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Résumé de l'article

Les activités récemment menées par les mouvements sociaux – plus spécifiquement, les mobilisations transnationales de justice globale – amènent les participants à collaborer au-delà de différences parfois substantielles de langues, origines culturelles, visions politiques et traditions d'organisation. La négociation de ces différences s'incarne dans un processus actif et nécessite un effort intense d'adaptation et d'apprentissage. Contrairement aux milieux institutionnels – écoles ou milieux de travail – où les rhétoriques telles que le multiculturalisme oriente de manière évidente la gestion des différences, je soutiens que la création de connaissances au sein des mouvements sociaux favorise une disposition dynamique et intensément relationnelle envers les différences.

GLOBAL JUSTICE PROTEST EVENTS AND THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT. Recent social movement activities – in particular, transnationally-coordinated global justice mobilizations – require participants to work across substantial differences in languages, cultural backgrounds, political visions, and organizing traditions. Negotiating such differences is an active, adaptive, and learning-intensive process. In contrast to more institutionalized settings such as schools and workplaces, where tropes like "multiculturalism" figure prominently in treatments of "difference," I argue that knowledge production in social movement settings cultivates a more intensely relational and dynamic disposition towards differences.

LES ACTIONS REVENDICATRICES DE JUSTICE GLOBALE ET LA CRÉATION DE SAVOIR SUR LES DIFFÉRENCES

RÉSUMÉ. Les activités récemment menées par les mouvements sociaux – plus spécifiquement, les mobilisations transnationales de justice globale – amènent les participants à collaborer au-delà de différences parfois substantielles de langues, origines culturelles, visions politiques et traditions d'organisation. La négociation de ces différences s'incarne dans un processus actif et nécessite un effort intense d'adaptation et d'apprentissage. Contrairement aux milieux institutionnels – écoles ou milieux de travail – où les rhétoriques telles que le multiculturalisme oriente de manière évidente la gestion des différences, je soutiens que la création de connaissances au sein des mouvements sociaux favorise une disposition dynamique et intensément relationnelle envers les différences.

While conducting ethnographic research among transnational networks of global justice activists between 1999 and 2005, it became clear to me that differences in languages, norms, objectives, and traditions are a significant source of the vitality of these networks. Through participant observation and in-depth, semi-structured interviews at mass mobilizations during this period,[1] I came to understand these politically charged settings as intensive environments for learning and knowledge production about differences. More specifically, I argue that global justice activist networks generate dynamic set-

tings for learning to negotiate differences in cultural backgrounds, historical experiences, social positions, and political visions. In this paper, I focus on global justice movement activities – particularly transnationally-coordinated protest events – as intensive arenas for knowledge production about how to work across such differences.

Global justice protest events during the last decade have brought together a remarkable variety of social movements, from faith-based "Third World" debt relief efforts to direct action environmentalism, from human rights campaigns to labour union organizing, from anarchist projects to indigenous, farmers', and immigrant movements, and more. The contentious dynamism that emerges through efforts to coordinate the collective actions of so many different strands of global justice activism is animated not just by the variety of issues and objectives in play, but also by the transnationality of the activist networks involved. While many forms of knowledge production can be identified in the context of social movements,[2] in this article I argue that the specific processes of negotiating differences inherent in global justice protest events engender an especially intensive and productive learning experience for participants. In doing so, I draw on the concept of a "figured world" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) of global justice activism to call attention to the interpretive work activated in these processes, with the interpretive work around the activist tactic of "property destruction" as a starting point. Then I briefly frame my argument in terms of a broader analysis of what I call the "edge effects" of global justice protest activity. Finally, I discuss the dispositions towards differences cultivated by knowledge production processes in the context of the figured world of global justice activism.

FIGURED WORLDS OF AND AMONG GLOBAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS

Global justice activism involves repeated engagements among multiple "figured worlds": sociohistoric realms of interpretation and action in which social positions and relationships are conducted, and in which individual and collective self-understandings, or identities, are afforded and developed (Holland et al., 1998). Features and acts that function as major markers of position, status, capacity, etc. in one figured world may not function as such in another. As an iterative effect of repeated engagements between figured worlds of different social movements, the emergent figured world of global justice activism itself is one in which differences are not only anticipated, but are expected to be integral to the dynamic of protest events. In this world of interpretation and action, the "differences that make a difference" (Bateson, 1979) do not simply consist of information about individuals' backgrounds, languages, traditions, and beliefs; they consist of a tremendous variety of political commitments, intentions, strategies, tactics, visions for social change, and "ground rules" for engagement.

Engagement among figured worlds during global justice protest events is often contentious, and due to this contention, popular education has been especially relevant in many contexts of global justice work. Like the "dialogue of knowledges" that happens through the popular education processes described by Kane (2000), dialogism between and among activist figured worlds involves an explicit recognition of differences; but rather than occurring through focused and deliberate discussions as in many contexts explicitly organized as venues for popular education, dialogism in the context of global justice protest events is often more spontaneous, less predictable, and directly shaped by immediate practical circumstances.

To illustrate the kind of learning and knowledge production about differences that has happened through global justice protest mobilizations, I will focus on one source of contention that has been an enduring feature of many activists' figured worlds. This source is the tactic of "property destruction," for example, breaking windows of targeted businesses, destroying machinery used, for logging forests or in commercial development, and tearing down security fences erected to control protests. On the surface, contention around this issue is a matter of ideological differences among activists, for example, with respect to the sanctity of "private property," or with respect to the meaning of "non-violence."[3] But contention around property destruction has, over the years, illuminated many other differences that have become important in the figured world of global justice activism as well. In what follows, I will trace several moments at protest events during the past decade that illustrate how contention around property destruction has developed over time, with attention to the multiplicity of differences that have been evoked and activated in the process. I will then briefly discuss some of the knowledge production about differences – and about how to organize differences – that has resulted from this contention.

Transfixed and transformed in front of McDonald's in Prague

My interest in how activists negotiate across competing attitudes towards property destruction was triggered in Prague, during the International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings in September 2000. One evening, after the main march of the week, I happened upon a large mass of people in dark clothing moving silently through the center of the city. As I approached to see what was happening, I heard the sharp clink of glass shattering. And then again. And again. They were attacking a bank. The mass of people moved slowly and precisely, rolling past the bank in a continuous motion while smashing the targeted windows entirely to bits, and leaving the restaurant next door untouched. The tightly organized mass moved down the street, still as if in slow motion; its sticks and arms retracted back into the mass as it continued towards Wenceslas Square. There, the mass merged into a crowd of maybe a thousand other people gathering and filling the square.

As I came down into the square behind them, it was clear that more destruction was planned. I found a subway station wall to stand on at one end of the square where I could watch the crowd of people swell with the slow absorption of the arriving mass. Everything around me was charged. The energy that was pulsing through that crowd is indescribable. There were small eddies in the crowd and then all of a sudden the mild turbulence was whipped into a kind of machine directly in front of the McDonald's at the other end of the square. Bodies dashed in from the side and began to attack the windows as the rest of us watched. It was like nothing I had ever seen or felt before. People all around me began to cheer; there was something undeniably euphoric about watching a McDonald's being destroyed by a well-organized group of people with sticks. As I struggled to maintain my own composure, I was engulfed by people hooting at the top of their lungs at the spectacle.

Whoops and screams of delight were sent soaring over the heads of the now thousands of people collecting in the square, but after a few minutes, I began to feel a hush spreading and pressing into the crowd. The sounds of glass shattering and then the dull pounding of wood against plastic coming from inside the restaurant were amazingly audible. As singular cheers continued to escape into the night air, a creeping sense of sobriety was becoming more tangible. It was a collective recognition of the intensity of what was happening; all of us in the crowd were captivated, awe-struck. We were not merely witnessing this, but were somehow also participating in it; it was difficult, during those dense moments, to perform any kind of divide that would distinguish the violent from the non-violent.

After several long minutes of watching – and feeling part of – the direct destruction of the exterior and then the interior of the McDonald's, I began to hear voices converging in the distance, an accumulating chorus moving toward the square. Then, suddenly, an enormous crowd of people, maybe five hundred or more, emerged from around the corner and descended into the square chanting – screaming – "No - Vio-lence! No - Vio-lence!," and as they bled down into the crowd, they performed an incision: they marked the boundary between the peaceful and the violent, distinguishing the good from the bad, the right from the wrong. Their call slowly enveloped everyone they moved past. I found myself floating down from the almost spiritual experience of just moments before as my lips formed the words that were literally reshaping the entire experience. As I looked around there was not one person I could see who failed to join in – except for those still tearing away at the guts of the McDonalds – as the rhythmic chant took hold of our interpretive capacities.

As the arriving group was actualizing a clear division between the property destroyers and the peace-seduced crowd, police in white helmets had begun to gather at the bottom of the square. The scattered helmets then merged into a coherent police force, marching toward us, in formation, up the square. After

what felt like about 20 minutes of completely unpoliced activity,[4] as the helmets gathered into formation and made their way up the square, people started to run. A series of chaotic crowd panics ensued as people fled suddenly out from the square in every direction. (If I had not had my running shoes and been ready to use them on half a moment's notice, I surely would have been trampled.) A tank appeared at the top of the square, sound grenades went off, and puffs of teargas were blasted over the crowd.

A collective rush of adrenaline capped off the night as we variously fled from – or stayed behind to fight with – the police; the time and space for any kind of interpretive closure for the experience was obliterated. But before the rupture of our collective "moment" in the face of aggressive protest policing, the intervention by non-violence advocates had dramatized and magnified key incongruities in interpretations of what was happening. These activists intercepted a figured world in which smashing McDonald's was experienced as a lived collective fantasy. They refigured the property destruction as a form of violence, and in doing so, they directly transformed the crowd's behaviour and understanding of the situation.

Divided by the "peace police" in front of Niketown in Seattle

My experience in Prague reminded me of a story about an infamous incident that occurred in Seattle during protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in November and December of 1999.[5] In this incident, a group of activists was smashing the windows of a Niketown store when another group locked arms in front of the store to defend the windows. This second group then forcibly intervened to stop the property destruction. This confrontation resulted in several competing accounts from activists. One story was that the activists smashing the windows were police agitators, planted in the crowd to escalate the tactics and thereby justify the unleashing of all of the policing resources available: the CS gas, OC gas, tanks, rubber bullets, wooden bullets, teargas, pepper spray, etc. Another story was that the activists protecting the windows were police plants, switching roles from undercover agents playing activists in one moment to protectors of multinational shop windows in the next. It is not my intention to evaluate the accuracy of these competing accounts, but simply to suggest that the interpretive work triggered by these confrontations reflects the diversity of perspectives at play.

In several accounts, the defenders of Niketown were labeled, derogatively, the "peace police," as in this activist's report:

> Unfortunately, the presence and persistence of "peace police" was quite disturbing. On at least 6 separate occasions, so-called "non-violent" activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property. Some even went so far as to stand in front of the Niketown super store and tackle and shove the black bloc away. Indeed, such self-described "peace-keepers" posed a much greater threat to individuals in the black bloc than the notoriously

> violent uniformed "peace-keepers" sanctioned by the state (undercover officers have even used the cover of the activist peace-keepers to ambush those who engage in corporate property destruction).... Response to the black bloc has highlighted some of the contradictions and internal oppressions of the "nonviolent activist" community. Aside from the obvious hypocrisy of those who engaged in violence against black-clad and masked people (many of whom were harassed despite the fact that they never engaged in property destruction), there is the racism of privileged activists who can afford to ignore the violence perpetrated against the bulk of society and the natural world in the name of private property rights. Window-smashing has engaged and inspired many of the most oppressed members of Seattle's community more than any giant puppets or sea turtle costumes ever could (not to disparage the effectiveness of those tools in other communities). (ACME Collective, 1999)

As is clear from this account, the practical need for better communication, more resilient alliances, and stronger collaborative efforts was urgent in Seattle if mass mobilizations involving such distinct approaches to political struggle were going to continue as key features of the figured worlds of global justice activists. The handling of conflict between competing protest styles during the Niketown incident was aggressively confrontational, and much of the interpretive work generated after the incident was acrimonious. In less than a year, however, activists' treatments of incongruous protest styles had already developed, as evidenced in Prague: the incident in front of McDonald's triggered another direct and physical encounter between competing interpretations of effective/appropriate protest forms, but this encounter was not aggressive. And in the years since, adaptations to these kinds of differences have become an increasingly integral and productive part of the protest experience.

Differences deferred and displaced at the fence in Quebec City

The spring following the Prague protests, in April of 2001, I traveled to Quebec City for a mass mobilization against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (described by activists as "NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] on steroids," referring to the expansion in territory and in market sectors that would have been integrated under the proposed "free trade" governance structure). At these protest events, the first true security fence of the "post-Seattle" period was erected. The fence had a relatively simple design: chain-link fencing three meters high, atop a concrete base, stretched for 3.8 kilometres up and down the intricate topography of the city's streets. The mobilizing process involved many different people coming from different locations, with different motivations, strategies and objectives. It included coordination with Quebec student movements, labour unions, and political parties, many of whom are directly connected to the provincial struggle for sovereignty from the Canadian government. The mobilizing also included coordination between activists traveling overland from the U.S. and Mohawk "traditionalists," whose territory bridges the U.S. – Canadian border. It included coordination as well among other indigenous peoples of the Americas, international NGOs, and

an expansive network of anti-capitalist activists. Each of these groups articulated their objection and resistance to the free trade agenda differently. For example both Quebec sovereigntists and Mohawk traditionalists connected their participation with pre-existing locally particular struggles for cultural, economic, and political autonomy, while many labour activists engaged as a form of resistance to neoliberal economic reforms and other activists engaged as a way of extending existing anti-capitalist projects.

Coordinating processes among these diverse interests generated many tensions that persisted up until the main day of action on April 20th. However, on that day, activists were so overwhelmed by the intensity of policing actions that brewing frustrations were largely displaced by the collective trauma and outrage over the brutality of state repression. Our senses of particularity as activists with distinct orientations and intentions were forcibly suspended by what felt like an obscene amount of teargas, along with rubber bullets and an occasional blast from a water cannon. Throughout the day and throughout the crowds I found myself part of, the most contagious chant was "So-so-so! So-li-dar-i-té!" The feeling among protest participants was not one of unity in any simple sense of shared identity,[6] but one of temporary but intense solidarity across various backgrounds, across languages, and across motivations for opposing the free trade agreement under negotiation at the summit.

The most significant source of contention I heard discussed after the Quebec City protests was connected with a decision among organizers of the "People's Summit"[7] to march *away* from the security fence surrounding the meetings, instead of bringing the thousands of participants to join with militant activists engaged in direct confrontations with police at the fence. While so many activists were attempting (and succeeding at several points) to tear down the fence amidst the dense and persistent fog of teargas, many (but not all) of the People's Summit participants followed leaders further and further away from the most intense street battles. According to one activist report, a Canadian auto worker who found himself in this situation asked afterwards, "Why was the 'legal protest' conducted miles away from the security perimeter? Had I known I was marching towards a parking lot, I would have stayed home and done that at the fucking mall" (quoted in Ewald, 2001).

Much of the interpretive work generated by the Quebec City protests emphasized the need for tactical solidarity in the face of police repression. It also invigorated the growing sense of shared opposition to the neoliberal agenda, and galvanized collective challenges to the increasingly sophisticated and costly security apparatuses constructed to protect it. One prominent activist/academic wrote later, "The spectacle of the Black Bloc, armed with wire cutters and grappling hooks, joined by everyone from Steelworkers to Mohawk warriors to tear down the wall, became... one of the most powerful moments in the movement's history" (Graeber, 2002). To balance this theme of shared

struggle, the involvement of Mohawk traditionalists and Quebec sovereigntists underscored the significance of "autonomy" as a key principle in global justice work; this principle obliges activists to recognize fundamental differences among communities, and to allow space for multiple and distinct agendas.

Differences performed at the fence in Cancún

Three years after the demonstrations in Prague, during protests against the WTO in Cancún in September 2003, the security fence once again became a focal point for protest actions.[8] Several days into the week of protest activities, a "women's action" was announced by word of mouth through a crowd of activists gathering for a large demonstration at the fence. Women were to lead the action by taking the "frontlines" along the fence, and then other groups were to play supporting roles in symbolically breaching – and later, tearing down – the fence. Throughout the week of activities in Cancún, tensions had been brewing between anti-authoritarian activists, who didn't like being told what they could and couldn't do by other activists, and "internationals" (mostly from the United States, but also from various parts of Latin America and Europe), who were trying to act as liaisons among multiple activist contingents. The women's action inadvertently amplified this tension by prohibiting men who were planning to tear the fence down from getting close enough to do so, at least right away.

This tension revealed a conflict among activists over the most appropriate understanding of, and behaviour towards, the fence (and each other). In one vision, women would act together in a peaceful show of strength and solidarity, and then later, women of the "global north" would unite with Indigenous Peoples of the "global south" in a show of global solidarity and collective purpose. In another vision, attacks on the fence – and perhaps clashes with police – would demonstrate the effectiveness and force of targeted direct action. The question of whose vision – and whether, when, by whom, and how – property destruction would happen, was settled in due course by a highly ritualized but improvisational series of actions at the fence that took all day.

Justifications for the initial women-only space along the fence were various. Many people said it would keep out undercover police more successfully because of the lesser likelihood of women in such roles.[9] Another justification was that it would help keep things peaceful so that campesinos and others would be less exposed to police violence. Another was that it would provide a buffer between the police and a particular group of Indigenous rebels who were usually armed, and therefore likely to be targets of harsher police treatment. In any case, everyone involved eventually accepted the women-only space at the fence for a (long) while, with promised opportunities for other types of actions later in the day.

Activists organized a slow rhythm for their actions, relatively spontaneously as the day wore on, creating distinct periods for performances by distinct activist groups. It was almost like a talent show, with some acts more serious than others. Contention over which group would be allowed to perform, and when, seemed to be partly what kept people at the fence, waiting for their turn. First the women stood hand in hand along the fence. Then wire-cutters were passed along the line and we took turns cutting through the layers of the fences. Then a group of Indigenous women negotiated with the police on the other side to be allowed through the fence, in a symbolic transgression of the barrier preventing WTO delegates from hearing their concerns. Then a group of Korean farmers hoisted an enormous woven rope (which they'd made themselves) to the fence and attached it in preparation for taking the fence down. Then other men and women were allowed to join in, and a dramatic tug-of-war began. Finally the group succeeded in tearing down a large section of the fence as they heaved backwards and collapsed as a giant heap into the thousands of us gathered to watch and cheer. Then militant activists climbed atop the fence and continued to rock and topple additional sections. Finally a giant consensus meeting was held for what felt like hours, as concerns, celebrations, and plans were announced and discussed, along with various interpretations of what had happened throughout the week of protests. The meeting culminated with burning an effigy of a WTO delegate, and then burning a U.S. flag.

The emergent and relatively spontaneous self-organizing process at the fence in Cancún illustrates how deeply the incongruity – but not incompatibility – among protest styles had become inscribed into activists' practical sensibilities. Different perspectives, different objectives, different movement traditions, different visions, and groups from different places around the world were not only present, but actively performing, for each other, distinct – yet engaged – figured worlds of global justice activism.

During the four years spanned by these protest events, from Seattle in 1999 to Cancún in 2003, global justice activists' coordinating efforts resulted in significant knowledge, not just about differences themselves, but about how to organize with and across them. In Seattle, distinct attitudes about property destruction led to aggressive physical confrontation among activists, and months of related verbal confrontations afterwards. In Prague, similarly distinct attitudes led to a less aggressive but still physical encounter in which one figured world was directly interrupted and overwhelmed by another. In Quebec City, deep cleavages in activist networks around the issue of property destruction were displaced by shared experiences with extreme forms of state repression. And finally, in Cancún, activists self-organized a complex space along the security fence for the enactment of multiple and distinct traditions and intentions. The knowledge produced through these kinds of events includes the develop-

ment of specific principles and models for dealing with the practical challenges presented by differences among activists.

PRINCIPLES AND MODELS FOR WORKING COLLECTIVELY

Motivated by the unpredictable dynamism, and in some cases, volatility, of summit protests and other global justice activity, activists have developed new models – and refigured older models – for protest actions that explicitly acknowledge, and create space (and time) for different protest styles and agendas. Practical organizing models include "affinity groups," "Consultas," "spokescouncils," and "convergence centres," each of which not only facilitates information exchange, but also cultivates strategic alliances and support mechanisms across different activist groups. These models are directly supported by key principles that have emerged as cornerstones of knowledge production about differences in contemporary global justice networks that happens *in practice* (Bourdieu, 1979; Holland et al., 1998). Principles that are prominent in the figured world of global justice activism provide conceptual grounding for an open, active and dynamic approach to differences among movement participants. Primary examples are "diversity of tactics," "decentralization," "autonomy," "horizontality," and "specifismo" (see Starr, 2005 for discussion of these and other principles). Popular slogans that articulate the sensibility reflected in these principles include the Zapatista slogan, "Walking, we ask" and the World Social Forum's slogan, "Another world is possible."[10] In each case, the vision for activist practice is open-ended and capable of resonating with a wide variety of objectives, strategies, and motivations.

Activists have developed many models for coordinating diverse summit protest actions in ways that animate key principles such as decentralization and autonomy, even as they function to organize activist groups into a coherent and minimally predictable form. For example, one model designates different protest styles spatially using colour to divide masses of demonstrators into distinct blocs. For example, in Prague there was the Blue Bloc, the Yellow Bloc, and the Pink and Silver bloc, each with a different degree of militancy and risk level for arrest (see Juris, 2008 for an analysis of the affective dimensions of these blocs). The practice of forming a "bloc" referred, for many years, only to the Black Bloc, which is a tactical and temporary convergence of militant activists trained to defend themselves against police officers, and trained in various direct action tactics; the strategy has been adapted over the years to create many different tactical collectives. In my own fieldwork, for example, I have encountered the Green Bloc, the Clown Bloc, and even a Baby Bloc. Another important adaptation for building support networks across distinct affinity groups is the formation of "clusters." For example, I have witnessed the Pagan Cluster create safe spaces, again and again, for many different activist groups in the midst of especially tense or dangerous protest situations.

Another widespread model divides summit protests temporally by designating particular days or parts of days for different issues, different contingents, and different types of actions, for example: issue-based marches, such as water marches or anti-war marches; contingent marches, such as labour or campesino marches; direct actions such as blockades or tearing down a fence; and street festivals, such as anti-capitalist carnivals and street soccer matches. And yet another model divides protest zones spatially by designating different locations for different types of actions by colour according to risk levels for arrest and aggressive policing. In each case, the shared objective is to allow people to engage in the forms of expression and action they prefer, without interference or endangerment from other, incompatible forms. Activists who engage in more fluid tactics, such as guerilla theatre and roving musical performances, can more easily coordinate their actions to complement other groups' plans when these models are used.

Central in the conceptualization and implementation of these models is the desire to create safe protest spaces for diverse participants. For example, if a march will include children, elderly people, and/or undocumented immigrants, protest actions likely to provoke police intervention present special threats to these participants (e.g., greater physical harm or deportation). An explicit recognition in global justice mobilizing processes of the particular vulnerabilities of particular participants signals the kind of learning and knowledge production that I am calling attention to in this article. This includes recognition that not everyone involved can risk arrest, and not everyone involved can run well enough to escape an onslaught of riot police, or breathe well enough to survive an onslaught of teargas. This also recognizes that not everyone involved feels safe with police escorts, which are usually required for officially permitted marches, and not everyone involved accepts the legitimacy of government authorities, even when "democratically elected."

Other forms of knowledge production related to global justice activists' models and principles for negotiating differences lie in the widespread circulation of triumphant stories about acts of solidarity across otherwise potentially hostile divides. For example, the story of "turtles and Teamsters, together at last" (environmental activists and organized labour) in Seattle appeared throughout both mainstream media and activist accounts of the demonstrations. And while I was in Miami for the 2003 FTAA Summit protests, I heard a story about dock workers coming to the defense of anarchist youth activists being harassed by police recounted at least six times, by six different people. The popularity (and exuberance in the telling) of these stories signals that acts of solidarity are an affectively important part of the global justice experience, and that working across differences is both an achievement to celebrate and an important skill to develop.

LEARNING DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS DIFFERENCES

In contemporary institutional settings such as schools, teacher preparation programs, employee training programs, etc., differences among people are often signaled by the tropes of "diversity" and "multiculturalism." Policies and practices implemented to address ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, gender, sexuality, ability and other forms of difference in these institutional contexts are usually structured as "top down" transmission of ways of understanding and approaching differences (for example from academic or policy experts to practitioners, from outside consultants to managers, from managers to employees, from teacher educators to teachers-in-training, and from teachers to students). Through this transmission, students, teachers, and employees learn how to recognize and refer to differences, and how to accept, respect, and value differences, but the learning process is often programmatic, superficial, or even essentializing (Yon, 2000).

Learning how to understand and appreciate differences in such institutional settings is often geared to make individual students or employees more comfortable, more proficient, and/or more productive, and is not typically oriented to actualizing a deeper collective project. In these settings, a structured and structuring "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977) often develops as a powerfully determining force on the experience, or the "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1977), of the differences at play. In addressing the treatment of "diversity" in schools (or workplaces, etc.), my goal is not to criticize existing efforts; it is simply to suggest that processes of learning how to negotiate and organize differences in social movement settings are generative of a much more active and dynamic knowledge. In global justice mobilizing processes, such habitus is disrupted, again and again, by direct encounters and confrontations among different figured worlds. In these contexts, answers to the question of how differences should be understood and negotiated are never fully, or finally, worked out. They are approached explicitly, collectively, and continuously, in ways that articulate with constantly changing practical circumstances.

An active practice of asking, and of listening, is required in collective efforts across differences that are as prevalent – and as potent – as they are in global justice mobilizing processes. This kind of engaged and continuous education is one of several important "edge effects" that I looked at in my dissertation research; the "edges" in the processes I am discussing in this article are those spaces of encounter between diverse strands of global justice movement networks. A closely related edge effect of these encounters is the emergence of a politics of "not-knowing": a form of knowledge production that refuses finality, and refuses closure; a politics that recognizes the fundamentally "unsuturable" nature of the "the social" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1989). In comparing the emergent power of activist networks to ant colonies, the Notes from Nowhere collective offers this analysis:

> The greatest feature of the ant colony is the simplicity of each ant; if one ant began to somehow assess the overall state of the whole colony, the sophisticated behavior would stop trickling up from below, and swarm logic would collapse. Emergence teaches us that not to know everything is a strength and that local knowledge is sovereign. (*Notes from Nowhere*, 2003, p. 71)

As an edge effect of repeated encounters between distinct network strands, activists develop flexible and adaptive dispositions towards differences that do not depend on "knowing" in advance the conditions and the actors that will shape a mass mobilization. These dispositions ground the practical skills and capacities necessary for successful self-organizing.

Global justice movements are, of course, not the only social movement contexts in which organizing differences is an integral aspect of the mobilizing process. How differences are, or might be, organized is a significant question in any context of activism in that political and social contention arises fundamentally from collective critiques and challenges that are rarely entirely unitary. In the protest settings described above, I endeavoured to show that dispositions towards differences develop rapidly in practice through iterative engagement at mass mobilizations, and that direct engagement among multiple figured worlds of activism cultivates dispositions that go beyond tolerance, acceptance, and respect for differences. The dispositions cultivated by knowledge production about differences in these contexts are actively relational, and relationally active: they are directly attuned to the vulnerabilities and capacities, the interests and concerns, of many different groups and individuals. They prepare activists to adapt, improvise, and create space accordingly. These dispositions actively anticipate differences, and expect them to be central both to the dynamic of organizing – and to the feeling – of important social movement events.

NOTES

1. These included transnational protest events and activist gatherings during the following: International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank meetings in Washington, D.C. (April 2000), IMF/World Bank meetings in Prague (September 2000), FTAA Summit in Quebec City (April 2001), the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (January 2002 and January 2005), WTO Ministerial meetings in Cancún (September 2003), FTAA Summit in Miami (November 2003), Life After Capitalism conference in New York (August 2004), Encuentro Internacional/ Ronda De Pensamiento Autónomo in Buenos Aires (January 2005), Mediterranean Social Forum in Barcelona (June 2005), G8 Summit in Scotland (July 2005), along with smaller regional and local gatherings, social forums, consulta, meetings, and workshops. Throughout this research, my ethnographic stance ranged from that of an involved but relatively passive observer to that of an active participant as an activist, depending on whether I was alone or with an affinity group. Some, but not all, of this research fits what Jeff Juris (2007), drawing on Nancy Scheper-Hughes, describes as "militant ethnography" among social movement communities.

2. Theorists and practitioners within the tradition of popular education have made explicit many forms of learning in the context of social and political struggle (and this tradition has long been an important strand of global justice organizing, particularly through the World Social Forum and regional Social Forum processes). See Foley (1999) for a related analysis of adult education that focuses on the importance of learning in the context of emancipatory struggles,

and more generally, the social nature of learning (vs. learning as an individual mental process). My discussion directly speaks to, and supports, these approaches by providing an example of the kind of learning that can happen in transnational social movement contexts.

3. One of the more prolonged debates around this issue focuses on writings and speeches by Ward Churchill, who points out that some of the most well-known and successful political struggles popularly understood to be "non-violent" have involved extreme violence (Churchill, 2001; see also Churchill, 1998). For example, the struggle for Indian independence from Britain, popularly understood as a peaceful movement led by Gandhi and informed by his teachings on non-violence, was only successful after thousands were killed (as anticipated by Gandhi himself); and the struggle for civil rights in the U.S., popularly understood as a peaceful movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and informed by his teachings on non-violence, was only successful after the Black Panthers, Malcolm X, and others were willing to adopt a more aggressive stance, and after key movement figures were killed and many activists were badly beaten. While Churchill and others argue that pacifism is counterproductive, other activist/ writers who engage in this debate and identify as non-violent argue that destroying property is not a form of violence.

4. There were several police that had been posted in front of McDonald's, presumably to protect the building from precisely this kind of attack, but when the group with sticks arrived, it seemed they weren't equipped to intervene. I saw one policeman turn his back, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head, as the mass moved in to attack – it was like they were turning their backs on their absurd task – why would they want to defend McDonald's? It was their job, but I witnessed and heard about several instances of police ambivalence about what or who they were acting in service to.

5. I was not in Seattle during the WTO protests, but was instead at a demonstration, organized in solidarity with the protesters in Seattle, in front of a Walmart store in Durham, North Carolina.

6. See McDonald (2002) for a critical discussion of the notion of "collective identity" among global justice activists.

7. The People's Summit, organized by a coalition of non-governmental organizations and activist contingents, was a "counter summit" held just ahead of the FTAA Summit in Quebec City, and included speaker panels, organized discussions, and performances.

8. Security fences at many global justice protests have come to function as stages on/at which to perform various actions. Although they are meant to keep protests away from summit meetings, they create important sites of visibility and audibility, often miles away from official meeting locations. They serve as props that support and enable a wide variety of theatrical and confrontational actions. In Cancún, the fence was the stage for the dramatic and fatal performance of Korean farmer Lee Kyung-hae's suicide.

9. In fact, I did see a man with a very expensive looking video camera wander into the women's space, and then respond to a command from a plainclothes officer among the riot police. The officer was gesturing and pointing frantically at some women cutting the fence, and the man with the camera responded by moving in close to film them. Instantly, a group of men protecting the women's space grabbed him back away from the fence, yelling at him angrily.

10. The World Social Forum itself can be understood an emergent and iterative arena for conversation across differences, with its own rhythm of institutionalization and de-institutionalization, centralization and decentralization. It has been described by many people involved as a "space of encounter," in contrast with being an emerging "subject" that speaks and acts as a unified body. Social forums have been described as "deliberative settings" in which meanings are negotiated and frames for action constructed. (e.g., della Porta, Andretta, Mosca, & Reiter, 2006) The World Social Forum addresses a need, which became particularly apparent in the late 1990s at major summit mobilizations, for both more talking and more listening. It has perhaps become the most massive unofficial transnational conversation ever to take place.

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