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Fall 2009

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Message from the Chair: Tea Parties, Town Halls, and Astroturf Protest

Nella Van Dyke
CBSM Section Chair
School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts
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Welcome everyone to the fall 2009 Critical Mass Newsletter. Before I launch into a discussion of the recent right-wing protests the nation is experiencing, I thought I would provide you with a brief update on the state of the section. First, the social movements sessions at the San Francisco ASA meetings in August were a great success from all accounts. The vibrancy and quality of scholarship of our section was on full display, and continues to be very impressive. That said, I want to issue a call for new members. Our section membership currently stands at 810, down a little from last year. The economic downturn has undoubtedly made it a little more difficult for people to join. We lose a section session at the ASAs for 2011 if we fall below 800, so please, everyone, recruit! Encourage your colleagues to join and if you have some extra money, consider sponsoring a graduate student.

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I am certain that anyone residing in the United States has noticed the rapid mobilization of the right since Obama's election last year. We saw tax day protests in over 750 cities in April (Robbins 2009), protests at Town Hall meetings about health care across the country in August, and a right-wing march on Washington involving tens of thousands of protesters on September 12th. What do we as social movement scholars make of these protests?

Many in the media have labeled these protests "Astroturf" rather than grassroots due to the heavy involvement of the Republican Party and associated think tanks in their mobilization. For example, the Tea Party protests and other mobilizations have been promoted and sponsored by FreedomWorks, an organization founded by Dick Armey, the former House majority leader. Dick Armey's other job these days involves working as a lobbyist for DLA Piper, a lobbying firm whose current and former clients include a number of pharmaceutical and health care industry businesses (Maddow 2009). FreedomWorks' President is Matt Kibbe, the former senior economist for the Republican National Committee. Before that, he was chief of staff for Republican Congressman Dan Miller of Florida. The Press have also uncovered the presence of Republican operatives as protesters at the Town Hall meetings. For example, a woman who claimed to be politically unaffiliated challenged Wisconsin Representative Steve Kagen, a Democrat, on health care at a Town Hall meeting in early August. However, a local TV station discovered later that she was a former Republican staffer who had worked for Mr. Kagen's opponent in his Congressional race (Stolberg 2009). And, Republican Party members and affiliated media commentators all have encouraged these mobilizations.

Thus, consistent with resource mobilization theory, groups with plentiful resources have organized these protests. That they have been able to do so is not surprising. McCarthy and Zald (1977) long ago observed that professional activists can generate grassroots mobilization, and various studies have confirmed this. My own research on the AFL-CIO's Union Summer program found that the labor federation has inspired college student labor protest.

What is more interesting, in my view, is the fact that the Republican Party is involved in generating mass protest. Why would the Republican Party turn to protest in an effort to influence policy, and what implications does this have for social movement scholarship?

One of the basic tenets of social movement scholarship is that people do not turn to protest if they hold enough power to influence policy through other means. So the use of protest is at least partially in response to the Republican loss of power in Washington, and Democratic control of the White House and Congress. Second, it seems clear that there has been a learning effect, they have seen progressive groups mobilize and protest for the past several decades, and they must perceive protest as being an effective means for influencing policy. Otherwise, why would they do it? But let's turn away from individual motives to think about these events from a more macro-level perspective, and through the lens of social movement theory.

Republican Party involvement in the protests is surprising in that few scholars have documented political party involvement in grassroots protest. Paul Almeida's (2006) recent work on protest in El Salvador is an important exception. Almeida coins the term social movement partyism to refer to cases where political parties act like social movements (based on the term social movement unionism). He describes how former social movements in Latin America have become institutional insiders, political parties, as a result of democratization, yet still engage in and mobilize grassroots protest. The US case, however, seems to be operating via different mechanisms than those uncovered by Almeida. Rather than occurring after a social movement became a political party, what we are seeing here is grassroots action after a political party has lost a significant amount of power. Thus, we need to recognize that social movement partyism can occur in response to a significant gain or loss of institutional political power.

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Although the term Astroturf protest is catchy, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that ordinary people (along with some extremist freaks) are responding to the Republican's call for protest. We can't assume that people are malleable blobs waiting for any professional activist to come along and mobilize them. The activists are coming from a pool of aggrieved citizens who are available for mobilization. Some of these individuals are likely responding to ethnic competition. The election of an African American to the Presidency represents a loss of political power for white Americans who have historically held a monopoly on Executive power in the United States. However, while the racists are definitely a part of this mobilization, and possibly the most disturbing part, we would likely see some mobilization of the right even if Obama were white. And this mobilization presents a bit of a challenge to standard social movement theory.

The individuals who are mobilizing are clearly not doing so in response to the opening of political opportunities at the Federal level. They definitely have political allies, allies who are intentionally generating their protest, but their mobilization has not occurred in response to an opening in political opportunities or an expansion in the number of allies they enjoy. On the contrary, the White House just changed hands from Republicans to Democrats and they lost allies in Congress during the same election. Thus, this mobilization is more consistent with recent work, including that by myself and scholars like Paul Almeida and Rory McVeigh, who are increasingly showing that political threats often inspire protest. As several of us have noted (McVeigh 2009; Van Dyke and Soule 2002), protest on the part of relatively privileged groups may be especially likely in response to threats. These groups already enjoy some level of resources and political opportunities, and therefore may be inspired to protest when they face a loss of resources or allies. Thus, political opportunity theory must recognize the mobilizing effect of threat, especially for reactive and right-wing movements.

These are just some preliminary ideas on the theoretical implications of the right-wing mobilization we are seeing in the US. I hope that some scholars out there with more time than I have are studying this in a systematic fashion, as I think these phenomena are important and need to be studied and theorized. I'm sure that these mobilizations are going to continue for the duration of the Obama Presidency, so we will have plenty of empirical data to work with.

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CBSM Award Winners

The Charles Tilly Award For the Best Book in Collective Behavior and Social Movements, 2009

Larry W. Isaac
Vanderbilt University

The 2009 Charles Tilly Award Committee consisted of Larry Isaac (Chair), Vanderbilt University; Elizabeth Armstrong, Indiana University (moving to University of Michigan); Belinda Robnett, University of California Irvine; and Nancy Whittier, Smith College.

The 2009 Charles Tilly Award Winner is: Maren Klawiter (Yale University Law School). 2008. *The Biopolitics of Breast Cancer: Changing Cultures of Disease and Activism*. University of Minnesota Press.

How did breast cancer come out of the closet in the 1990s? In answering this and related questions, Maren Klawiter not only advances our understanding of the biopolitics of breast cancer, she also advances the field of social movements. Her rich empirical analysis driven by years of field research in the San Francisco Bay area is organized and informed by a creative use of what is coming to be known as a multi-institutional fields approach to social movement studies. This approach facilitates the bridging of activism and medical practices surrounding breast cancer. Central to the study is the link between cultures associated with differing regimes of medical practice (echoes of Foucault) and differing cultures of breast cancer activism. Klawiter has demonstrated how a creative social movement imagination can serve to illuminate other important fields of sociological inquiry.

Honorable Mentions go to:

Amin Ghaziani (Princeton University). *The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington*. University of Chicago Press.

Kelly Moore (University of Cincinnati). *Disrupting Science: Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military, 1945-1975*. Princeton University Press.

The Committee received 27 nominations this year.

There were many excellent, interesting, and important books in that pool that we would like to share with the CBSM membership, including:

Sharon Erickson Nepstad. *Religion and War Resistance in the Plowshares Movement*. Cambridge University Press.

Chad Goldberg. *Citizens and Paupers: Relief, Rights, and Race from the Freedman's Bureau to Welfare*. University of Chicago Press.

Ann Mische. *Partisan Publics: Communication and Contention across Brazilian Youth Activist Networks*. Princeton University Press.

Jackie Smith. *Social Movements for Global Democracy*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lynne Woehrle, Pat Coy, and Greg Maney. *Contesting Patriotism: Culture, Power, and Strategy in the Peace Movement*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Isaac Martin. *The Permanent Tax Revolt*. Stanford University Press.

Paul Ameida. *Waves of Protest: Popular Struggles in El Salvador, 1925-2005*. University of Minnesota Press.

Timothy Kubal. *Cultural Movements and Collective Memory*. Palgrave Macmillan.

David Pellow. *Resisting Global Toxics*. MIT Press.

**Deadline for the Spring 2010 Issue of
Critical Mass Bulletin: April 1**

The Collective Behavior and Social Movements Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award

*Holly J. McCammon
Vanderbilt University*

CBSM Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award committee members were: Holly McCammon (Chair), Mary Bernstein, Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum, and Greg Maney.

The winner of this year's CBSM Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award is:

Matthew S. Williams, Boston College, "Strategizing against Sweatshops: Ideology, Strategic Models, and Innovation in the U.S. Anti-Sweatshop Movement."

Abstract: In this paper, I analyze the ways in which the US anti-sweatshop movement—particularly United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC)—have strategized in response to the globalization of apparel production. While social movement scholars have theorized extensively about tactics, much less has been said about strategy. By strategy, I mean the process by which social movement actors seek, in the context of unequal power relationships, to develop sets of interlinked practices that will allow them to alter the power relations in society, particularly those affecting their constituents. These practices include many of the things social movements scholars have traditionally looked at, such as organization-building, tactical repertoires, and cultural framing, but a strategic analysis seeks to understand how they fit together in a larger whole. In strategizing, the anti-sweatshop movement has drawn on both an ideology of worker empowerment and past experiences as a guide for which sets of practices to deploy in their campaigns. At the same time, as the movement has encountered new obstacles, the anti-sweatshop movement has adapted and innovated, creating new practices and strategies; specifically, they founded the WRC and created the Designated Suppliers Program in response to the actions of their corporate foes. The anti-sweatshop movement's ability to strategize effectively has been facilitated by their organization, which allows them to create an institutional memory; and which encourages deliberative decision-making, allowing them to draw on a broad range of experiences and ideas.

There were also two honorable mentions:

Thomas V. Maher, The Ohio State University, "Threat, Resistance, and Collective Action: The Cases of Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz."

Alexandra Pittman, Boston College, "Bridging Discourses: Moroccan Women's Rights Activists Framing the Need for Islamic Family Law Reform."

The Collective Behavior and Social Movements Outstanding Article Award

*Nella Van Dyke
University of California Merced*

Committee: Nella Van Dyke (chair), Rob Benford, Jennifer Earl, Caroline Lee. We received 15 excellent nominations.

The award-winning paper was:
Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Mary Bernstein. 2008. "Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements." *Sociological Theory* 26:1, 74-99.

Committee members felt that this paper will have a big impact on the field. It lays out what may become the next dominant theoretical paradigm for our area, one that recognizes that power operates through multiple institutions, and has both symbolic and material components. The authors draw together and synthesize a vast body of work from recent years that challenges the political opportunity perspective by suggesting that many social movements challenge elements of civil society (like education, science, the workplace) rather than the state; work that expands our definition of the political and political action to include cultural events and action, such as the work of Verta Taylor and her colleagues and their study of drag shows; work that challenges who social movement actors are, for example, by demonstrating that institutional insiders often play a crucial role in social change, and so on. We are all familiar with these critiques, but Armstrong and Bernstein weave them together into a powerful theoretical statement, one that is complex and multi-faceted, and provides us with a theoretical paradigm that we can work with, develop and build on.

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An honorable mention goes to:

Holly McCammon, Soma Chaudhuri, Lyndi Hewitt, Courtney Sanders Muse, Harmony D. Newman, Carrie Lee Smith and Teresa M. Terrell. 2008.

“Becoming Full Citizens: The U.S. Women’s Jury Rights Campaigns, the Pace of Reform, and Strategic Adaptation.” *American Journal of Sociology* 113:4, 1104–47.

Committee members were impressed with the novelty of the topic and the breadth and depth of their data collection. They demonstrate that when activists engage in strategic adaptation, where they tailor their tactics in response to messages they are receiving from the social environment, they are likely to achieve success more quickly.

A Specter is Haunting Glenn Beck

Richard Hutchinson
Kennesaw State University

On June 16, 2009 the *New York Times* ran an article that gently mocked an event in Union Square celebrating the publication in English of a French book called *The Coming Insurrection* (Invisible Committee 2009). The *NYT* article was titled “Liberating Lipsticks and Lattes,” and ended with a quote from an onlooker as a crowd chanted “All power to the communes”: “I have no idea what’s going on, [b]ut I like the excitement” (Moynihan 2008). This is a sly reference to the Situationist manifesto *The Society of the Spectacle* (Debord 1967), a key influence on the new manifesto. Debord maintains that in modern capitalist society protest is absorbed and becomes spectacle. The article did not go unnoticed on the right.

On July 1, 2009 Glenn Beck announced on his Fox News broadcast that the Left was preparing imminent armed revolution. He warned that “[a]s world economies go down the tank and unemployment continues to rise, disenfranchised people are set to explode. The dangerous leftist book that could spark this is *The Coming Insurrection*. This is a call to arms for violent revolution...” Thus was launched an

interesting example of the framing of radical activism (Snow et al 1986). Space limitations preclude a summary or analysis of *The Coming Insurrection*, but suffice it to say that there is much more to it than what one might gather from Glenn Beck. In short it advocates a non-commodified communalism, more anarchist than any sort of traditional Marxism or Marxism-Leninism.

The book was originally published in France in 2007, and based its apocalyptic analysis primarily on the massive youth riots in the *banlieues* of Paris in October and November of 2005. (The new U.S. edition adds an introduction that also takes into account the huge youth riots in Greece in December 2008.) In that it bears some resemblance to *The Communist Manifesto*, (Marx & Engels 1848), published just prior to the uprisings of 1848, and *The Society of the Spectacle*, written prior to the French General Strike of 1968. The Italian autonomous youth movement of 1977 was a key influence on the authors (Lotringer & Marazzi 1980), along with the Italian theorists Antonio Negri and Giorgio Agamben (Guattari & Negri 1990; Mandraud & Monnot 2008). On November 11, 2008 nine young activists were arrested in the French village of Tarnac and charged with sabotaging high-speed rail lines. They were also accused of being the authors of *The Coming Insurrection*. One activist, Julien Coupat, charged with being the main author, was held in detention for over six months under France’s anti-terrorist laws.

In the French press, the government’s terrorist frame for the Tarnac 9 (Burke 2009) was challenged by the activists’ parents and fellow villagers, who characterized them as young idealists. A letter from the parents of five of those arrested says “In Tarnac our children planted carrots without bosses or leaders. Because they naively think that life, intelligence and decisions are more joyous when they are collective” (Letter, 2008). *Le Monde*’s frame is their upper-middle class social status. It characterizes them as “brilliant students with multiple diplomas,” and says “[a]ll of them have good relationships with their families. Their parents, a director of a pharmaceutical laboratory, a physician, an engineer, a university professor, a teacher, all middle class, were seeing them on a regular basis” (Mandraud & Monnot 2008).

The British press runs with this frame as well: “They are brilliant ex-students from bourgeois families who live in a farm commune in the green, empty, centre of France” (“Cabbage-patch revolutionaries?” 2008). By adding the frame “cabbage-patch revolutionaries” and “grocer terrorists,” the French government’s terrorism frame is mocked. A Tarnac villager is quoted as saying “It’s ridiculous. I see them at the shop every day of the year, I help them with their drains, they help me. They are people who came to Correze to change lives, to help people. “We don’t view them as terrorists here” (Chrisafis 2009). *The Independent* article asks “...how can aggravated vandalism be described as ‘terrorism’? Why has so much been made ... of what may – at most – have been an act of priggish civil disobedience by a couple of brilliant young people with idealist-extremist ideas?” (“Cabbage-patch revolutionaries? 2008). The acts in question, for which no one has been convicted, were six incidents of disabling trains by placing “horseshoe-shaped iron bars over ... power lines ..., disabling 160 trains ... no one was hurt and there was no risk of derailment” according to the French rail company (“Use of French terrorism law on railroad saboteurs draws criticism” 2008).

Glenn Beck’s use of *The Coming Insurrection* can be seen as a defensive framing maneuver, an attempt to deflect concern from him and the right onto the left. The U.S. context is one of increasing concern over the heated anti-Obama framing on the right, starting with the “palling around with terrorists” frame during the campaign and leading by now to a surge of death threats and provocatively armed individuals at his speaking events. Lacking anything better than someone who was a Weatherman 40 years ago as a violent left-wing threat, Beck picked up the manifesto from France strictly as a weapon to use in his fight against the Obama Administration, the Democratic Party, and the American left, with little knowledge of its intellectual antecedents or social context. But it is certainly interesting that Beck perceives the possibility of large-scale anti-capitalist unrest under current conditions. A specter is haunting Glenn Beck!

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Recent Publications

Baggetta, Matthew. 2009. "Civic Development in Apolitical Organizations." Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Harvard University.

Baggetta, Matthew. 2009. "Civic Opportunities in Associations: Interpersonal Interaction, Governance Experience, and Institutional Relationships." *Social Forces*. 88:1.

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Davis, Nancy J. and Robert V. Robinson, "Overcoming Movement Obstacles by the Religiously Orthodox: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Shas in Israel, Comunione e Liberazione in Italy and the Salvation Army in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 114, 1302-49.

Esparza, Louis Edgar. 2009. "Global Movement Coalitions: The Global South and the World Trade Organization in Cancun." *Societies Without Borders* 4:2, 226-247.

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Oberschall, Anthony. 2007. *Conflict and Peace Building in Divided Societies: Responses to Ethnic Violence.*, Routledge.

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Slater, Dan. 2009. "Revolutions, Crackdowns, and Quiescence: Communal Elites and Democratic Mobilization in Southeast Asia." *American Journal of Sociology* 115:1, 203-254.

Snow, David S. and Sarah A. Soule. 2010. *A Primer on Social Movements*. WW Norton.

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Upcoming ASA Deadlines:

2010 ASA Submissions open December 1; topics will be listed October 30. The 2010 meeting theme is "Toward a Sociology of Citizenship;" the meeting will be in Atlanta.

2011 Thematic Session proposals are due November 13, 2009; proposals for other types of invited sessions are due by February 5, 2010. The 2011 meeting theme is "Social Conflict: Multiple Dimensions and Arenas;" the meeting will be in Chicago.

Valocchi, Stephen. 2009. *Social Movements and Activism in the USA*. Routledge.

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Williams, Dana M. 2009. "Anarchists and Labor Unions: An Analysis Using New Social Movement Theories." *Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society*, 12:3, 337-354.

Williams, Dana M. 2009. "Cross-National Protest Potential for Labor and Environmental Movements: The Relevance of Opportunity." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Akron, Department of Sociology. Advisor: Rudy Fenwick.

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Yang, Guobin. 2009. *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online*. Columbia University Press.

Pedagogy and Politics: What is the Role of the Classroom in Campus Demonstrations?

Amin Ghaziani

*Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows and
Lecturer in Sociology
Princeton University*

During the Spring 2009 semester at Princeton University, my students in “Queer Theory and Politics” and I staged a demonstration on campus against the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), a local nonprofit organization whose self-described mission is “to protect marriage and the faith communities that sustain it.” We protested their \$1.5 million ad campaign, ominously titled “A Gathering Storm,” in which paid actors presaged, “There’s a storm gathering. The clouds are dark and the winds are strong, and I am afraid. Some who advocate for same sex marriage have taken the issue far beyond same sex couples. They want to bring the issue into my life. My freedom will be taken away... The storm is coming.”

Embracing a program of action-based learning, I had my students apply theories of queer

politics by staging an actual demonstration. Aristotle was my inspiration: “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” Or consider Confucius: “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.” Early education theorist John Dewey, along with contemporaries such as David Kolb and others have empirically validated the mutuality between thinking and acting, exposure and experience.

But a formal complaint against the exercise obliged the university to respond in a way that raised a difficult question: What is the role of the classroom

in campus demonstrations? What follows is a story about an exercise in experiential learning that complicates the relationship between pedagogy and politics.

Explaining “queer theory,” sociologists Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer offer five “hallmarks” that express rejections of conventional wisdom and embraces of an alternate vision: (1) reject invariant categories / embrace historical variation; (2) reject impermeable categories / embrace fluidity; (3) reject comparisons to race and ethnicity / embrace the distinctiveness of sexuality; (4) reject binaries / embrace multiplicity; and (5) reject interest group politics / embrace a politics of parody and cultural provocation.

My students and I applied these theories by staging our own demonstration on campus. Aware of possible risks, I took three precautions: We voted on the idea (the decision was unanimously in favor), I invited students to e-mail me privately if anyone did not want to speak out publicly against the idea (no one did), and I allowed students to observe from the sidelines during the event itself (two students did). Like any other class session, this final one was mandatory. Unbeknownst to my students, they would have to use course frameworks for a postmortem analysis on their final exam. Thus, the progression from reading and discussing academic materials in class, to implementing our own queer political event, and then formally reflecting on it in an exam made for a productive synthesis of theory, practice, and analysis.



Students at the Protest. Photo taken by Amin Ghaziani

The day after our demonstration, the student newspaper printed a photograph of our protest on its front page with the following caption: “Students in SOC 354/WOM 354: Queer Theory and Politics protest the National Organization for Marriage on McCosh Walk on Wednesday afternoon.” Five days later, an administrator requested a private meeting with me. Someone had seen this photo and complained: The University’s nonprofit status prevents it from taking official stands on political

issues. An ad hoc demonstration by students is one thing, but a demonstration staged under the auspices of a course flirts with crossing this line. The university wanted to alert me to this problem. The administrator calling the meeting also wanted an explanation for why I did what I did—and what steps I took to ensure that no student felt coerced into participating. Although he indicated to me privately that he and many others favored marriage equality, he was forced to act as an agent of the institution once the complaint had been registered.

As a result, all of my students received the following e-mail from the university:

“Encouragement of an interest in public affairs and the furthering of a sense of social responsibility have long been considered important elements of a liberal education. The University continues to consider self-chosen participation in political and social action by individuals and groups to be a valuable part of the educational experience it seeks to encourage. Such activities on the part of individuals or groups do not, and should not be taken to, imply commitment of the University to any partisan political position or point of view.

“A recent exercise in a class entitled Queer Theory and Politics (SOC 354 / WOM 354) involved a demonstration that occurred during a class period. While this was designed as an exercise to supplement the pedagogy in the class, it violated the spirit of [the above] University guideline. In particular, it did not allow students the self-choice participation mentioned in the above excerpt... I also invite Princeton students who have concerns about partisan political activities in other classes to contact me so that we might arrange a confidential meeting with me or a member of my staff.”

It brought me great joy to learn that my students defended our action:

“You write that Professor Ghaziani’s exercise ‘did not allow students the self-choice participation.’ I must correct you, for Professor Ghaziani explicitly offered an opt-out option to any student who may have felt uncomfortable participating in the protest. Furthermore, I am concerned when you imply that our exercise was a partisan political action. You write ‘I also invite Princeton students who have concerns about partisan political activities in other classes to contact me,’ suggesting that that this class has demonstrated such an activity. Surely, protesting for equal rights for ALL citizens of the United States (regardless of their sexual orientation) is not a partisan issue but a human rights matter which all political parties should support... Applying the theory we have studied in class to a real-life event was an interesting and productive task.”

The 1962 Port Huron Statement was an inspired manifesto of the American student movement that demanded universities to “permit the political life to be an adjunct to the academic one.” Author Tom

Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society pitted idealistic students against a university that exhibited a “mass reluctance toward the controversial public stance.” Despite putative notions of academic freedom and free speech, worlds collide in a university context when visions for social change are potentially blinded by fine distinctions between pedagogy and politics. Sociologist Todd Gitlin has shown that 1960’s student movements successfully wedded political engagement with the college experience. The aftermath of my class’s exercise sits uncomfortably next to this observation. If protesting is a quintessential part of college life, then why was our campus demonstration challenged by the university? What would Hayden think of today’s college campuses?

Today we must contend with the strained relationship between the classroom and campus activism, in addition to its Haydenian possibilities: Precautions that universities must take may inadvertently obstruct creative pedagogies. There is a widening gulf between individually-embraced and institutionally-sanctioned political beliefs. As a subtype of action-based education, political experiential learning is more complicated and cannot be promoted without qualifications; and academic freedom can wilt against charges of violating “self-choice participation” and forcing students to engage in “partisan political activity.”

In the end, it remains an open question whether the exercise backfired. It was certainly an effective experiential teaching tool that provoked an important discussion at the university and classroom levels. Our demonstration was as exciting and important as the university’s protection of the expression of individual convictions. Unfortunately, the two trajectories of pedagogy and politics do not always run in parallel. But genuine efforts toward mutual comprehension and respect can enable all concerned parties to be the change they wish to see in the world, to allude to the great educator Mahatma Gandhi.

For a more detailed consideration of these events, see Ghaziani, Amin. 2009. “Out of the Classroom at Princeton.” Gay & Lesbian Review 16:5, 28-29, 31.

Calls For Papers

Spring 2010 Issue of CriticalMass

The deadline for submissions for the Spring 2010 issue of *CriticalMass* will be April 1, 2010. We are particularly interested in the following, but are happy to consider any submissions:

- Announcements, including dissertations completed, books and articles published, faculty position openings, and calls for papers
- Book reviews of recent CBSM-related books, including finalists, honorable mentions, and other submissions to the Charles Tilly Award that have not previously been reviewed in *CriticalMass*. If you are interested in writing a book review for the Spring 2010 issue, please contact cbsmnews@gmail.com as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to have a copy of the book forwarded to you in time.
- Discussions of teaching CBSM-related courses or topics, classroom exercises, teaching resources, etc. for either graduate or undergraduate-level courses
- Commentaries related to the current world economic crises and its implications for CBSM issues (note that while we are an informal publication, commentary articles must be written in academic prose with complete references).

Interface: Call for papers issue 3: crises, social movements and revolutionary transformations

Interface is a new journal produced twice yearly by activists and academics around the world in response to the development and increased visibility of social movements in the last few years—and the immense amount of knowledge generated in this process. This knowledge is created across the globe, and in many contexts and a variety of ways, and it constitutes an incredibly valuable resource for the further development of social movements. Interface responds to this need, as a tool to help our movements learn

from each other's struggles, by developing analyses and knowledge that allow lessons to be learned from specific movement processes and experiences and translated into a form useful for other movements.

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

Our third issue, to be published in May 2010, will have space for general articles on all aspects of understanding social movements, as well as a special themed section on crises, social movements and revolutionary transformations.

"In every country the process is different, although the content is the same. And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking, for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of broad masses or because huge masses have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A 'crisis of authority' is spoken of: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the state."

So wrote the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci from behind the walls of Mussolini's prison, in his famous notes on "State and Civil Society." His words aptly describe the trajectory of crises in modern history—these are periods when the wheels of economic growth and expansion grind to a halt, when traditional political loyalties melt away, and, crucially, when ruling classes find themselves

confronted with popular movements that no longer accept the terms of their rule, and that seek to create alternative social orders. The clashes between elite projects and popular movements that are at the heart of any "crisis of hegemony" generate thoroughgoing processes of economic, social and political change—these may be reforms that bear the imprint of popular demands, and they may also be changes that reflect the implementation of elite designs. Most importantly, however, crises are typically also those moments when social movements and subaltern groups are able to push the limits of what they previously thought it was possible to achieve in terms of effecting progressive change—it is this dynamic which lies at the heart of revolutionary transformations.

Gramsci himself witnessed, organized within and wrote during the breakdown of liberal capitalism and bourgeois democracy in the 1910s through to the 1930s. This was a conjuncture when tendencies towards stagnation in capitalist accumulation generated the horrors of the First World War and the Great Depression. Movements of workers and colonized peoples threatened the rule of capital and empires, old and new, and elites turned to repressive strategies like fascism in an attempt to secure the continuation of their dominance.

Today social movements are once again having to do their organizing and mobilizing work in the context of economic crisis, one that is arguably of similar proportions to that witnessed by Gramsci, and a political crisis that runs just as deep. The current crisis emerged from the collapse of the US housing market, revealing an intricate web of unsustainable debt and "toxic assets" whose tentacles reached every corner of the global economy. More than just a destruction of "fictitious capital", the crisis has propelled a breakdown of world industrial production and trade, driving millions of working families to the brink and beyond. And, far from being a one-off, this crisis is the latest and worst in a series of collapses starting with the stock market crash of 1987, the chronic stagnation of the once all-powerful Japanese economy, the Asian financial meltdown of 1997 and the bursting of the dot.com bubble.

The current conjuncture throws into question the fundamentals of the neoliberal project that has been pursued by global elites and transnational institutions over the past three decades. Taking aim at reversing the victories won by popular movements in the aftermath of the Second World War, neoliberalism transferred wealth from popular classes to global elites on a grand scale. The neoliberal project of privatizing the public sector and commodifying public goods, rolling back the welfare states, promoting tax cuts for the rich, manipulating economic crises in the global South and deregulating the world's financial markets continued unabated through the 1980s and 1990s.

As presaged by Gramsci, neoliberal policies have whittled away the material concessions that underpinned social consensus. Ours is a conjuncture in which global political elites have failed in an undertaking for which they sought popular consent, and as a consequence, popular masses have passed from political passivity to a certain activity.

Since the middle of the 1990s, we have seen the development of large-scale popular movements in several parts of the globe, along with a series of revolutionary situations or transformations in various countries, as well as unprecedented levels of international coordination and alliance-building between movements and direct challenges not only to national but to global power structures. The first stirrings of this activity were in the rise of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the water wars in Bolivia, and the protests on the streets of Seattle. On a global scale we saw dissent explode in the form of opposition to the wars waged by the US on Afghanistan and Iraq. In terms of sheer numbers, the mobilization of against the latter invasion was the largest political protest ever undertaken, leading the New York Times to call the anti-war movement the world's "second superpower."

Each country has had its own movements, and a particular character to how they have moved against the neoliberal project. And for some time many have observed that these campaigns, initiatives and movements are not isolated occurrences, but part of a wider global movement for justice in the face of the neoliberal project. An explosion of analysis looking

at these events and movements has occurred in the academic world, matched only by extensive argument and debate within the movements themselves.

In this issue of *Interface*, we encourage submissions that explore the relationship between crises, social movements and revolutionary transformations in general and the character of the current crisis and how social movements across different regions have related and responded to it in particular. Some of the questions we want to explore are as follows:

- What are the characteristics of the current economic and political crisis, what roles do social movements—from above and below—play in its dynamics, and how does it compare to the political economy of previous cycles of crises and struggle?
- What has been the role played by social movements in moments of crisis in modern history, and what lessons can contemporary popular movements learn from these experiences?
- What kinds of qualitative/quantitative shift in popular mobilization we might expect to see in a "revolutionary wave"?
- Are crises—and in particular our current crisis—characterized by substantial competitions between different kinds of movements from below? How does such a dynamic affect the capacity to effect radical change?
- What goals do social movements set themselves in context of crisis and what kinds of movement are theoretically or historically capable of bringing about a transformed society?
- What are the criteria of success that activists operate with in terms of the forms of change social movements can achieve in the current conjuncture?
- Is revolutionary transformation a feasible option at present? Is revolution a goal among contemporary social movements?
- What are the characteristic features of elite deployment of coercive strategies when their hegemony is unraveling?
- How have global elites responded to the current crisis in terms of resort to coercion

and consent? Have neoliberal elites been successful in trying to re-establish their legitimacy and delegitimizing opponents?

- Are we witnessing any bids for hegemony from elite groups outside the domain of Atlantic neoliberalism?
- How is coercion in its various forms impacting on contemporary social movements and the politics of global justice?

The deadline for contributions for the third issue is January 1, 2010. Please contact the appropriate editor if you are thinking of submitting an article. You can access the journal and get further details at <http://www.interfacejournal.net/> *Interface* is programmatically multilingual: at present we can accept and review submissions in Afrikaans, Catalan, Croatian, Danish, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Maltese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Zulus. We are also willing to try and find suitable referees for submissions in other languages, but cannot guarantee that at this point.

We are also very much looking for activists or academics interested in becoming part of *Interface*, particularly with the African, South Asian, Spanish-speaking Latin American, East and Central European, Mediterranean, Oceanian and North American groups.

The Fifth Organization Studies Workshop: "Social Movements, Civil Societies and Corporation"
26-28 May 2010, Margaux, France

Conveners: Frank de Bakker, VU University Amsterdam, Faculty of Social Sciences; Frank den Hond, VU University Amsterdam, Faculty of Social Sciences; Brayden King, Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management, Evanston (IL); Klaus Weber, Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management, Evanston (IL)

The Organization Studies Workshop is an annual activity, originally launched in June 2005, to facilitate high-quality scholarship in organization studies. Its primary aim is to advance cutting-edge research on important topics in the field by bringing together a small and competitively selected group of

scholars, who will have the opportunity to interact in depth and share insights in a stimulating and scenic environment. From 2010 on, the OS Workshop will be sponsored by Sage in order to help attracting talented scholars from diverse regions of the world, following on editorial purposes of *Organization Studies*.

About the topic:

Corporations and other private sector organizations are embedded in wider societal and political arrangements and participate in local, national, and transnational politics. They are subjects and objects of civil society, and venues in which conflicts over domination are played out and settled. “Contentious politics” are a particularly intriguing and understudied aspect of how private sector organizations interact with civil society. In addition to a focus on the state and the formal political environment in more traditional political economy approaches, researchers have recently begun to examine the intersection of social movements and organizations. The study of movements promises to address the intermingling of economic and political aspects in organizations, including questions of social and cultural change through the mobilization of informal and non-elite actors at the periphery and the use of extra-institutional tactics and strategies in the process. Corporate practices are frequent targets of contemporary movements, including movements against globalization or genetically modified foods and those that promote human rights or international labor standards. Movements are a critical fulcrum that links the informal realm of civil society with formal organizations in the private sector, both in Western and in developing polities.

While an impressive literature examines the relationship of movements to the state, movement activities targeted at non-state organizations have been examined less thoroughly. Even less attention has been given to the reverse dynamic: of private sector organizations targeting or seeking to influence social movements. We believe that much theoretical and empirical work lies ahead to put this budding area of research on more solid ground. This involves a need to better situate the interplay of movements and corporations in perspectives that pay more

attention to larger historical and societal structures, a more careful theorization of how movement activity impinges on central organizational processes, and a spatial and temporal expansion of empirical focus beyond nation-centric studies of movements in contemporary Western societies. The goals of this Special Issue are to (a) stimulate innovative studies of movement dynamics in a variety of corporate, geographic and economic settings, (b) develop the conceptual foundations, frameworks and methods for analyzing the intersection between movements, corporations and societies, and (c) to advance our understanding of mobilization and civil society processes in the political economy from diverse regional and disciplinary perspectives.

We invite theoretical and empirical papers and are agnostic about epistemological and ontological perspectives. We especially welcome papers that are situated in diverse geographies and disciplinary traditions. We conceive of social movements as loosely organized coalitions that contest social, economic and cultural practices or structures through sustained mobilization. We treat the category of the corporation broadly to include private sector organizations of all types. The following is a list of indicative, but not exhaustive, topic areas, all of which could be addressed in different geographical spheres:

- Stakeholders and governance: Movements in mobilizing stakeholders and the social control of corporations; explorations of the mechanisms of mobilized stakeholder influence.
- Civic engagement: Collective mobilization around notions of citizenship, rights and duties in corporations; movement activists and dynamics inside organizations.
- Identities, networks and audiences: Interplay of movements with organizational identities, images, and reputations; how movement work with each other and their relationships with other organizational audiences, including analysts, shareholders, and the media.
- Participation, resistance, subversion and cooptation: Corporations as participants, targets and opponents in movements,

practices of corporate engagement and conflict with movements.

- Regime change: Origins of critique and transformation of industry and economic regimes; movement processes in the creation of institutional alternatives and organizational heterogeneity.
- Technology and entrepreneurship: Movements in the construction and regulation of economic and technological development; the legitimation of new organizational forms and construction of entrepreneurial identities.
- The local and the global: Local, national and transnational mobilization in the face of local, national and transnational organizations; postcolonial, development and indigenous perspectives; the politics of economic globalization.
- History, society and institutions: Movements and changes in the relationship between civil society and corporations.

Submissions: The Fifth Organization Studies Workshop will take place in May 2010, in Margaux, France. Interested participants must submit to osofficer@gmail.com an abstract of no more than 1,000 words for their proposed contribution by December 10th 2009 indicating on the subject: 5th Organization Studies Workshop. The proposal must be submitted as an email attachment (formatted as .doc or .rtf) and should contain authors' names, institutional affiliations, email and postal addresses. Authors will be notified of acceptance or otherwise by January 10th 2010. Full papers must be submitted by April 30th 2010. Further details on the venue of workshop will be published through the EGOS website (<http://www.egosnet.org>). Any further questions may be directed to osw2010@gmail.com.

Following the workshop, a Special Issue will be announced in Organization Studies. To be considered for publication, papers must be electronically received by November 30th 2010. The latest guidelines for submission and information on the review procedures can be found on the Organization Studies internet pages. It should be made clear that participation in the workshop is not a prerequisite to submit a paper for the Special Issue.

Using research to Advance the Understanding of Group Behavior, Dynamics, and Outcomes

Fourth Annual Conference, July 22-24, 2010

George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia

Submission Deadline: Friday, January 22, 2010

Scholars who study groups and teams are scattered across many disciplines, such as communication, education, history, information systems, nursing, organizational behavior, philosophy, psychology, political science, public health, and sociology. The Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research (INGRoup) was created to provide a place for scholars to:

1. Promote communication about group research across fields and nations
2. Advance understanding about group dynamics through research
3. Advance theory and methods for understanding groups
4. Promote interdisciplinary research

The fifth INGRoup conference is planned to facilitate conversations among scholars across disciplines. In addition to paper and symposia sessions, innovative sessions designed to facilitate interdisciplinary conversation will be programmed. A business meeting will be devoted to planning for the future of INGRoup and its conferences.

Submissions

An on-line system will be made available from December 1, 2009 to January 22, 2010 to facilitate submission of the following:

Papers: Submissions for paper presentations can take two forms; an extended abstract or complete paper. Extended abstract. Submit a 900-1500 word extended abstract for papers that (a) present original research, or (b) develop, review, or critique group theory or group methods. Extended abstracts for empirical papers should include: title, keywords, purpose, methodology, results (preliminary if in early stages), conclusions, and key references. Extended abstracts for theories, reviews, or critiques should include: title, keywords, purpose, scope of theory/critique/review, conclusions, and key references.

Complete paper. As with extended abstracts, complete papers should also (a) present original research, or (b) develop, review, or critique group theory or group methods. Complete papers can be up to 35 pages, inclusive. Complete papers should include: title, keywords, purpose, methodology, results, conclusions, and references. Complete papers for theories, reviews, or critiques should include: title, keywords, purpose, scope of theory/critique/ review, conclusions, and references.

Symposia: Submit a 900-1500 word proposal describing the focal issue, the participants' qualifications and expected contributions, and proof of commitment from all participants that they will register for and attend the conference. Symposia that include participants from one disciplinary tradition are highly discouraged.

All submissions will be asked to provide a 50-word abstract for inclusion in the conference program. Also, provide full name, position, institution, discipline and contact information for all authors. You will be asked to indicate your preference of presenting your paper as an oral presentation or in an interactive poster session. Completed papers are expected at the conference.

Submissions should be sent by January 22, 2010 to Franziska Tschan via the <http://www.ingroup.info> webpage. The program chair will notify the submitter of acceptance in mid to late March. For additional information, go to INGRoup's website, <http://www.INGRoup.info>, or contact a member of the organizing committee: Franziska Tschan (Program Chair), Universite de Neuchatel (franziska.tschan@unine.ch); Michelle Marks (Local Arrangements Chair), George Mason University (mmarks@gmu.edu); Joann Keyton (Coordinating Chair), North Carolina State University, (jkeyton@ncsu.edu).

The United States Social Forum: A Call to Action

*Jackie Smith
University of Notre Dame*

“Another World is Possible, Another U.S. is Necessary!” argue organizers and participants in the United States Social Forum (USSF). The 2nd USSF will take place from June 22-26, 2010, in Detroit, a city which is seen to symbolize many of the failures of the current system. It is expected to bring as many as 20,000-30,000 activists from around the country who will engage in developing alternatives to the capitalist world economy. An entire day of the Forum is devoted to discussions of ways of responding to the global financial crisis. Many recognize the potential of the Social Forum process to be a powerful vehicle for change and to foster the next level of community organizing, local governance, and democracy. Members of the USSF National Planning Committee represent a vast array of movements ranging from immigrant rights to anti-racism to feminism, labor, environment and youth justice. However, this process will be successful only to the extent to which we all work to make it successful.

The months leading to the forum offer a chance for sociologists and other public intellectuals to engage in a dialogue with our communities about the nature of the crisis we are going through and about its possible alternatives based on justice, solidarity, and sustainability. We invite you and your students to join this historic movement to bring people's needs back onto national and global political and economic agendas by joining the USSF writers network. The USSF writers network will produce op-eds; articles for mainstream, community, and alternative media; and other creative expressions to help raise public awareness about the USSF and the issues it addresses. We aim to reach the many diverse groups that make up this country. For more information, visit: <http://www.ussf2010.org> (Click “Get Involved” for information about supporting the USSF, including by providing financial support and assisting with various working groups.



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In our recent conference, I don't think there was a single paper that didn't reference apiece published in *Mobilization*. At this point, the field of contentious politics-social movement studies is inconceivable without *Mobilization*. That's no small accomplishment in just over a decade.
Kevin O'Brien, University of California Berkeley

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