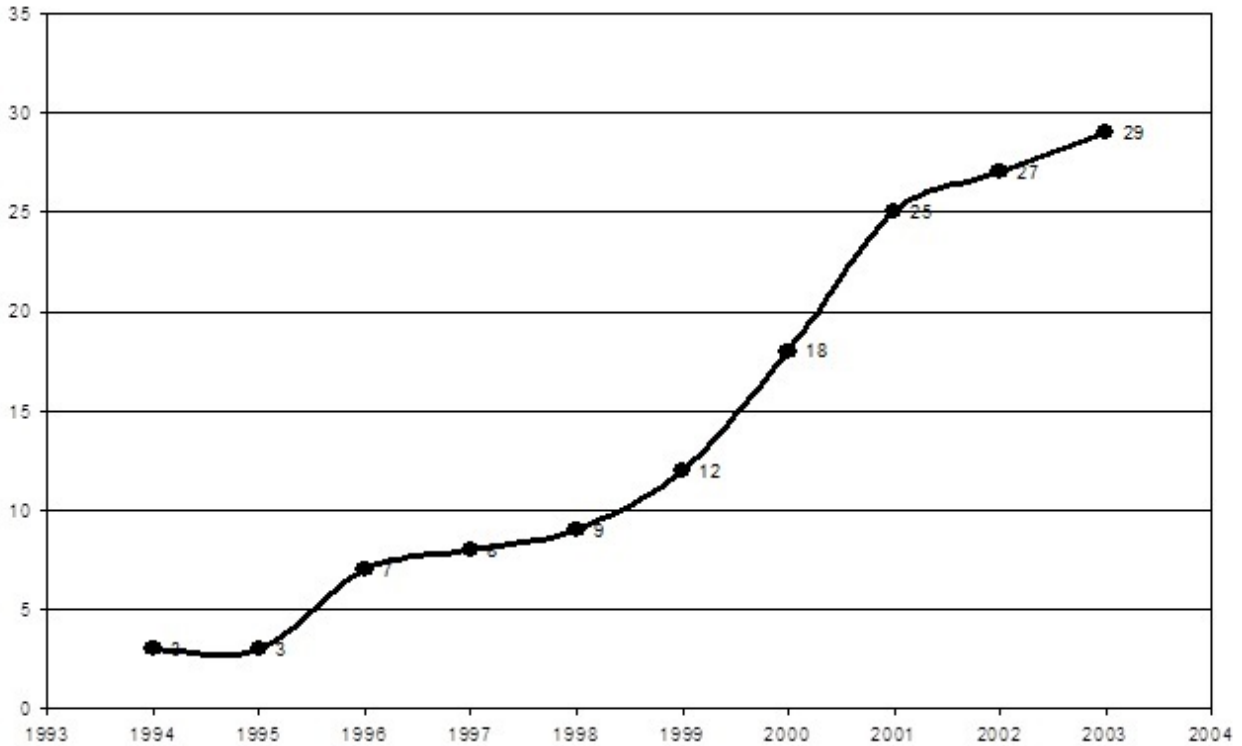


Figure 1. Approximate dynamics of the membership of “Robitnychi S protyv” (Trotskyist group) in Kiev, from 1994 till the end of 2003

However, in 2000 “Tigra-Nigra” reappeared in renewed membership (“Ob initiative” 2003). At the end of 1998 two TN activists were among the organizers of the club of socially active youth that, in contrast to the old TN (“classical political group”) was more prefigurative, and was “an effort to create freedom space” (Interview no. 32:6), with the organization of work in accordance with anarchist principles of the minimization of hierarchy and consensus decision-making. At the beginning the activity of the group was limited, first of all, to anti-smoking and anti-alcohol activity or, generally speaking, to social work. However, later younger participants got to know about ideas of the Western “anti-globalization” movement (anti-corporate resistance, “no borders”, “no copyright”, “no wars” and so on) (Interview no. 26:6). Thus in 2000 some club members started explicit political activity for which they revived the label of “Tigra-Nigra”.

Figure 2 presents the approximate membership dynamics of the group from 1999, i.e. of the “club” and new TN¹³. Expenditure for political, anarchist activity was no more than \$500-\$1,000 per year (Interview no. 24:11; interview no. 32:7). Besides this, around \$2,000 per year was saved for the expense of obtaining grants for social projects (interview no. 32:7) which least potentially could be used for political activity.

Thereby, despite the fact that at the beginning of the 90's Kiev anarchists were more numerous than Trotskyists, in 2003 the Trotskyists had significant superiority in comparison with the anarchists in

13 Since TN did not have formal membership and not everybody in the group was an anarchist, I asked respondents about: 1) the number of “anarchists” in the group, i.e. those who identify themselves with anarchism and work on political projects under the framework of Anarchist Initiative “Tigra-Nigra”; 2) the overall number of people who work on different projects of the club. They indicated me the approximate number of people who are not active participants but sometimes attend their events and meetings (mostly these are their friends). In Figure 2 for the last category I used the term “mobilization” based on Flacks’ distinction between “activism” and “mobilization” (2004: 143). The “mobilization” can be regarded as roughly analogous to RS “contactors”.

the number of activists and “contacters” for mobilization - also, it had stable positive dynamics of membership growth and financial resources till the collapse in 2003,¹⁴. Moreover, these differences could not be explained with external factors, particularly, by the differing attitude of Ukrainian population towards these groups or by the difference in the structure of political opportunities.

According to the results of the survey conducted in February 2005 by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (1,991 respondents were interviewed) both the anarchist and revolutionary Marxist identities are marginal in the mass consciousness of Ukrainian citizens; out of ten political directions only 0.6% respondents chose the anarchist one, and only 0.2% chose the revolutionary Marxist one. Moreover, there is evidence that Ukrainians prefer the value-rational solution of the means-ends dilemma proposed by the anarchists to the instrumentally rational Trotskyist one. Out of two statements 1) “Facing the current level of corruption and criminality in our society we have to use the most efficient methods to achieve a socially important goal, even if they are not honest and humane. Otherwise, we will not get results”, and 2) “Even though it might damage the efficiency of achieving a socially important result, we always have to be honest and humane”; 60.5% of the respondents chose the latter and only 23.3% chose the former (even despite the stronger argumentation proposed in the first statement than in the second). Besides this, almost all activists whom I interviewed answered the question “In your opinion, are there more anarchist or Marxist supporters among young people?” in favor of anarchism¹⁵. Usually they believe this to be the consequence of the discredit of the Marxism of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and anti-Marxist propaganda in independent Ukraine (Interview no. 4:8), while anarchism was considered more attractive for protest-oriented youth and some youth subcultures (Interview no. 15:17; interview no. 11:15). Therefore, the Trotskyist group had reached larger outcomes despite being viewed more unfavorably in public opinion than anarchists.

The only one difference in the structure of the political opportunities for RS and TN was repression against the anarchists in 1998. Indeed, the repressions were one of the reasons for the almost complete dissolution of the “old” Tigr-Nigra. However, the number of the anarchists in 1999–2000 was only slightly lower than the number of the formal RS members (8 and 15 against 12 and 18 respectively). Moreover, the repression in 1998 could not directly cause the negative dynamics of the anarchist group starting from 2001.

In the rest of this section I will present an ideological explanation of the processes and the outcomes of resource mobilization by RS and TN between 2000 and 2003. The earlier time limit was chosen because, first of all, the source of my data (interviews with the activists, which means low reliability of the information about events distant in time); second, 15 out of 29 respondents started their political activity only from 1999. At third, this period is much better documented because of the start of extensive use of the Internet. The later time limit is determined by intrusion of the independent social-psychological and social-structural factors in the internal processes within RS and TN. Starting from the fall of 2003 during one year RS experienced two splits because of the fight for leadership, personal conflicts, and the international Trotskyist movement reaction to their fraudulent way of financing. From the end of 2004, RS ceased to exist as a political group. At the beginning of 2005 because of several personal conflicts three of the main activists left TN and that caused the dissolution of the group¹⁶.

14 There is a problem of inadequate comparison between the number of “formal members” in RS and “active members” in TN. Around 5-6 formal members of the Trotskyist group were characterized as “dead souls” (Interview no. 4: 7), i.e. passive (not participating in the work of the organization) for several months running (Interview no. 6: 6). Probably, people with the same activity level would not be considered as “active participants” in the anarchist group. However, this fact does not change the picture significantly because there were 23-24 active Trotskyists, approximately three times more than there were conscious anarchists.

15 Except for two respondents who believed that there was in any case no difference (Interview no. 25:6; interview no. 27:9). Both RS and TN used to be explicitly youth groups, therefore it is logical to assume that young people were their target group.

16 It is necessary to mention that the collapse of both groups does not mean that their former members have completely stopped their political activity. Now the majority of the former RS members are members of another

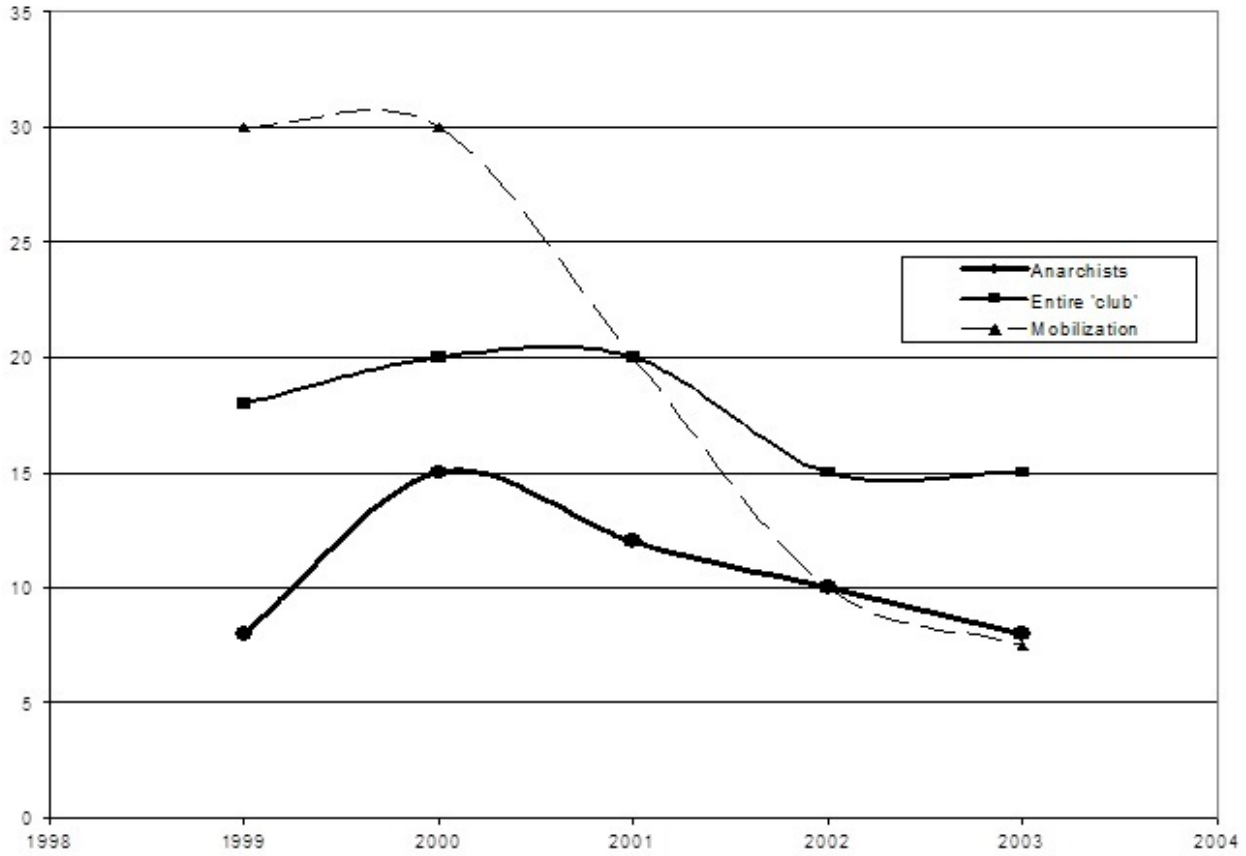


Figure 2. Approximate dynamics of "Tigra-Nigra" (Anarchist group) from the end of 1999 till 2003

Ideologies: The general strategic solution and means-ends dilemma

Since there are a lot of different interpretations of anarchism and Trotskyism it is necessary to analyze the specific versions of these ideologies held by the activists of "Tigra-Nigra" and "Robitnychi Sprotyv", particularly, their solutions to the means-ends dilemma.

"Robitnychi Sprotyv". The program of CWI-section in the CIS¹⁷ clearly states that it is based on classical Trotskyist ideological sources: "documents of the first four Congresses of the Third International (Comintern), the founding Congress of the Fourth International"¹⁸ and also on specific theoretical documents of the CWI ("Prohrama sektsii SND Komitetu za Robochyi Internatsional"). The most widespread personal political identity of the interviewed activists of RS was "Marxist" or "revolutionary Marxist".

The ultimate goal of the organization is, of course, communism, the "creation of conditions for free realization of potential, creative potential, for development of each person" (Interview no.11: 15). It is necessary to mention that the former actual leaders of "Robitnychi Sprotyv" used the terms "anarchy",

organization "Liva Initsiatyva" ("The Leftist Initiative"), orienting on the very broad left-radical ideological platform. Having existed only for two years it became twice as large as RS was in 2003. The similar situation is with TN. The group did not stop political activity; now it has even more participants (however, it is all the same much smaller than "The Leftist Initiative") but it is no anarchist anymore and it does not call itself "Tigra-Nigra" (as respondent no. 24 mentioned in his comments to the draft of this article).

17 There was no independent national Ukrainian section in CWI; it was considered a branch of CIS-section.

18 Called by Alexander "the 'sacred texts' of the movement" (1991: 26).

“self-government”, and “communism” interchangeably, (Interview no. 2:19; interview no. 8:2); presumably following Lenin’s insistence that the stateless society is the common aim of both Marxists and anarchists (Lenin 1975: 353). However, the Trotskyists interviewed unambiguously rejected prefigurative politics as a method of social change. They conceived it as non-realistic, simply “utopian”:

I mean, we live integrated into the surrounding reality with economic relationships, and to some extent it has an effect on relationships in the organization, its activity, functioning. This effect is harmful for some things, but for other things, I think, we need to borrow some elements, for example organization of ... some campaigns, marketing tactics... God knows! I think we do not totally reject the surrounding reality, not at all (Interview no. 11:16).

This approach reflects an instrumentally rational solution of the means-ends dilemma. An organization has to be an adequate tool to destroy the System: “...if the repressive bourgeois system fights with you, then you must fight fire with fire... They have a repressive apparatus; therefore, you must have a repressive apparatus too” (Interview no. 2:21).

The existence of “the elements of the future society” inside the organization is dependent on the current situation of the struggle with the system:

It is clear that there should be some democratic forms that gradually are developing into full self-government. But at the same time the organization should not be completely chaotic and anarchic because the anarchic structure is responsive to the communist society, where party is necessary. When it is a communist organization, it is obvious that it should be minimally vertical and maximally horizontal. But under the conditions of confrontation with the capitalist system, which is strictly hierarchical and totalitarian, then the organization should have the vertical elements together with horizontal ones (Interview no. 29:14-15).

Thus we have a step-by-step strategy of radical social change: building the revolutionary organization, capturing state power, radical transformation of the relations of production, and suppression of the resisting remnants of the old society, developing the elements of self-government and the building of communism. The transition to the next step can be done only after success at the previous stage. Therefore, on the each step one particular task and activity have the highest priority; other tasks and activities are secondary ones. One can see a clear-cut hierarchy of the means and ends.

“Tigra-Nigra” did not orient to some clearly defined ideological sources. Moreover, none of the younger activists whom I interviewed (No. 19, 22, 24, 26, 27) have ever managed to read a classic anarchist writer, though some of them tried to begin reading Kropotkin. Nevertheless, most of them identified themselves as anarchists and they shared certain basic ideological principles of the group, which were formed during the personal communication with older anarchist activists (Interview no. 24:5) and also from group seminars and discussions (Interview no. 22:6).

The short description of “Tigra-Nigra” on the web site states, “the main and the most global goal of the group is libertarian development of the society through libertarian development of personality” (“Ob initiative”). The libertarian development of personality means not only individual self-improvement, but also, what is no less important, rebuilding of social relations in which the individual is involved in the principles of self-organization, mutual help, consensus decision-making, the absence of hierarchy (Ibid; Interview no. 22:6).

The ideology of the group clearly equates the means of social change with its goals. Anarchism is first of all “a way of life”, alternative to the ways dominant in the System.¹⁹ This means that prefigurative politics is the only possible way to change the System; it is necessary to create a new alternative society parallel to the System: the network of “autonomous communities” (Interview no. 19:5) or “free

¹⁹ “Because every activity that at least somehow is similar to the activities of the System is the part of the System” (Interview no. 21:5).

informational zones” (Interview no. 20:4). It is implied that if the new way of life is evidently better than the dominant one, other people will see this and will understand the difference, and subsequently will be trying to realize the same principles themselves. Anarchists can consciously help social change by disseminating “these ideas” (however, in an unobtrusive way, and not via propaganda) (Interview no. 22:5; interview no. 24:3; interview no. 32:3).

Actually, the elements of better social relations are already intertwined with the elements of the System in the society. For example, each person is involved both in the dominant economy of private capital and in the “anarchist economy” based on gifts and on informal social networks (“Eto to kak vygliadit demokratiia?”).

However, here lies the problem: anarchism may become just “a way of life”, the attempt to live as a “good” and “happy” person inside the current System.

These are some autonomous territories where you feel well and comfortable when you feel cooperation when you can unite with your friends and to make something... Probably from the outside it does not seem to be anarchism, but just pleasant, comfortable conditions for life. For me these make some sense (Interview no. 19:6).

It is implied that political activity must be only spontaneous and enthusiastic; otherwise, it does not make any sense. The motives “it was interesting” or “it became boring” in the explanation of starting or stopping some activities were often mentioned in the interviews. Moreover, this emphasis on spontaneity is the result of the radical identification of means with ends. From this point of view it is completely logical that if you strive for the better society, in which your personal life will be easier and more pleasurable, then psychologically comfortable life becomes a way of social change in itself. Thus, on the one hand, enjoying your life is “political”; on the other hand, political activity driven by the feeling of obligation (“I must”) and not by the spontaneous deep desire (“I want”) is senseless (“Vasha politika skuchna!”).

Nevertheless, only one activist from “Tigra-Nigra” pointed out that anarchy is not the future form of society, but merely a way of living within contemporary society (Interview no. 21:9). Others reported the belief in the necessity of dissemination of their ideas and the change on the mass level, not only on the level of small groups. However, as I will show below, the emphasis on spontaneity and refusal to use “systemic” means was one of the causes of the relatively lower outcomes of resource mobilization of the anarchist group.

Dynamics of group membership

I will analyze strategies and mechanisms of new members’ recruitment to the Trotskyist group, and simultaneously will explain why the anarchist group did not use those methods, or why they had not been useful in its case.

The main Trotskyist method of recruitment of new members was obtrusive persuasion combined with invitations to RS events and to involvement in its activities. The main goal was not so much ideological conversion as persuasion to become a formal member of the organization. Quantitative growth was considered as one of the most important tasks if not the most important for the current stage of the development of the organization (Interview no. 8:4; interview no. 6:7). “We seriously worked on each person who somehow caught our sight. The person was included into the list of ‘contacters’, we established responsible comrades: who is for persuasion, who is for integration... I mean, we drove him to such a stage where he even dreamt of the RS...” (Interview no. 2:11). Each opportunity for communication and interaction could be used for this. The activists intensively used the social networks in which they were involved in the process of earning money and spending leisure-time. New members of RS could be acquaintances from a theatrical school or students of activists teaching in universities. In addition, from 1994 until 2002 RS used traditional Trotskyist tactics of “entryism” in different established

mass parliamentary left-wing political parties and in their youth offspring organizations. They looked there for disappointed activists not agreeing with, for example, “reformism” or “opportunism” of the leadership of those parties, and who potentially could have the desire to join a more radical organization.

Despite the fact that anarchists recognized the necessity of the dissemination of their ideas for social change on the mass level, they did not agitate for affiliation at all. An obtrusive persuasion (like Trotskyism) would violate the authenticity of the anarchist identity that was articulated in the context of ideology, in which prefigurative politics is the general strategic solution. Imposition of their own point of view was unacceptable for anarchists. An old disappointed anarchist activist reconstructed this logic in the following way:

If we actively press into an ordinary person some slogans, then we are not different from fascists, who do the same thing, or from bourgeois mass-media, which do the same thing, advertisements and so on. Our task is to awaken the consciousness of the person, shift her mind, to make her to look at this world and feel terrified. But in no way we can impose her our ideals (Interview no. 13:4).

This does not mean that anarchists did not produce anything oriented to the masses. However, their activity had the aim of achieving soft changes in the minds of people (at least they believed so) with, for example, sticker “campaigns” in the metro on some actual issues or replacing commercial advertisements with papers carrying the reinterpretation of some hot news topic.

Combined with obtrusive persuasion to join the organization, Trotskyists also used the mechanism of social-psychological integration of potential activists with the RS group. They actively invited their “contacters” to participate in their events (for example, in their internal meetings, street actions or public discussions) and to involve in the current activity of the organization (for example, writing an article). First of all, participation and involvement created opportunities for political discussions and persuasion (Interview no. 1:1). Further, a “contacter” might have become interested in a particular activity (Interview no. 11:2; interview no. 16:1) or in cooperation with certain people, or might have established friendly relationships with them. Thus a person may have become an actual activist and comrade of RS before becoming a formal member, and formalization of the status was frequently only a matter of time.

Obviously, the result of this mechanism of integration was directly dependent on the intensity of activity, on the frequency of events that provided occasions to invite potential activists. Generally, between 2000 and 2003 RS was much more active as a political group than TN, if one measures activity by the quantity of street actions, the frequency of political discussions, internal seminars, video-clubs, and publishing printing materials. Moreover, the activity of TN was decreasing with time, while activity of RS was increasing. It was only in June 2003 that TN came to exceed RS in Internet activity (and only in Internet activity) maintaining www.zaraz.org portal, while RS web sites were updated very rarely²⁰.

Trotskyists approached public activity as a very important component of the strategy of party building. It was done not only with the aim of dissemination of ideas but also “in order to attract new people and integrate older ones” (Interview no. 4: 7). Each public event ended with collecting contact phone numbers or e-mail addresses by RS activists from the maximal number of new participants. Later those new “contacters” received invitations to subsequent events. Another aim of public activity was attracting attention of mass media and promoting the brand of “Robitnychi Sprotyv” (Interview no. 8: 4-5). This strategic approach to public activity directly influenced its intensity: if public activity was absent or on a very low level, it would make senseless the entire existence of the organization: from a Marxist point of view just enjoying your life in a small community will not advance the world revolution.

On the contrary, for anarchists public activity was spontaneous and not strategic. Street actions, for example, could be made “just to shout ... that there are people who think differently. We are trying to make them interesting for us and they are oriented on media” (Interview no. 24:6). But their orientation on media had nothing to do with the promotion of the brand of the organization by Trotskyists. As the

²⁰ Data on activity retrieved from analysis of messages from web-sites, mail-lists, documents and interviews.

same activist explained, “I have my own theory for this case. I don’t like advertisements very much and support anti-branding. I mean, the constant use of one and the same name may be effective, but it is branding. You develop it yourself” (p. 2, added emphasis).

The second important moment is that street action must be interesting at least for organizers themselves, other things are secondary. Here is the description of the May-Day picnic in 2003:

For 4 hours we were dancing, distributing leaflets, entertaining people passing by with anarchist cookies, drinking lemonade, flying a kite, reading our poems, selling (for the cost price, without profit) CDs... *We* agitated minimally – though, maybe we should have agitated more, but, we wanted to leave a pleasant unstrained first impression of us as people (as for political essence they could get the information from the leaflet), and, second, we made the action first of all for ourselves... It was a party after all! (“Otchet [pervomaiskii piknik ‘03]”, added emphasis).

At the beginning of the leaflet the anarchist roots of the holiday were explained, as was anarchism itself, and the question “what is to be done?” was asked. The answer: “Actually, you can try even now. I try to lessen the control of money and power over my life. To expand the space of human solidarity. Less to buy, more to gift. Less ingratiation of yourself to your boss, more support for your colleagues. Less TV watching, more communication with friends...” (“Tekst listovki [pervomaiskii piknik ‘03]”).

From the point of view of prefigurative politics “anarchist” changes in behavior are really more important than formally joining an anarchist group. However, this does not mean that anarchists consciously did not want to attract new people at all. Interviewed activists recognized the problem that the group needs “fresh blood” and even recognized that public seminars and discussions could be used as events where to invite new people (Interview no. 22:6; interview no. 24:8; interview no. 26:10). Although even earlier “seminars were done more for the internal dynamics, for ourselves” (Interview no. 21:2). In 2002 they lost the apartment used as an “office”, much of their activity had gradually stopped, “and many people left the club when we stopped organizing public seminars” (Interview no. 22:9).

The problem of a spontaneous, expressive approach is that it is too vulnerable to random factors and the changing interests of activists. The TN’s interpretation of anarchism ascribed a political meaning to a prefigurative community of close friends, and did not demand anything more from activists. The reduction of public activity naturally led to the decrease in the number of newcomers that were not replacing the older activists leaving because of the change in interest or for personal reasons. Further, the group dynamics, the development of friendly relationships caused an “internal” orientation towards activists to prevail over an “external” orientation towards the rest of society. “We already have a group that is enough for communication, and it does not demand more people, I mean, people so close to us.” (Interview no. 24:2). Anarchists did not feel expansion as a necessity. “From a theoretical point of view it would be good if it was a mass movement”, but “new people could enter only when they wanted to, because nobody paid attention to them” (Ibid).

At the same time Trotskists considered “tusovka”²¹ as a problem. They also had an “office” where several activists lived permanently. In the course of time it had grown into a community of friends. On the one hand, it attracted some people close to the “subculture” or “psychology” of this community but, on the other hand, it pushed off people from other “subcultures” despite the fact that they might share ideological views of the group (Interview no. 2:11). However, as is the case with high intensity activity, maintaining the authenticity of Marxist identity as articulated in the context of an instrumentally rational solution to the means-ends dilemma demanded from RS activists that they build mass organization on the principles of shared political ideas and independently of personal sympathies and antipathies.

²¹ Russian colloquialism for a group of people often spending leisure-time together, a group of friends.

Mobilization of Material Resources

In the last section I will analyze the most important strategies of material resource mobilization (mainly financial) and explain the ways in which they were caused by the solutions to the means-ends dilemma in the ideologies of Trotskyism and anarchism.

“Robitnychi Sprotyv”. Despite the fact that RS had several sources of finance mobilization (including membership fees, newspaper selling, direct sponsorship from CWI²², resources of those parties and organizations where they used “entryist” tactics), the largest part of the group’s budget came from the so-called “International Department” (“Mezhdunarodnyi otdel” (MO)) (Interview no. 2:6). The essential task of MO was to simulate the existence and activity of Ukrainian branches of different small leftist international organizations using intensive Internet communication, gathering virtual groups for western “emissaries” and participating in international meetings of some tendencies for which Ukrainians simulated desire to join them. Afterwards, they invented various public actions and other activity about which MO reported via Internet. When organizations became part of this network, RS started to receive financial aid (mostly in the same forms as it got from CWI) that was completely used by RS for CWI branch development (“Otchet komissii KRI o deiatelnosti t.n. «Mezhdunarodnogo otdela» v sostave Kievskoi gorodskoi organizatsii”, p.2). Therefore, financial mobilization by “Robitnychi Sprotyv” had an explicitly strategic character, aiming to create the material base for expansionist party building. The activity of MO structurally resembled more the work within a commercial firm or bureaucratic organization (with “perfect organizational structure”, a “high level of discipline”, “quite good financial reporting” (Interview no. 6:4)) than it did working within social movements.

It is impossible to understand the choice of this manner of strategic financing without taking into consideration the structure of networks of Trotskyist ideology. The logic of party building led to the necessity of establishing regional branches of the group that presupposed the existence of permanent office, stable Internet connection, regular party meetings, and All-Ukrainian conferences, etc. (Interview no. 8:7). Almost every Trotskyist whom I asked about possible ways of fund-raising for a revolutionary party said that there was no other way except for cheating somebody (with certain reservations such as not cheating leftists, or in another way, or not in such scale, or with better conspiracy etc.) or did not see any way of financial mobilization at all. Only one person said that it was possible to build a party solely on membership fees (Interview no. 6).

Receiving money from any Ukrainian organization or private person could lead to loss of independence (Interview no. 31:2); this is why small (and relatively rich because of the difference in life standards between the First world and Ukraine) Western organizations were more attractive for strategic cheating. MO tried to work with other organizations but they had success only with Trotskyists; this was explained by the lack of knowledge and skills needed to cheat other tendencies²³. Furthermore, the instrumentally rational solution of the means-ends dilemma took away any “moral obstacles” for such activity. After the start of MO projects the leaders began to recommend the reading of Trotsky’s article “Their morals and ours” (1936) where he argued for the class character of any morality and rejected any appeal to “eternal values” as “bourgeois moralizing”. The high level of sectarianism among Trotskyist

²² Wages for two activists for organization building and coverage of costs for travel to international CWI conferences.

²³ “The work was rather delicate, and they were those organizations that we understood, understood the logic of their actions, understood how to work with them... With any other organizations we had to work blindly. Even if we had had a success, we would have reached it significantly later. Thus, I would say, it was for the reasons of efficiency” (Interview no. 8:7).

organizations²⁴ (who consider other leftist tendencies rather as enemies than as allies) created preconditions for the use of the same methods as against “bourgeois forces” (Interview no. 2:4)²⁵.

“Tigra-Nigra”. The main source for projects of “Tigra-Nigra” was activists’ own money (Interview no. 19:11). They did not try to collect money on a regular basis as Trotskyists did, but as it was required by a specific project or action (Interview no. 20:11), and this completely corresponded to the spontaneous character of their activity. Activists could cover no more than \$200; more expensive projects faced a lack of money (Ibid: 12). This problem was partially solved with economically used grants received for the social projects of the club.

Can this manner of operation be compared with Trotskyist MO-technology? From the theoretical standpoint of the “cultural tool-kit” (Swidler 1986) the cases are not fundamentally different. Anarchists had experience in social work, so it was easier for them to receive grants and then use them for their own purposes; just like the Trotskyists who chose the path of least resistance and worked with organizations with which it was easier for them to work. But if one is to take into account the level of motivations, one will see the difference and why it has produced the different outcomes in resource mobilization. For anarchists social work had the same priority as political projects: “Not only some ideological work, swinging flags and throwing stones at McDonald’s, but real, immediate change ... You want change in the society? Here is the society, take it and change it” (Interview no. 26:5). Social projects were not virtual ones, and the main parts of grants were spent directly on them (Interview no. 32:7). To continue the comparison with MO, when the club received a proposal to get money from the World Bank, they refused the offer “because of ideological reasons”: “Because the World Bank favors this, this, and this, this, this, and this. It turns out that everything we fight for, I mean, the World Bank crosses out. And so this money was not taken...” (Interview no. 24: 14). This argumentation radically differs from that of the Trotskyist. The value-rational solution of the means-ends dilemma rejects any possibility of adaptation to the structure of interest in the System and tactical cooperation with ideologically unsympathetic forces.

Moreover, the spontaneous character of the activity did not push the anarchists to receive money even from ideologically acceptable sources. For example, the antiglobalist network “No Borders” proposed to choose one of them as a “full-timer”, who was to receive \$200 as permanent wage. They refused this offer,

...because if you take money, its means that you have to undertake obligations. Moreover, they are good people. You assume obligations to good people. Thus, you must fulfill them. We did not find anyone of us who was ready to commit herself on a regular basis to No Borders. (Interview no. 24: 11, added emphasis).

This attitude is completely opposite to the “professional”, strategic one of the Trotskyists towards financing. The latter allowed realizing MO technology, which sometimes demanded exhaustive work (“Obraschenie k Kievskoi konferentsii KRI 18-19 oktiabria 2003 goda”) and was constantly accompanied by psychological tension because of the risk of being exposed.

²⁴ The list on the “Leftist Parties of the World” web-page contains 36 Internationals identifying themselves with Trotskyism (retrieved on April 4, 2004 – <http://www.broadleft.org/trotskyi.htm>).

²⁵ Financial mobilization through MO had very important negative consequences for the work of the Kiev organization. The high level of conspiracy (full information about all international projects had only several persons in RS (Interview no. 25:4)) led to the development of distrust and personal aversion between activists. Spending energy and time of activists on virtual projects caused the reduction of the amount of real political activity of RS as the section of CWI (Interview no. 6: 10). The growing discontent with MO activity increased tensions between internal groupings inside the organization and caused the split of RS when information about cheating leaked out to the West, triggering a huge scandal among the leftist public and dissolution of Kiev group by CWI. A majority of the group dissatisfied with “betrayal” left RS.

Conclusions

An empirical examination of the left-radical groups in Kiev has demonstrated the limitations of the approaches to ideology that consider it either as an irrational obstacle for “pragmatic behavior”, or as a “cultural toolkit” disregarding the deep motivations and content of ideological systems. I have shown that the opposed solutions of the dilemma of the means and ends of social change in the ideologies of the Trotskyist and anarchist groups in Kiev were causally related to their different outcomes in membership numbers and in the amount of material resources mobilized. There were two specific mechanisms through which ideologies caused such outcomes in the groups:

1) The instrumentally rational solution opened opportunities that contradicted the vision of the future social order as radically different from the current one. Particularly, it allowed for Trotskyists' intensive exploitation of the political and non-political networks, co-optation and cheating of other organizations relatively independently of their ideological orientations. Generally speaking, it allowed them to survive within the System using its own methods. For the anarchists orienting to the value-rational solution, these ways were closed because of rejection of those methods of change of the system that were the system's own rules of the game, and giving the prior political meaning to the activity that was transcending the System, i.e. to the construction of the new society here and now.

2) The value-rational solution demands the spontaneous, expressive nature of political activity, while the instrumentally rational solution requires the “professional”, strategic one. If the first mechanism justified for Trotskyists a wider range of potential methods of mobilization than for anarchists, the second mechanism justified for anarchists the disuse of even those methods that were compatible with the vision of anarchist society. Particularly, there was nothing wrong with the reduction of public political activities. Combined with the factor of group dynamics it had gradually led to the transformation of “Tigra Nigra” / the club of socially active youth into a closed group of friends. From the point of view of Trotskyists such transformation is extremely undesirable and in the result removes any political reason for the existence of such a group.

With regard to the general mechanism of the influence of the ideological network of the interrelated solutions of the means-ends dilemma, general strategic and tactical solutions for strategic activity and for resource mobilization of the activists was the mechanism of identity articulation and of the maintaining of its authenticity, as described in theoretical section of the article. Activity that contradicted the ultimate values of the future society of freedom, equality and solidarity had no political sense and its exercise was violating for the anarchist identity articulated in the context of value-rational solution and prefigurative politics. In contrast, reduction of the political group to a close group of friends violated the authenticity of Marxist identity that was articulated within the context of the instrumentally rational solution and party building.

I have also shown that the difference in the objective situation cannot explain different outcomes of resource mobilization. Trotskyists did not suffer repressions from the state but the repression of anarchists in 1998 cannot explain the negative dynamics of membership since 2001 was long after the repression had ended. The evidence from public opinion shows that the situation was even more favorable for anarchists than for Trotskyists.

In the end I want to point out some limitations of my analysis and perspectives for future research. First of all, there is the question of the possibility of the generalization of these conclusions. I suppose that processes I have described here will be the most evident in the case of radical movements struggling inside “hostile” environments. The more desirable society differs from the existing one, and the fewer opportunities are open for radical activity, the more there will be results from strategic flexibility and professional organization of political activity. In Ukraine these unfavorable conditions for the leftist movement were decreasing living standards of the population, which could influence the amount of resources spent on leisure-time associations (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1224), the relatively low level of political activity of the population (Howard 2002) (at least until the “orange revolution” in 2004), and the

discredit of socialist rhetoric. It is possible that under different structural circumstances outcomes of instrumentally rational and value-rational politics would be different.

Therefore, my goal was not to “blame” prefigurative politics and in some way “condemn” it as “ineffective”. I deliberately avoided using such terms as “success”, and wrote only about outcomes, since Trotskyists and anarchists understand “success” differently. For Trotskyists the quantitative growth of the organization is the necessary stage on the way to the revolutionary party; for anarchists it does not make sense without qualitative change in behavioral practices. I have pointed out the tendency of prefigurative groups to close up within themselves (that within certain conditions might develop further, but within other conditions might stay latent), and to the existence of a problem, but I do not argue the complete impossibility of social transformation at the macro-level with prefigurative methods.

Comparison of the value-rational and instrumentally rational approaches to politics within different structural conditions will allow transcendence of the one-dimensional “idealistic” model, and the investigation of the mechanisms of the political socialization of activists, of formations of ideological identities and of their articulation within the context of specific symbolic networks. In other words, it will allow the placement of ideological processes within concrete social contexts and will allow us to put them into dynamic perspective.

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Interviews

The references to interviews (Interview no. [1, 2, 3...]) relate to the transcriptions of interviews conducted by the author in April-May 2004. The Appendix contains the profile of interviewees.

APPENDIX: THE PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

No.	Date of interview	Former involvements (from 1997)	Current involvement ^a	Sex	Age ^a	Occupation/Education ^a
1	7.04.04	RS	RS	Male	29	Taxi dispatcher
2	7.04.04	RS	LI	Male	32	Lecturer of law
3	8.04.04	RS	RS	Female	24	Ph.D. student of philology
4	10.04.04	RS	RS	Male	32	Student of social work
5	10.04.04	RS	RS	Female	21	Agent on purchase and sale of real estate
6	10.04.04	RS	RS	Male	29	Ph.D. student of economics, engineer
7	11.04.04	RS	LI	Male	n.a.	n.a.
8	11.04.04	RS	LI	Male	33	Tourist-agent
9	12.04.04	-	RS	Male	23	Student of programming
10	12.04.04	RS	RS	Male	21	Student of psychology
11	12.04.04	RS	RS	Male	23	Journalist
12	14.04.04	-	RS	Male	21	Student of law
13	14.04.04	TN, then RS	LI	Male	29	Archaeologist
14	15.04.04	RS	RS	Male	24	Student of archaeology
15	15.04.04	RS	UKRS	Male	23	Engineer-designer
16	17.04.04	RS	LI	Male	21	Student of law
17	17.04.04	RS	-	Male	19	Student of programming
18	18.04.04	RS	LI	Male	31	Philologist
19	18.04.04	TN	TN	Female	25	Journalist
20	18.04.04	TN	TN	Male	30	Teacher of design
21	19.04.04	TN	TN	Male	27	Freelance (?) artist
22	20.04.04	TN	TN	Male	26	Journalist

23	21.04.04	RS	-	Male	40	Political scientist
24	22.04.04	TN	TN	Male	22	Designer
25	27.04.03	RS	LI	Male	22	Newspaper editor
26	29.04.03	TN	TN	Male	23	Manager of sociological researche
27	29.04.03	TN	TN	Female	21	Student of law
28	1.05.03	TN, then RS	-	Male	n.a.	n.a.
29	26.02.03	Respondent No. 2				
30	26.02.03	Respondent No. 25				
31	12, 14.02.05	Respondent No. 2				
32	16.02.05	TN	TN	Male	31	Manager

^a – at time of interview.

Here RS means Vseukrainske marksystske obyednannia “Robitnychi Sprotyv” (All-Ukrainian Marxist Association “Workers’ Resistance”),

LI – Liva Initsiatyva (Left Initiative – split from RS, 2003),

TN – Anarchist Initiative “Tigra-Nigra”,

UKRS – Ukrainska Komunistychna Robitnycha Spilka (Ukrainian Communist Workers’ Union – split from RS, 2002)