POLITICS, CONSUMPTION OR NIHILISM: PROTEST AND DISORDER AFTER THE GLOBAL CRASH

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Whilst the first of these issues concentrated on the riots in England following the global financial crash of 2008, this second issue focuses on the social movements that emerged in this context. Whilst defining a social movement is conceptually problematic- either because it could be so narrow to exclude, or, to broad to include, any type of collective action, there are certain features that we can point to. Edwards (2014: 4-5) provides four conceptual distinctions:

(a) Social movements are collective, organized efforts at social change, rather than individual efforts at social change. (b) [They] exist over a period of time by engaging in a conflictual issue with a powerful opponent, rather than being one off events. (c) The members… are not just working together but share a collective identity. (d) They actively pursue change by employing protest.

Whilst the case studies of the riots presented in the first issue might share some of these features too, there are some key distinctions that they do not. First, the social movements in this issue were all engaged in collective efforts to bring about social change and there was a strong degree of political solidarity. Rioters, as opposed to social movement activists, do not share the same objectives towards social change and are often heterogeneous (Bagguley and Hussain, 2008). Second, although some of the movements in this issue were relatively short lived, for example, the Occupy movement in the UK lasted approximately 4 months, this is considerably longer than the several days of rioting that took place in the UK, in 2011. Thus social movements have a longer life span.

Therefore the second of these special issues is dedicated to two interrelated themes. First, social movements that emerged from the global financial crash, post 2008. Second, the policing of movements that are a result of the crisis of capitalism. These include austerity movements such as Occupy, the Greek (Aganaktismeni) Indignant movement, the Quebec student protests, and the anti-fracking protests in the UK.

The first four papers presented in this issue are focused on what are termed as anti-austerity

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movements (della Porta, 2015). That is, movements that have attempted to resist austerity measures imposed on them by their respective governments. The specific cases are the UK Occupy movement, the Greek indignant movement and the Québécois student protests. These movements, although very different in their manifestations, societal and political cultures and contexts, have been mobilized through an anti-austerity collective action frame. Their action repertoires have all involved occupying central spaces in cities, with a view to reclaiming democracy for the people. Collective action frames are interpretive schemata, 'they are ways of ordering experiences and events so that we can know them and how to react to them' (Snow and Benford, 1992; Edwards, 2014: 93). In order to recruit people to a cause, activists use collective action frames to 'convey ideas in a logical, convincing, and culturally resonant way' (Edwards, 2015: 95). Occupy as a movement drew on normative claims of economic injustice, the famous slogan, 'we are the 99%', implies that a wealthy and powerful elite are benefiting at the expense of the majority. It also implies that political representatives were either unable or unwilling to hold financial institutions properly to account. This theme continues through all of the first four papers here.

This issue begins with Fletcher's paper on how the Occupy movement negotiates its existence with the hegemonic state-corporate-nexus through its Safer Spaces Policy. The Safer Spaces policy was developed to ensure the Occupy camps were made safe through a 13-point plan. Tension around the 13th point emerged since this rule restricted the consumption of alcohol and drugs in camps. The Occupy movement was in some respects an experiment in deliberative and participatory democracy through the general assembly and various working groups. The horizontal structure suggests no leaders and rules except through general consensus. So although the rules on the one hand attempted to offer a safe space for activists, it could be argued a catch 22 situation develops whereby a counter hegemonic movement (such as Occupy) is both resisting and imposing rules. In this respect it is emulating what it set out to contest. Fletcher interrogates notions of what a safe space means, how this space was policed by activists and the authorities, and the power implications for social movements.

The following paper by White takes a step back to consider the challenges to the welfare state in the UK in the context of the economic crisis of 2007/2008, amidst the continued hegemony of neoliberal capitalism. A continued hegemony most evident in the political framing of 'austerity' as the necessary response to the current crisis. Nonetheless, White is clear that the extent to which this logic prevails is contingent upon a number of other, related, crises; the declining political approval for the welfare state in the context of an increasingly individualistic society; the failure of traditional left-wing parties to adequately represent the concerns of the working classes; and the background of passivity from the wider labour movement. In relation to these factors White reviews contemporary critiques of 'capitalist realism' before moving on to demonstrate how new 'non-institutionalised' movements (such as Occupy and UK Uncut) are emerging and beginning to challenge not only the politics of austerity, but also the institutions of political and economic governance that have precipitated the current crisis.

The third paper in this issue is by Simiti, who profiles the Greek indignant movement, known as the Aganaktismeni. Inspired by the Indignados in Spain and Occupy in the USA, this movement also protested against official political institutions and their lack of control over financial transactions leading to economic crisis. Aganaktismeni shared other attributes with Occupy, namely, occupying a central public place, experimenting with democracy and voicing the politics of solidarity. In keeping with the anti-austerity collective action frame, Aganaktismeni was very much part of the wave of anger that spread across the globe calling for real democracy and an end to financial mismanagement. The movement made explicit the connection between

political corruption and/or incompetency and the financial crisis (della Porta, 2015). However, as Simiti explains, unlike Occupy and the Indignados, the Greek movement did not share a collective identity, both left-wing and right-wing activists were part of its mobilizations. Indeed Simiti claims that right-wing groups used rage and indignation to their advantage. To this end, Simiti argues that rage and indignation do not automatically lead to the recruitment of passive citizens to progressive politics; and that advances in democratization is only one possibly outcome of these types of movements.

The next paper by Laurin-Lamothe and Ratte focuses on the student protests in Quebec, 2012. These were against a government imposed increase of 75% in higher education tuition fees. This was set against the backdrop of the increasing neo-liberalization of higher education, and the fact that a government bill was adopted which restricted the right to protest and organize demonstrations. After outlining the context of the protests, Laurin-Lamothe and Ratte explain how students began strike action against tuition fees. What followed was many varied creative resistance strategies including rallying in the subway, backward, silent and naked protests, blockades of bridges, banks, and private companies' headquarters. In their analysis these authors very skillfully draw on notions of Sartre's bad faith and Orwell's concept of double think, when arguing how the government distort the meaning of student protests for free education into bullying and denying access to education to non-protestors. Nonetheless, as the authors point out that unlike Orwell's dystopic dictatorship in 1984, democracies allow for open discussion and thus cannot extinguish the open endedness of other languages and thus new opposing arguments.

The fifth and sixth papers of this issue focus on 'policing the crises of capitalism' (Hall, et al 2013). That is, how do political institutions and the authorities respond to the emergence of social movements during a crisis? And when faced with social controls imposed on them how do social movement activists respond back?

Ruiz paper draws on De Certeau's Practice of Everyday Life, which provides a framework for understanding the construction of protests by examining the use made by social movements of spaces within the city. In particular, how the authorities claim the right of administration of city space and the way in which they draw a distinctions between 'good ' and 'bad' protestors. The 'good' are those that comply with the demands of the state, who organize protests by informing the authorities of when and where they are to take place and are granted permission beforehand. The 'bad' are those who are autonomous and who do not conform to set routes and obtain permission to protest beforehand. It is the latter group that have sometimes been subject to the police method of kettling. This has been described as 'progressively isolating problematic groups and individuals from peaceful protesters' (HMIC, 2011: 7). As a tactic to avoid being kettled for long periods of time, activists have responded by developing an app called Sukey. Sukey combines data from Facebook, Twitter and other social media to provide updates on when and where protestors and police are within a geographical space - colloquially known as maptivism. The aim is to evade being kettled. Over the last few years new media has become a more important tool for activists in the shaping of political contention (Gerbaudo, 2012; Hands, 2011). In this respect, Ruiz's paper contributes to this burgeoning field.

The final paper by Jackson et al in some ways revisits the idea of consumption outlined in the first issue. However, in this context it relates to a crisis of sustainability due to the exigencies of energy consumption in the UK. The most recent social movement to emerge from this context is the anti-fracking movement. Fracking is the short hand term for hydraulic fracturing, which extracts shale gas from solid rock hundreds of meters, possibly kilometers, below the surface by pumping water and chemicals at high pressure into fissures in the rock. The focus here is a case study of Barton Moss, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK. The article examines the way in which

the anti-fracking camp at this site was policed, exploring and critiquing the extent to which the police have downgraded the rights of the protestors in relation to those of IGas, who are conducting the fracking operation. This paper has implications not just for the policing of the anti-fracking movement but for policing protest more generally.

The common theme running throughout all these articles is that they are social movements that have emerged at a time of political and economic crisis. specifically the global crash of 2007/8 and its aftermath. Citizens have formed social movements, albeit from diverse backgrounds, because they have been acutely affected by the financial shocks and the measures imposed on them by governments seeking to manage the crises.

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