Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed: from labor movements to anti-austerity protests

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From labor movements to anti-austerity protests

Marco Giugni and Maria Grasso

Introduction

The emergence and mobilization of social movements rests on the politicization of social and cultural cleavages (Kriesi et al., 1995). This has given rise to a variety of movements and protest waves in European history along with a fundamental transformation of the repertoires of contention (Tilly, 1986, 1995). This chapter examines the historical evolution of labor, new social movements, and Global Justice Movements in Western Europe. Additionally, we also consider the more recent mobilization by anti-austerity movements during the economic crisis that struck Europe in the recent past. We start our account from the labor movements, which may be considered as the first modern social movement, and then consider the other three movements or movement families.

The specific features of social movements, such as the amount of protest they produce or the prevailing forms of action they use, vary in important ways across countries (Kriesi et al., 1995). While acknowledging this and noting relevant cross-national differences, here we focus on the commonalities and trends which tend to characterize the social movement sector in all European countries, albeit to varying degrees. Thus, we look at both the continuities and discontinuities between these movements or movement families. We will point out in particular the role that recent protest waves have had in shifting the main focus of social conflict and in bringing back into the protest arena 'old' or redistributive concerns. As others have pointed out (Della Porta, 2015), both Global Justice Movements but above all anti-austerity movements and protests have brought questions of redistribution and capitalism back into protest politics. Additionally, we also put forward a related and more speculative argument according to which Global Justice Movements can be seen as a continuation of the new social movements featuring a scale shift from the local and national levels to the global level. Global Justice Movements, in turn, can be seen as having had a strong spillover effect on anti-austerity movements in many respects. In this process, both global justice and anti-austerity movements have helped to re-emphasize various dimensions of the role of capitalism and of the unequal distribution of resources in the sphere of
contentious politics. This, we maintain, has led to a homogenization of protest among old and new movements which is the result of the shared experiences of mobilization within the Global Justice Movement and similarly heterogeneous formations as well as of the common goals and target of protest participants in these movements.

Our account follows three main steps, each covering a specific phase in the evolution of the movements at hand. In the first step, we discuss the labor movements and new social movements as characterizing a space in which the national context represents the main frame constraining and molding their mobilization. The second step is characterized by the rise of the Global Justice Movements, which according to our working hypothesis have contributed in a substantial way to bringing together 'old' and 'new' social movement issues and mobilizations. Moreover, they have done so while also shifting the scale from the national to the transnational arena. Finally, the third and more recent step in this process has witnessed the strong mobilization of anti-austerity movements as a response to the economic crisis of recent years as well as to the implementation of austerity policies in many European countries (see Giugni, 2001 for an alternative account of protest politics in Europe emphasizing the role of cleavages).

**Labor movements and new social movements: two worlds apart**

Labor movements have long been considered the main driving force of industrial societies. From a Tillean perspective, they resulted from the process of industrialization and the rise of capitalism as new interests of the working class were created and the opposition between capital and labor emerged. Historically, the working class has been organized and represented in the three main arenas for the articulation of collective — in this case, class — interests: by leftist — communist, socialist, labor or social-democratic — parties in the party arena, by trade unions in the intermediation arena, and by labor movements in the social movements arena. Each of these three aspects has formed distinct bodies of work, that have often talked past each other however but with some overlap between labor and trade union movement works, for example. Given their central place in industrial conflicts and relations, there is an abundant literature on labor movements, addressing various aspects (see Fantasia & Stepan-Norris, 2004 for a review). This includes research on trade unions as well as works focusing on the role of strikes as a specific form of action in the movements’ repertoire of contention (Colin, 1993; Shorter & Tilly, 1974).

Alongside the weakening of the traditional cleavages, Europe has witnessed a strengthening of new cleavages during the 20th century. A key transformation in this regard is the increasing salience of a new cleavage that gave rise to the so-called new social movements. In this perspective, the traditional labor–capital struggle linked to trade unions and the workers’ movement had become less prominent relative to ‘new’ struggles in the post-war period. Inglehart’s (1977) postmaterialist theory is often referred to in relation to emergence of this new cleavage. It provides a theoretical underpinning for the value change that underlies the rise and mobilization of new social movements. Inglehart (1977) famously suggested that the ‘advanced industrial societies’ witnessed a cultural shift — a ‘silent revolution’ — from a materialist value system emphasizing socioeconomic needs as well as social order and security to a postmaterialist value system stressing individual participation, emancipation, and self-fulfillment. This was understood to be due to increased social mobility, the development of a mass education system, and above all post–World War II economic growth with the related expansion of the welfare state that resulted in rising economic well-being. Thus, according to the postmaterialism thesis, material security brought the formation of those types of values emphasizing self-expression and universal moral causes which are seen to be conducive to the development of postmaterialism.
Ingelhart’s postmaterialist thesis is rooted in a theory of structural change and deals with the rise of a new value cleavage. Others have also studied the structural bases of such a value cleavage. In this regard, scholars have noted how the core participants in new types of movements were largely drawn from the middle classes and particularly from specific sectors thereof (Cotgrove & Duff, 1980; Eder, 1993; Kriesi, 1989). In particular, Kriesi (1989) argued that ‘social-cultural specialists,’ a particular segment of the emerging new middle class, displayed left-libertarian values and were over-represented in new social movements.

Labor movements and new social movements have often been contrasted in terms of their social bases, organizational forms, and value orientations. According to Pichardo (1997), the central factor from which everything else flows in the new social movement paradigm is the ideological distinctiveness of new social movements (Dalton et al., 1990). The fundamental break is understood in terms of a changed focus from economic redistribution (working-class movements) to quality of life and lifestyle concerns, the ‘questioning of wealth-oriented materialistic goals of industrial societies’ as well as of ‘representative democracies that limit citizen input and participation in governance, instead advocating direct democracy, self-help groups, and cooperative styles of social organization’ (Pichardo, 1997: 414). In this way, themes of autonomy and identity are understood to have become central to the new social movements (O’Le, 1985). With respect to ideological uniqueness, self-reflexivity is also seen as important (Pichardo, 1997) as reflected in the questioning of meaning of action (Gusfield, 1994; Melucci, 1994) and therefore the choice of structure and actions which more clearly reflect the aims of the movement, as for example in the feminist consciousness raising groups (Katzstein & Muller, 1987).

With respect to tactics, new social movements have a predilection for non-institutional modes of participation in line with their perception of the nonrepresentativeness of existing state democratic structures (Pichardo, 1997). Their critique of the state as a legitimate – or at least a privileged – channel of representation, led them to create an autonomous space for action focusing on non-institutional means and forms of participation, including symbolic tactics. However, some new social movements also use pressure group type strategies, as noted by Eder (1985), while others have gained access to decision-making or linked to the formation of political parties contesting elections such as, for example, Green parties (Kitschelt, 1989). With respect to tactics, therefore, it is hard to see how new social movements differ from any of the preceding or subsequent movements in that, like other movements, they focus on those tactics which are in a given context deemed most useful for enacting the goals of the movement. Yet, the focus on influencing public opinion – by raising awareness, for example – and the use of media in highly visual campaigns carried out by a small group of activists (for example, Greenpeace spectacular direct actions), could be seen as an innovation with respect to tactics of new social movements compared to the labor movements of old focusing on protest, picket lines and wildcat strikes. Moreover, one could argue that the character of protests has changed and that they have become more celebratory and ritualistic and less confrontational with new social movements – see for example National Climate Marches across Europe – and focused on celebrating a certain type of identity.

With respect to structure, new social movements are seen to favor fluid over oligarchic organizational styles, for example through rotating leadership, voting communally, and so forth (O’Le, 1985). Given their opposition to the bureaucratization of society and its depersonalizing tendencies, they are also seen as opposing these trends in their own organization supporting instead more culturally libertarian change allowing individuals more choice for self-organization (Pichardo, 1997). Concerns over cooptation, in particular, are central in the way the organizations are structured. Such trends and concerns were particularly marked
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within the autonomous movement (Flesher Fominaya, 2007; Katзавícas, 2007; Martínez, this volume) and have also been stressed in the case of prefigurative politics in European movements more generally, including in the Global Justice Movement which we discuss below (Della Porta, this volume).

With respect to participants, the focus tends to be that a 'new' middle class, employed in nonproductive economic sectors, forms an important social base (Kriesi, 1989; Rüdig, 1988). Moreover, it is those individuals not bound to profit motives that are more likely to be seen as new social movement constituents (Pichardo, 1997) and employed in areas that are more dependent on state spending (Offe, 1985). Conflict over the control of work is also noted where professionals' control based on expertise and skills and work autonomy comes into contrast with administration so that the skills and service-oriented professionals become a key structural support for new social movements, all of which critique technocracy (Kriesi et al., 1995). For Offe (1985) the new middle classes are supported by elements of the old middle class as well as those not heavily engaged in the labor market. Moreover, Pichardo (1997) notes how there tends to be a lack of participation by minority communities in most new social movements.

The rise of the new social movements raised a number of debates among scholars. One of them was whether and to what extent they were qualitatively different from older movements, most notably labor movements. Indeed, Pichardo (1997) notes that overall the differences between new social movements and labor and other 'old' movements are not so great and even where key characteristics of new social movements such as the above are noted there are many exceptions, for example in tactical modes which tend to be diverse including the institutional; the middle class is not the only basis for protest and so forth. Moreover, old collective action mobilizations continue to exist, particularly with protests emanating around redistributive and labor issues which tend to involve trade unions. Callon (1993) challenges the distinction arguing that older social movements were not simply economicist. Here Melucci (1994) stressed that the key question was whether their meaning and place in society and social relations was the same or had changed. As such the answer to this question depends on what outlook one takes and which types of characteristics one focuses on. There is a great deal of continuity that can be seen between not just labor and new social movements, but also the global justice and anti-austerity movements that followed. However, there are also some differences in terms of the focus and social bases, most clearly.

Global Justice Movements: bringing the two worlds together and shifting the scale

The start of the third millennium brought to the fore a new type of movement focusing the critique of neoliberal globalization and of the limits of democracy on the global scale (Della Porta, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2015; Juris, 2007; Maclskelbergh, 2009). They have been called various terms – also depending on the country and language – such as antiglobalization movement, no global movement, movement for globalization from below, movement alternativista, Globalisierungskritische Bewegung, Global Justice Movement, and still others. Here we refer to them as the Global Justice Movements (see also Daphi, this volume), a term which is most often used in the Anglo-Saxon literature. It also underscores a common feature of the actors involved in these movements: their willingness to fight against injustices at the global level. Indeed, Global Justice Movements may be defined as
the loose network of organizations (of varying degrees of formality, and including even political parties) and other actors, engaged in collective action of various kinds, on the basis of the shared concern to advance the cause of justice (economic, social, political and environmental) among and between peoples across the globe.  

(Della Porta, 2007a: 184)

The key event, which for some represents the ‘official’ start of the Global Justice Movement, was the so-called ‘battle of Seattle’. This expression refers to the protests that occurred at the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which aimed to prepare the launching of a new negotiation round – the so-called Millennium Round – and took place between 30 November and 3 December in Seattle (USA). These protests staged by a variety of organizations and groups, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, unions and students, among others, has become the symbol of the struggle against neoliberalism and for a ‘democracy from below’. Yet, the roots of the movements are much older as protests against international financial or economic organizations such as the WTO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the G7/G8 – and later the G20 – were already present in the 1980s and 1990s, albeit on a smaller scale. It is in particular after the Seattle events, however, that such protests were staged on an almost regular basis at every single international meeting for a certain number of years, until the movement started to fade away in the mid-2000s. The Seattle and later protest events gave public visibility to the critique of neoliberal globalization, but such criticism had already been present.

Parallel to the action in the streets, Global Justice Movements have brought to the fore new ways to affirm their agenda: parallel summits, social forums – the World Social Forum, the European Social Forum as well as a variety of national and local social forums – and global days of action. These types grew steadily in the first half of the 2000s (Pianta 2004). In this regard, we may distinguish between two main forms taken by the mobilization of Global Justice Movements: street demonstrations and protest activities addressed against major international governmental or private institutions or organizations, on the one hand, and social forums as well as experiments with deliberative democracy, on the other (Giugni et al., 2006).

One of the key features of Global Justice Movements lies in their strong heterogeneity (Della Porta, 2007b; Eggert & Giugni, 2012). This heterogeneous character – as opposed, most notably, to the much more homogeneous nature of labor movements – is visible in various aspects of the movement. To begin with, it can be seen in the issues they addressed. Global Justice Movements have a wide range of claims and mobilize around different issues. Two of them were at the core of their mobilization: the struggle against neoliberalism and the promotion of democracy. On the one hand, Global Justice Movements mobilized around issues relating to the redistribution of resources as well as notions of justice, solidarity and democracy on a global scale. On the other hand, they called for greater participation of citizens in decision-making processes and arenas, both at the local and global level. More generally, Global Justice Movements have emerged and mobilized around both distributive and emancipatory issues, and therefore they combine aspects relating to both labor and new social movements (Giugni et al., 2006), bridging together these two sectors.

The strong emphasis placed by Global Justice Movements on democracy can be seen at various levels, from the criticism of the democratic deficit in international institutions, organizations and decision-making arenas, to the skepticism towards traditional, representative democracy, to the promotion of alternative forms of democracy. In particular, participatory and deliberative forms of decision-making were key to the movements and implemented in their internal functioning, in addition to being publicly stated (Della Porta, 2005a, 2009;
Della Porta & Rucht, 2013). As such, one can say that the organization of social forums and participation in experiments with deliberative democracy have become part of the action repertoire of these movements (Giugni et al., 2006). To be sure, participatory forms of decision-making and democracy were not new; they were already present in the new social movements, so that we see a point of continuity between the two types of movements. However, Global Justice Movements incorporated them into their public discourse, in addition to trying to implement them— not always successfully— internally.

Although the struggle against neoliberalism and the promotion of democracy formed the core claims, a variety of secondary issues and claims were brought in also by other groups and movements. Global Justice Movements include a variety of social, generational, and ideological groups as well as organizations from different countries (Della Porta, 2005a). The breadth of the social basis of the movement is documented in a number of studies conducted on participants at key events, like the European Social Forums as well as protests staged by the movement at various international summits (Della Porta, 2005b, 2009; Della Porta et al., 2006; Fillieule et al., 2005). Furthermore, events staged by the movements saw the presence at many demonstrations of the so-called ‘black bloc’ (Dupuis-Déri, 2007) a transnational group of young radicals, often drawn from social centers, who often engaged in violent encounters with the police at protest events staged by the movement.

Besides their strong heterogeneity, Global Justice Movements are obviously characterized by their transnational reach. Transnational forms of contention are not new, and were surely not invented by the Global Justice Movements (Della Porta et al., 1999; Smith & Johnston, 2002; see Smith, 2004 for a review). Global Justice Movements, however, have an inherently transnational — global — character. As such, they epitomize a process of ‘scale shift’ (McAdam et al., 2001) moving the locus of contention from the national — the traditional focus of previous movements — to the global level. Far from emerging in a vacuum, social movements and protest actions are strongly influenced by the political and institutional context in which they take place. This view has most forcefully been put forward by political opportunity theorists (see Kriesi, 2004; Meyer, 2004 for reviews). While some have tried to go beyond this focus and tried to examine also the role of supranational opportunities (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 2001, 2005), political opportunity theory has most often focused on national opportunities and constraints. Given its strong transnational character, one of the questions pertaining to the Global Justice Movement is whether national opportunities and constraints are still important for this movement as they were shown to be for previous movements, most notably labor and new social movements. While it is undeniable that Global Justice Movements have expressed a shift from the national to the global level and that they are subject to supranational factors to a greater extent than previous movements and protests, they were also still strongly embedded in the national context. More generally, the ‘classic social movement agenda’ stressing such mobilizing structures, (national) political opportunities, and framing processes, while needing to be adapted to some extent, still helps to explain mobilization of such a transnational movement (Giugni et al., 2006). In other words, national opportunities and constraints are important to account for the characteristics and mobilization even of more genuine transnational movements (Tarrow & Della Porta, 2005).

In sum, Global Justice Movements broke into the scene and started entering the news after the ‘Battle of Seattle’ in 1999. However, their roots were deeper, suggesting that these movements built upon past experiences of organizational institutionalization, but also upon reflexive criticisms of it (Della Porta, 2005a). As such, Global Justice Movements can be understood as emerging out of the protest wave carried by the new social movements in the previous two decades (Giugni et al., 2006). Issues, organizational forms, but to some extent
also constituencies were in part imported from that previous protest wave. At the same time, they combined 'old' and 'new' issues and constituencies, therefore producing a _approach_ between two protest sectors that had remained largely distinct – and studied as such – in the past. Yet, the _former_ seemingly _disappeared_ from the public stage as quickly as they broke into it a few _years earlier_. Did other movements take up their _legacy_?

**Anti-austerity movements: bringing capitalism and social class back into European social movements**

Preceded by a financial crisis that started off in the U.S. as a credit crunch linked to the so-called 'housing bubble', starting from 2008, Europe was hit by one of the deepest economic recessions in its history, a prolonged period of low or negative economic growth coupled with rising unemployment that eventually became known as the 'Great Recession'. While in the U.S. the crisis was officially declared as finished in June 2009 – so, about one and a half years after it started – in Europe it has left the most profound and long-lasting impacts, also due in part to the austerity policies implemented to address it, which has been argued to have further compounded existing problems (Krugman, 2012; Stiglitz, 2012).

The deep economic crisis, but above all the austerity measures taken by governments (Bermec & Bartels, 2014), led citizens in many – if not all – European countries to take to the streets to protest against deteriorating conditions. Perhaps the two most well-known protests – a sort of equivalent of the 'Battle of Seattle' for Global Justice Movements – were the Occupy Wall Street protest that took place in Zuccotti Park in New York on September 17, 2011 and, in Europe, the 15-M protests that occurred in Madrid on May 15 of the same year. Both protests then spread to many other cities. Protests were particularly large in those countries, such as Greece and Spain, that were most deeply affected by the crisis, although it is unclear to what extent there is a direct relationship between the crisis and the level of protest (Cinalli & Giugni, 2016). As Bermeo and Bartels (2014) have noted, the extent of such protests and movements may have been overstated.

Anti-austerity protests in particular can be seen to have formed an important share of contention of the most recent period, characterized by one of the most profound crises ever experienced by advanced democracies (Lohera, this volume). Just as with the Global Justice Movements some 10–15 years earlier, the wave of anti-austerity protests that took place during and in the aftermath of the economic crisis in Europe has spurred much interest amongst students of social movements, who have examined in particular the Spanish _Indignados_ and the various Occupy movements (Auncelovici et al., 2016; Castells, 2012; Della Porta & Mattoni, 2014; Flesher Fominaya & Cox, 2013; Flesher Fominaya & Hayes, 2017; Gunson & Sifry, 2013; Giugni & Grasso, 2015).

The protests against austerity measures and policies that took place during the years of the economic crisis raise a number of questions. We briefly address three of them here: Can we speak of a genuine social movement or should we rather speak of a series of protests? Are these movements or protests more similar to old or to new movements? Relatedly, _how do they compare to previous movements?_ A first question is _whether_ we can speak of a genuine social movement or rather of a series of protests. Social movements are organized efforts, based on a shared identity, to reach a common goal _mainly_, though not exclusively, through _non-institutional_ means (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Thus, the presence of a _collective identity_ is constitutive of a social movement. In other words, for a network of _actors_ to be considered as a social movement there must be an _attempt_ to _forge_ bonds that go beyond the boundaries of specific organizations (Diani, 2015). In this context, some have
argued that there is a shared collective in light of the shared focus, at least in Europe, on austerity and democracy as well as the presence of a process of transnational diffusion of frames and tactics (Feenstra et al., 2017; Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Kaldor & Selchow, 2013). However, we might wonder whether the networks that have organized and coordinated anti-austerity protests really do share a collective identity in the intended sense. In the absence of such bonds amongst participants, one might rather speak of a ‘protest without movement’ (Andretta, 2017). It is perhaps not by chance that many – if not most – of the existing accounts refer to them as ‘protests’, ‘opposition’, or ‘collective action’. This might prefigure a trend for emerging patterns of contention, as the ‘thick’, identity-based mobilizations – such as by labor and new social movements, but in part also by Global Justice Movements – come to be increasingly replaced by ‘thinner’ forms of protest. More work is needed to assess the organizational basis of anti-austerity protests as well as the presence of a collective identity or at least identification with a movement.

A second question is whether they are more similar to old or to new movements. Our own analysis of the social composition, values and action repertoires of anti-austerity protests suggests that participants in anti-austerity demonstrations share more characteristics with old issue demonstrators than with new issue ones (Grasso & Giugni, 2016a, 2016b). Anti-austerity protests attract constituencies that are less well-educated and middle class than new issue demonstrations.

Moreover, we wish to stress the importance of the supply of protest and the distinction between protests around different issues: cuts in public spending and services for the more deprived groups will provoke individuals to take to the streets against these perceived injustices. In this regard, together with other recent movements, the wave of anti-austerity protest has brought scholars’ attention back to class-based and redistributive issues focusing on the struggle against existing social and economic inequalities. In particular, scholars have recently called for more attention to capitalism in social movement theory (Delia Porta, 2015; Hedlund & Goodwin, 2013) as we witness ever-growing inequality across the globe. In this way, these types of event can be understood to attract a different crowd to the one that attends more ritualistic, peaceful demonstrative events. Our results show that issues matter and that anti-austerity protests attract less well-educated and middle-class constituencies than new issue demonstrations (Grasso & Giugni, 2016b). Moreover, these constituencies are less organizationally embedded than those at old issue protests and so are more resource-poor, also with respect to organizational capabilities (Grasso & Giugni, 2016b). At the same time, they are more likely to be drawn from younger generations or to be students, suggesting that anti-austerity movements have brought new groups of young people to the streets (Grasso & Giugni, 2016b).

A third, related question is how do anti-austerity protests relate to previous movements and protests. In a way, anti-austerity protests carry on a process that began with the Global Justice Movements whereby old, redistributive issues combined with new ones, in particular those relating to democracy from below. As such, Global Justice Movements may be seen as precursors of anti-austerity protests, therefore tracing a line of continuity between European movements. Such a continuity might perhaps be seen, at least to some extent, in the most recent wave of protests by the so-called Gilets Jaunes (literally, yellow vests) that we are witnessing in France at the time of writing (2018), which started as a fiscal protest but then expanded to more fundamental issues. Many of the issues addressed by these protests are similar to those raised by anti-austerity movements – and by Global Justice Movements prior to that – and perhaps the constituencies of these movements and protests are at least in part also similar, but future research will need to speak to that. At the same time, one should not
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forget that differences also exist across these different movements and protests. Despite some continuity with the actors involved as well as in the critique of global capitalism and democratic deficits inherited from Global Justice Movements, anti-austerity movements tend to feature a stronger focus on the nation state as both a target and a focus of mobilization (Flesher Fominaya, 2017).

European social movements between continuity and change

'Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed': this quote attributed to French chemist Antoine Lavoisier to epitomize his law of conservation of mass can be seen to summarize the leitmotiv of our brief account of some of the key recent strands of European social movements. We have tried to show that the historical trajectory of these movements was characterized by both continuity and change (see Flesher Fominaya & Cox, 2013 for a similar attempt to find linkages between European movements of the past decades). On the one hand, each movement or movement family rests upon a specific type of cleavage and therefore expresses a specific conflict line and (class) opposition. Furthermore, each has its own specific features, such as the use of strong embeddedness in the interest-mediation system or the use of the strike as a privileged form of action for labor movements, the focus on lifestyle issues and politics for the new social movements, the scale shift from the national to the transnational level and the relevance of participative-deliberative democracy for Global Justice Movements, and the focus on bringing capitalism and questions of inequality back into the study of contentious politics for anti-austerity movements.

We also pointed to a different degree of homogeneity and of 'movementness' for the labor, new, global justice, and anti-austerity movements. While any kind of movement can be seen to have some degree of heterogeneity (Giugni and Grasso, 2019), it would seem that labor movements were more homogeneous in terms of their social bases as well as the issues they addressed relative both to new social movements and Global Justice Movements. The situation of anti-austerity movements is less clear-cut as it brings together both old and new issues, but at the same time, as their name suggests, they focus on the struggle against austerity measures and policies. As such, some have also questioned whether anti-austerity protests are based on a cohesive movement as would be understood through a common definition adopted by many social movement scholars.

On the other hand, alongside these elements of change, we also observe continuity. Apart from the big transformation in the repertoires of contention – from a local, patronized and reactive traditional repertoire to the national, autonomous and proactive modern repertoire – so well described by Tilly (1986, 1995), other changes characterize the historical development of social movements: as new cleavages and conflict lines emerge, new issues arise, other social groups and sectors of society enter the protest field, new generations become mobilized, new forms of organizations are experimented with, new forms of action are put to use, and so forth. Organizational action forms, however, can then be 'handed down' to other contentious groups. Thus, the horizontal, participatory forms of organization introduced during the 1968 protest wave can be seen to have then been borrowed by new social movements and later by Global Justice Movements, and also employed during anti-austerity protests. Similarly, 'cultural' forms of action consisting in the combination of political protest with more visual 'shows,' such as street theater, were brought to the fore by strands of new social movements – and even here, one could find some resemblances with the thoinari of the Ancien Régime used to address a reprimand to the individuals deemed guilty of having broken collective rules (Tilly, 1986).
Continuity may also, and perhaps above all, be observed in the issues addressed by the different movements. Some scholars have pointed long ago to the fact that the issues raised by the new social movements were not novel per se. Quite the contrary, these movements had their precursors at the end of the 19th century, although those issues then had not been politicized to the same extent as they later were after the 1968 protest wave (Brand, 1990). Moreover, some issues do come and go. As we have tried to illustrate, 'old,' redistributive issues typically addressed by labor movements were given lower priority by new social movements, which mostly focused on cultural issues relating to lifestyle and wider moral causes. Global Justice Movements and above all anti-austerity protests, however, can be seen to have brought them back into the field of contention in the 2000s, at least in some respects.

Finally, we wish to note how while each movement has its own constituency based on the specific cleavage upon which it rests, those involved in different movements may not always be quite so distinct. This may suggest, in a more speculative fashion and following Eggert and Giugni (2012, 2015), that a process of homogenization of the structural bases of the movements of the Left, bringing old and new movements closer to each other, may have occurred in more recent years. In other words, the social bases of old and new movements - in terms of social background as well as in terms of value orientations - can be seen to have become less pronounced than before. While this process would have been made possible by a transformation of the cleavage structures in Europe and of the political space, the rise of Global Justice Movements and in part also of anti-austerity protests could have contributed to the bridging of the gap between the structural and cultural location of participants in new social movements - environmental, peace, women, gay and lesbian, and so forth - on the one hand, and that of old social movements - particularly labor movements - on the other. This, in turn, could be seen to be due to - and to a varying degree depending on the strength of the class cleavage - a 'colonization' by the new social movement constituencies of issues traditionally addressed by other social classes and movements. This argument remains speculative at this juncture. However, it does open up avenues for exploration on the affinities between movements or movement families that have emerged in Europe in further research.

References


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