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*York University*  
*University Consortium on the Global South*

# **Social Movements & Globalization: Resistance or Engagement**

**Workshop Report**  
**August 2004**

## **Abstract**

This workshop was the kickoff event for York's *University Consortium on the Global South* (UCGS), bringing together faculty and graduate students from throughout York and beyond, as well as community activists and journalists. The day consisted of two panel presentations and discussions exploring issues and research questions related to social movements, and a business meeting in which participants engaged in a lively debate about how to bring the Consortium to life.

The four main themes that ran through the panel discussions were: 1) the contradictions and tensions in social movements and the terms and discourses around them; 2) processes of NGO-ization and demobilization; 3) the relationships and roles of researchers, journalists and activists in the North and the South; and 4) the relationship of social movements to power and the state.

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## INTRODUCTION

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This workshop, held on April 2, 2004, was the kickoff event for York's *University Consortium on the Global South*, bringing together faculty and graduate students from throughout York and beyond, as well as community activists and journalists. The day event consisted of two panel presentations and discussions exploring issues and research questions related to social movements, and a business meeting in which participants engaged in a lively debate about how to bring the Consortium to life.

Several main themes ran through both panel discussions, grounded in numerous and diverse experiences of resistance from a range of perspectives and regions. The contradictions in social movements and the terms and discourses around them were highlighted, and processes such as demobilization and NGO-ization were explored. The relationships and roles of researchers, journalists and activists from the North and the South were also consistent themes throughout the workshop, as was the complex issue of the relationship of social movements to power and the state.

In the business meeting following the panels, participants discussed the term "Global South," they considered a number of ways to engage people in other universities and in the community, and they debated the proposal to develop a weekly seminar series. The goals of the Consortium were discussed and all those interested were invited to contribute to the ongoing construction of this new and open space.

This report includes a program of the workshop and a summary of the opening remarks, followed by summaries of Panel I and II presentations and discussions. A list of the presenters and the participants is included as an appendix.

**Social Movements & Globalization:  
Resistance or Engagement  
Workshop Program**



**305 Founders College, York University  
Friday, April 2, 2004**

**Introduction** Ricardo Grinspun (CERLAC) & Peter Vandergeest (YCAR)

**Panel I: Issues on Social Movements** Chair: Peter Vandergeest (YCAR)

- Peasant Enterprises and Rural Social Movements in Mexico - Judy Hellman (Social Science)
- The 'Movement of Movements' and the New Internationalism: Palestinian, Colombian and Argentinean Solidarity Campaigns in Perspective - Joel Harden (PhD cand., Political Science)
- The Reformed State and Civil Society Resistances in Zimbabwe - Richard Saunders (Political Science)
- The Evolution of Intimate Praxis: From the Nestle Boycott to Toxic Breasts - Penny Van Esterik (Anthropology)
- Feeding Social Transformation: From Popular Food Education to Transnational Action- Deborah Barndt (Environmental Studies)

**Panel II: Current Research on Social Movements** Chair: Ananya Mukherjee Reed (HDDG)

- Territorial Autonomy in Mesoamerica: With or Without State Consent. The case of the Zapatista Autonomous Territories in Chiapas, Mexico, and of the Autonomous Regions in Nicaragua. Miguel Gonzalez (PhD cand., Political Science)
- Fair Trade Coffee: Developing a Theoretical Framework - Gavin Fridell (PhD cand., Political Science)
- Understanding Palestinian Social Movements: Problems of Research and Method - Adam Hanieh and Rafeef Ziadah (PhD cand., Political Science)
- The Strategic Context of Resistance Movements in Colombia and Venezuela - Justin Podur (journalist, ZNet/Z Magazine)

**Business Meeting of the Consortium** Chair: Ricardo Grinspun (CERLAC)

## OPENING REMARKS

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The day opened with an introduction by Ricardo Grinspun (CERLAC) and Peter Vandergeest (YCAR). After welcoming all those attending, from York and a range of other places, Ricardo pointed out that the day combined two exciting events: the launching of the Consortium and a one-day workshop on resistance and global engagement.

Most of the people involved in the Consortium engage in work with a regional or area focus, yet they share many common challenges and issues with their colleagues who work on other areas. This is unsurprising since virtually all regions have been subject to the forces of colonialism, imperialism and today's global capitalism. Over the last two decades, regions have struggled with issues such as structural adjustment, the penetration of transnational companies, trade liberalization and the transformation of rural societies. Over the next two decades we will likely witness ongoing efforts to establish stronger supra-constitutional international frameworks allegedly concerned with trade and investment rules, but which in fact place severe limits on the scope of public policy at the national and sub-national levels.

Our focus on the Global South does not mean that we see the local level as subordinate. Quite the contrary. To Margaret Thatcher's "there is no alternative" we respond with the call to raise thousands of alternatives. We are here to reject one-size-fits-all globalization "solutions," which are actually part of the problem. Thus we are keenly interested in history, agency, identity, geography, local conditions and diversity. These are the kind of issues that will define the Consortium at its core.

As this is an academic space, the focus is on research, education and dissemination. It is important to protect, expand and enhance the space in Canadian universities to engage in such inquiry. The range of academic units and programs involved in the Consortium – AFS, BUSO, CERLAC, FES, HDDG, IDS, LACS, and YCAR – gives a sense of the inclusiveness of the initiative. It also signals that there is a large group of people interested in issues of social justice, social movements and alternative development.

While the Consortium started as a York-based initiative, it is conceived as an open space which will hopefully grow and become even more significant. The Consortium will allow people to come together, collaborate on an ongoing basis, and serve as a platform for a range of activities. During the months to come we are going to have a discussion on how to give life to this Consortium, and all are encouraged to be active in this space.

Peter opened the day's workshop on social movements. Such movements are central to the themes that interest the Consortium, such as social justice, alternative development and North-South relationships. As engaged scholars and scholar activists, many workshop participants work with social movement groups that act to promote global social justice. Social movements present a variety of significant issues and are full of tensions and debates, which proved to be very productive and made for a provocative and lively kickoff event. The first panel introduced issues, and the second focused on research and research agendas, representing a diversity of interests and regions.

## PANEL I: ISSUES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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### Peasant Enterprises and Rural Social Movements in Mexico

*Judy Hellman (Social Science)*

Following the overthrow of Allende and Popular Unity in 1973, the implosion of the Grenadian Revolution in 1983, the electoral defeat of *sandinismo* in 1990, and increasing disillusionment with the emergence of a dual society in Cuba among people who were once passionately enthusiastic supporters of the Revolution, the project of socialist revolution began, for many progressive people, to look less and less like an obtainable goal. In place of a belief in the inevitability of the triumph of socialism, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a widespread inclination for progressive people to pin their hopes on grassroots movements that arose in Latin American cities as “urban popular movements,” or, more generally, as “new social movements.”

In the early 1990s I wrote several articles on new social movements making two points critical *not* of the social movements themselves but of many students of social movements, many of whom found in social movements what they wanted to find. For example:

- Some claimed that such movements were democratic in form and had a democratizing impact on the system. My own view was that this is sometimes the case, but often not, and that sometimes – notwithstanding very democratic discourse – such movements are very clientelistic in structure. Often they are dominated by *caciques* or *caudillos*. Frequently, (and very understandably) they are much more concerned with obtaining material benefits, that is “stuff,” for their members than they care about transforming the system. In any case, I argued, it is our job as analysts to figure out if they have democratizing and transformative impact, not to take these qualities as “given.”
- Other analyses claimed that such movements inevitably transform the people who participate, “empowering” them, while I argued that rather than assume that personal transformation is inevitable and unidirectional we need to investigate whether this is the case and to entertain the idea that movements may coalesce but may also disintegrate and that participants may be empowered and later come to feel disempowered or at least disappointed, disillusioned and disaffected from the movement.

At it turned out, just when my critique of this literature was catching on, the “next greatest thing” came along which was the proposition that new social movements represent effective forms of resistance to neoliberalism. Here again, I would say: maybe yes, maybe no. It is our job to investigate, not to assume that grassroots movements necessarily challenge neoliberalism. In fact, often such movements fit perfectly into the neoliberal scheme. They can be a World Bank “dream” through which smallholding peasants (or other similarly marginalized sectors of society) organize themselves to get a piece of the action, to claim their “market share” within the logic of capitalism.

This is certainly the case for Mexican peasant organizations. Following Heinegg, Ferroggiaro and Hernandez’s presentation at LASA (Latin American Studies Association) in 2001, I would argue that these grassroots organizations could be aligned on a spectrum: At one end would be those with primarily political, ideological, transformative objectives, that target state and local power structures like *caciquismo* and may embrace marxist or liberation theology

concepts. At the other we find “productivist,” market-oriented, *empresas campesinas* (US-style producers’ cooperatives) that seek to extend the benefits of existing structures to the peasantry. In between are organizations that manage to combine both transformative political objectives with a desire to eliminate or minimize inefficiencies in order to participate in the global market on equal terms with large capitalist producers.

As with the assumptions about new social movements that were so widespread in the 1990s, I would argue, with respect to new peasant movements and producer cooperatives, that it is our job to study them to see if, in any sense, they represent a challenge or a form of resistance to neoliberalism. Often they are less about resisting than about joining the fun, and it is only wishful students of these organizations, rather than the activist members themselves, who insist that it should be otherwise.

## **The 'Movement of Movements' and the New Internationalism: Palestinian, Colombian and Argentinean Solidarity Campaigns in Perspective**

*Joel Davison Harden (Political Science, Ph.D. cand.)*

In late November 1999, during a decade more renowned for Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis and the collapse of "existing socialism," protests erupted in the United States, in the very heart of global capitalism. Critics and activists alike stood in awe of what had happened; its significance took months for many to fully digest. In the streets of Seattle, the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Ministerial had collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions.

Large, diverse, and boisterous demonstrations followed the globally-networked protests against the WTO in 1999 (the centre of which was Seattle), displaying an unabashed, contagious, and participatory approach to politics. A "movement of movements" of unprecedented scope and diversity began in earnest, first against the present neoliberal phase of global capitalism, and secondly in opposition to the recent Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. This is a context where mobilizations of unprecedented size have posited radical alternatives in new and exciting ways.

An exciting pulse of internationalist sentiment has been at the heart of these developments. Increasingly, the fences that enclose Palestinians or the detainees of the Australian detention centres are viewed with equal outrage to a barricaded trade meeting in Quebec City. The "movement of movements," after successive World Social Forums, is widely understood as an international fight for meaningful participatory democracy everywhere. Such a vision is impossible to espouse without international solidarity work playing a central role.

In this context, abundant evidence suggests that a new approach to international solidarity campaigns is emerging – one driven by the self-active, grassroots character of the "movement of movements." Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith have identified this shift as evidence of a "globalization from below," where the planning and execution of mass demonstrations and conferences is frequently done from the ground up, with new alliances being forged at the base of the student movement, the labour movement, and other social justice organizations. Activists engaging in international solidarity campaigns who work in these networks have grown disinterested in delegating their global concerns for others to address – more participatory practices have instead taken centre stage.

By way of illuminating this trend, I explore the work of international civil disobedience activists in Palestine, trade union exchange programs between Canada, Colombia and the United States, and the international fervour generated by the example of resistance in Argentina. I end the paper with a call for thinking through the contradictions of today's "new internationalism," and its potentials as a site of renewal for transformative politics.

## **The Reformed State and Civil Society Resistances in Zimbabwe** *Richard Saunders (Political Science)*

Zimbabwe represents an important focal point in current debates about the nature of Southern Africa's transition to post-liberation, post-nationalist forms of democracy. Having experienced an initial post-independence period of state-led popular social democracy, Zimbabwe's rapid transition to a regime of neoliberalism has led to the collapse of the social economy, a growing political crisis and more recently, the thorough militarization of formerly democratic state institutions. In the process, the foundations of popular democracy – in the state, civil society and economy – have been fundamentally restructured and undermined as the ruling ZANU-PF has fought to retain state power. There are important repercussions for any short-term transition to democratic legitimacy as well as for the longer-term prospects for national reconstruction in the post-Mugabe era.

Mainstream commentators and many political brokers have commonly seen the Zimbabwean crisis as primarily one of political leadership, and have identified the solution to the crisis in the form of a quick fix involving an elite transition: democracy and stability secured through non-democratic means. This is the position advocated by the South African government, ZANU-PF, some elements within the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, and some civic democratic activists. However this assessment of the current crisis takes inadequate account of the changing political and economic reality on the ground, and threatens to marginalize important demands put forward by membership-based civil society organizations for redemocratization of the broader political process.

One key challenge facing democratic reforms is the changed nature of the state. "Militarization" has involved not only the placement of ZANU military-based loyalists in strategic command posts throughout the civil service, police and law enforcement agencies, but also the diminishing of state budgetary commitments to the social economy, the diversion of government resources to "national security", and the cannibalizing of key parts of the public and private productive sector through privatization, leasing, theft and extortion. There have been sustained attacks on various "democratic" institutions of the state such as parliament and the judiciary, as well as educational and health structures.

Importantly, the forced redistribution of assets in an environment of a breakdown of law and order has bound the security elite and paramilitaries ever more closely to the political project of the old ZANU-PF leadership; the security elite's retention of recently acquired assets – farms, businesses, access to state loans, and so forth – depends directly on the continued political hegemony of President Mugabe and his inner circle. The old political leadership and its military allies both have a strong interest in pre-empting a democratic transition which challenges the recent militarization of politics and repressive seizure of assets.

As a result, the considerable legal and extra-legal instruments of the state and ruling party have been focused increasingly on undermining those constituencies and civic organizations that call for a thoroughgoing democratization of the state and economy. Here, membership-based organizations working in the areas of social and economic rights have been particularly targeted for attack. The sustained and often brutal interventions have weakened the capacity of some organizations such as trade unions to maintain contact with their membership for the purposes of mobilization and defence. At the same time, other organizations – for example technical or service NGOs (non-governmental organizations) – have fared comparatively well.

There is danger of growing discord within the civil society democracy movement over the nature and goals of a transition away from the current unsustainable period of effectively militarized rule. By intervening in civil society politics to both punish and reward, marginalize and dialogue with different constituencies and organizations, government has strategically compounded existing problems of organizational weakness and effectiveness within the democratic movement. In the current situation, there is need to recognize differences among civic positions, and to find ways of providing political, material and other forms of support to mass-based, rights-focused, beleaguered organizations in Zimbabwe.

## **The Evolution of Intimate Praxis: From the Nestle Boycott to Toxic Breasts** *Penny Van Esterik (Anthropology)*

Social movements are usually about solving the problems of war, economic and social justice and human rights, often through NGOs. Is the breastfeeding movement a social movement? A public health issue? A dead horse? Everybody knows “breast is best,” but women do not like to be told how they should feed their newborns. Who is out there working on this issue? A small part of Mother and Child Health units in most countries address breastfeeding issues generally, and about 60 “lactolonies” all over the world – about half have been involved in the issue for 30 years – consider this a critically important account of globalization and corporate control.

The history of the breastfeeding advocacy movement demonstrates how the issue has changed focus over the years. The problem of the inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes and the decline in breastfeeding rates was first recognized by public health workers in the 1930s in developing countries who began to see the consequences of the colonial imposition of western approaches to birth and infant care. In particular, a paternalistic model encouraged the support for milk banks in Indonesia, Malaysia and elsewhere. Later action centred around a boycott of Nestle products, reflecting in part the origins of the protests in the intersections of the consumer and health movements.

I work with a small NGO called World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) with a secretariat in Malaysia. WABA organizes social mobilization campaigns around World Breastfeeding Week each year, and lobbies to include infant feeding issues in key United Nations (UN) meetings. UN regulations, conventions, and declarations can be useful tools for grassroots organizing, even given their legal language, lack of contextual details and weak enforcement mechanisms. They provide a shared focus for action, and can be easily appropriated for local use. They help make local and global connections, and illustrate the complexity of acting on multiple local and global levels at once. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ILO labour regulations, and the Stockholm Convention to limit the “dirty dozen” chemicals – which will come into effect May 17 in spite of US attempts to block and weaken the text – all present opportunities to create coalitions across differences.

However, experience indicates that there are often limited incentives to cooperate across single-issue causes. For example, most potential allies share an anti-globalization focus. But globalization has both caused and made possible WABA’s work. It has:

- Allowed single-issue movements to see connections with other movements and interconnections between causes (e.g., violence against women, reproductive rights, environmental conditions, and human rights).
- Allowed these networks to detect corporate movements fast enough to try and critique plans, or at least publicize them widely.
- Sped up international connections and communications, including transfers of funds between countries.

Globalization has made it possible to explore common ground with a number of very different single-issue causes, strengthening them all. Globalization has also helped ensure that movements do not work at cross-purposes or undercut each other's campaigns (e.g., "Breastmilk: the world's most polluted food!"). But, as other presentations here have demonstrated, globalization has also created the very conditions requiring social action in the first place.

## **Feeding Social Transformation: From Popular Food Education to Transnational Action** *Deborah Barndt (Environmental Studies)*

How are we defining social movements? What processes nurture the building of social movements and stimulate engagement?

Popular education, a practice developed in the context of Latin American social movements of the 1960s and 70s, offers potential frames or tools for rethinking and rebuilding social movements in the face of corporate globalization. My questions and suggestions come out of research I have done around the global food system over the past ten years, as well as three decades of experience in popular education in both Latin America (Peru, Nicaragua, Mexico) and North America (the US and Canada).

I suggest that popular education can contribute to a process of rethinking and building social movements in at least four ways:

- **Dialectical thinking:** Drawing from a Gramscian analysis, popular education can challenge dichotomies (such as personal/structural, nature/culture, critical/creative, local/global, spiritual/political, and reflection/action) and reframe them as creative tensions to be engaged. The global food system – one slice of the globalization pie – can be challenged through these lenses in a more dynamic way.
- **Interdisciplinary analysis:** By identifying Freirean codes or dominant generative themes of our era, popular education can promote an analysis that shows the interrelationship of many issues. My transnational study of the food system, and particularly of the tomato as a code of globalization, for example, examined the following dynamic tensions that frame both the tomato's life cycle and the experiences of women workers within it: the relationship between production and consumption, between biodiversity and cultural diversity, between work and technology, and between health and environment.
- **Coalition building:** A popular education code such as food can be a catalyst for linking many different social movement actors: it is something everyone can connect with, even though our interests and stakes vary depending on our social location, power, and particular interests. Two examples of alliance building around food issues that have been transnational in nature are the anti-McDonald's campaigns, epitomized by the website McSpotlight, and the organization of Mexican civil society groups along with international solidarity to fight the contamination of Mexican Maize by imported genetically modified (GM) corn.
- **Integralidad, or integrality:** Popular education links education with action, but action can only come with a commitment that comes from both the head and the heart, that is embodied. Latin American popular educators have been developing the concept of "integralidad" to propose a more integrated world view that counters the fragmentation of knowledge, of disciplines and of our understanding of issues that are at the same time economic, political, social, ecological, cultural, and spiritual.

## PANEL I: DISCUSSION

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A number of themes came up in the discussion following the panel presentations, including a great deal of critical questioning of the terms and concepts employed as well as discussion about the contradictions of social movements and the tensions within them.

Viviana Patroni (Social Science) stated that we must be clear about what constitutes resistance and what constitutes a political act if we are to give these concepts meaning and not look at them too generally; we need criteria with which to understand diversity. Similar calls for clarity and the importance of questioning the terms employed were repeated throughout the discussion.

The very concept of **social movements** was questioned by both Richard Saunders (Political Science) and Penny Van Esterik (Anthropology). Richard Saunders suggested we should unpack the term and engage in social analysis to see what the differences are, looking at constituents, the processes of broad coalitions over time and conjunctural moments. Penny Van Esterik prefers to frame the issues she examines not only as social movements but also as concerns about gender, community, embodiment, food and identity.

The notion of **new social movements** was also critiqued. Susan Spronk (Political Science, graduate student) pointed out how the various panelists addressed the concept in different ways, and she called for discussion of what we mean by “new.” What are the hopes and contradictions of these movements? What are the limits to the celebration of the “new”? The work of Judy Hellman (Social Science) has been critical of the concept, as was her panel presentation. In the discussion she commented that many practices are rooted in history, and suggested that in Mexico there is nothing new under the sun. Questioning the limits of the celebration of the “new” indicates that the term is too broad, as Viviana Patroni suggested with respect to resistance and the political.

Deborah Barndt (Environmental Studies) expressed that while the concept of new social movements comes out of a western and North American construction, she finds it useful for looking concretely at resistance and organizing around food and the tensions between and within the North and the South. There are tensions between Southern questions of food sovereignty and Northern questions of food security/food safety, reflecting contradictions between production and consumption and the locations of different groups. She asks how to make connections between these worlds, globally as well as locally, and has questions around how to frame this and how to link the issues.

Another term questioned was **democracy**. Hira Singh (Sociology) commented that historically, the term “civilization” was used to come and civilize us. Today the term “democracy” is used in similar ways. Democracy is eroding not only in the periphery but in the centre as well. Richard Saunders responded by suggesting that the term democracy is like Gramsci’s “hegemony”; you see it most when it is not there. In southern Africa, the loss of rights is the best form of mobilization for making new rights claims, and democracy identifies processes by which rights claims can be made.

The **contradictions in social movements and their study** were explored. Pablo Idahosa (African Studies Program) suggested that participation has become a normative notion that everyone wants to engage, but that we must examine its contradictory nature and that of social movements. How do we determine the good, normative community of activists, at both the local and global levels, in the Global South and the Global North?

Elena Cirkovic (University of Toronto Political Science, graduate student) also questioned how we recognize social movements and whom we are supporting when we provide funds or work with these groups. Some groups are recognized and legitimized by the media and other organizations, while others have great problems accessing any funds or support, as with Quechua-speaking groups of relatives of the disappeared in Peru, which have been considered terrorist organizations.

Both Ricardo Grinspun and Pablo Idahosa spoke of the problems and contradictions presented by “other” social movements such as those that form part of a right-wing social agenda and those grounded in religious fundamentalisms. These groups often respond to real local needs yet their strategies and often their behaviours and the conditions they impose on local communities are very controversial. It is necessary to have a debate around these questions and around how to engage these movements and such “other” groups. Carlos Torres (Centre for Social Justice) offered the example of Venezuela where there are independent social movements both supporting and questioning the establishment.

Liisa North (Political Science) commented that it is important not to over-generalize, as the Evangelical movement in Ecuador formed part of the indigenous movement and is no more or less radical than other groups. Penny Van Esterik expressed that local, grounded ethnographic work is necessary to address these issues.

Joel Harden (Political Science, graduate student) discussed the contradictory nature of some of the vernacular of social movements, including the meanings of participation and democracy. He noted that alternative forms of politics express a positive side to anti-politics that is not just skepticism, while acknowledging that there were a lot of contradictions.

Several people pointed out the problems of imposing conceptions of social movements onto groups. Richard Saunders noted that in his work with trade unions and residents’ associations, nobody refers to themselves as members of social movements. Joel Harden mentioned Nancy Fraser’s recent work where she suggests that the juxtaposition of identity and resource-based movements is not very helpful. Judy Hellman warned against projecting onto others the assumption that their actions are about the radical transformation of society.

In her presentation, Judy Hellman introduced the notion of a spectrum of organizations from productivist groups to more ideological ones concerned with transformation. Liisa North pointed out that in certain contexts, movements that begin as productivist with limited goals can become revolutionary. Such was the case in Guatemalan villages with development promoters (trained by an NGO linked to the Methodist Church), who ended up challenging power structures and producing political leaders. Challenging the production of surplus might seem limited but can become revolutionary.

Gavin Fridell (Political Science, graduate student) added that in the example of fair trade cooperatives the reverse is true; seemingly transformative groups become increasingly productivist as they seek to compete in the market. He also mentioned that his critique of the Oxfam fair trade campaign lies not in it being a productivist project but rather in asking questions about what the project is about and whether it will create a real transformation for a more just and equal society.

Penny Van Esterik offered the example of the breast-feeding movement, which began in a very revolutionary way and has perhaps now become more of a productivist project, though it has a lot of revolutionary potential. The subject of contaminants in breastmilk, for example, cannot be developed by breastfeeding women, as there is a time dimension for women’s

awareness about contaminants in breastmilk and anger may develop after breastfeeding finishes. Women can later look back and ask questions that link broader issues.

Judy Hellman agreed that movements can move back and forth along this continuum, and can also change in other ways – they can be captured by clientelism, corruption, *caciquismo* – and they can descend. Just as with individuals, groups can be both empowered and disempowered.

Drawing on many of the issues raised by panelists, participants discussed issues of **strategy and coalition building**. Mira Dudley (Oxfam Canada) agreed with Judy Hellman that social movements are not all necessarily resisting neoliberalism, such as peasant groups that want a piece of the pie, and many other groups as well. She asked what alternative paradigm we can offer to those who want to join the capitalist model. How can we join together on common themes, build alliances and coalitions, and have a strong voice in order to preach to the unconverted? Joel Harden suggested that this is important but there are some major questions that we need to ask, such as whether capitalist development can be socially progressive.

Penny Van Esterik referred to the challenges of building alliances as she reflected on the difficulty of inserting the breast-feeding issue into other movements. In particular, it has been difficult to work with the largely male-dominated environmental movement, which has framed women and breastmilk as sources of contamination.

Scott Schaffer (Millersville University) suggested that it is important to develop local-global linkages in both theory and practice, and he discussed the mediating organizations we work through in fostering solidarity, such as NGOs, formal international organizations and nation-states. He asked how we can conceptualize and practice either working through such organizations or skirting them entirely.

Both Viviana Patroni and Deborah Barndt raised concerns about the **name of the Consortium**. Viviana Patroni questioned both what is meant by Global and what is meant by South. Deborah Barndt suggested that part of the development of the Consortium can be to look at the internal contradictions in the group, such as differences over the name. She added that it is good to have such conversations, coming from diverse locations and with different interpretations and frames. In this respect, Carlos Torres noted that there was little diversity represented in the panel, yet there are many activists working on the Global South and North. Thus we should make a bigger effort for diversity.

Finally, Jennifer Johnson (Women's Studies, graduate student) raised concerns about the use of the terms **“we” and “us”** without clarifying who is behind these collective terms. Peter Vandergeest pointed out that social movements are often talked about in an analytical way as objects of study, but that Penny Van Esterik and Deborah Barndt also talked about “we” as parts of social movements. Part of what we need to do as academics is think about how to negotiate these different roles.

Carlos Torres called for going beyond such analyses to address **how social movements intervene in and relate to power structures**, how transformations take place on the street, in the organic farm, in parliament, in municipal governments, and in a range of other spaces.

**Territorial Autonomy in Mesoamerica: With or Without State Consent. The case of the Zapatista Autonomous Territories in Chiapas, Mexico, and of the Autonomous Regions in Nicaragua**

*Miguel Gonzalez (Political Science, Ph.D. cand.)*

A significant body of literature on issues of political representation, indigenous autonomy, and democracy in Latin America was published between 1987 (the year in which the Statute of Autonomy was approved by the Nicaraguan National Assembly) and August 2003 (when the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) inaugurated the *Caracoles* (snails) – governance structures that have emerged in the Zapatistas' autonomous territories). In Nicaragua, the regional autonomous regime is the fragile outcome of a negotiated peace process with the indigenous resistance movement, which had fought against the central government since 1981. The revolutionary government of Nicaragua has thus endorsed and supported the autonomy process – a unique experience in the context of Latin America's indigenous struggles. In Chiapas, however, the Mexican state rejected an ongoing process of negotiation with the rebels, and obstructed the indigenous demand for autonomy. Consequently, the Zapatista communities decided to create their *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Good Governance Boards) as an expression of regional autonomy. The Mexican case may indicate the inability of the liberal democratic model to accommodate – and most certainly to promote – the demands of indigenous peoples.

What can we learn from these ongoing processes in Nicaragua and Mexico with respect to current scholarly debates on democracy and indigenous peoples' political representation? What models of autonomy do these two experiences promote? What preliminary lessons can we learn from these processes of establishing regional autonomies, so decisively proclaimed by the indigenous movement throughout Latin America? I suggest that far from having achieved consolidation, liberal democratic institutions are deeply challenged by the demands of the indigenous movement.

Indigenous organizations are struggling for pluralistic citizenship regimes, specific mechanisms for direct participation, and for constitutional recognition based on both their diverse collective identities as well as on individuals' rights. Ultimately, this invokes a struggle for internal self-determination through autonomy within the state's constitutional framework. Certainly, both the Nicaragua and Chiapas experiences demonstrate the importance of the territory and the region as political units, and suggest that the regional scope and reach of governments are key features of autonomy. Furthermore, both experiences not only share unfulfilled and fuzzy links with their own juridical-institutional state frameworks, but first and foremost, they constitute within their own political environments a crucial symbolic expression of power as the indigenous movements assert themselves with or without the state's consent. Autonomies are indeed possible.

## **Fair Trade Coffee: Developing a Theoretical Framework** *Gavin Fridell (Political Science, PhD cand.)*

This discussion of fair trade coffee will highlight the main theoretical perspectives that are emerging out of the growing body of literature. I have loosely grouped the arguments of various authors into three main groups, which represent different perspectives on fair trade.

The first group of authors – the shaped advantage group – variously describe fair trade as an exercise in enhancing “social and cultural capital,” “institutional capacity,” and marketing skills designed to allow poor producers to enter the global market under more favourable conditions by taking advantage of a socially conscious “market niche” in Europe and North America.

The strength of this perspective is that it recognizes the limits imposed on the goals and future expansion of fair trade by the market. The weakness of this perspective is that it tends to focus on micro-level adjustments and neglects the broader aims of fair traders who seek to change the unfair structures of world trade at the macro-level.

The second group of authors depict fair trade as a “true” free trade movement that counters the neoliberal version of free trade which they assert is merely a hypocritical mystification that obscures protectionism and monopoly in the interest of rich countries in the North and transnational corporations (TNCs).

The strength of this perspective is that it has a more accurate understanding of the objectives of fair traders and of the hypocrisy of neoliberal institutions. The weakness of this perspective is that its neo-Smithian understanding of the market fails to come to terms with the Marxist critique of capitalism. Namely, that crises, exploitation, and inequality are not distortions of the capitalist market, but are products of it.

The third group of authors depict fair trade as a challenge to what Marx termed the fetishism of commodities under capitalism, where alienated workers and consumers engage the market as self-interested individuals. They argue that fair trade does this by revealing the conditions under which goods are produced and by affirming non-capitalist values of co-operation and solidarity.

A rigorous investigation of these claims shows that fair trade falls short of such high expectations. First, while fair trade does represent a challenge to the principles of trade under capitalism, in the end fair trade is still driven by the market and by the ethical purchasing decisions of Northern consumers who make their decisions based on a variety of factors, including cost, convenience, image and level of disposable income. Second, while fair trade does promote the values of co-operation and solidarity, competition and exploitation under capitalism are not just a result of values, but stem from the imperatives of the capitalist market. Already these imperatives are emerging within the fair trade network as larger fair trade co-operatives crowd smaller ones out of the fair trade market, and new co-operatives are barred from access to the fair trade market due to limited demand.

While the goals of fair trade transcend those of the shaped advantage perspective, it is not clear that fair trade’s actual impact does. Fair traders do believe that fair trade represents a radical challenge to conventional trade. However, in the final analysis, fair trade might just be about providing capabilities to some specific groups who are then better able to adjust and enter the global capitalist market on slightly better terms.

## **Palestinian Social Movements from the First to the Second Intifada** *Rafeef Ziadah and Adam Hanieh (Political Science, Ph.D. cand,)*

This paper examines the evolution of Palestinian social movements from the first Intifada (1988-1992) to the current Intifada (2000-). It focuses on several questions: the differences in organizational forms of the social movements (particularly the women's movement) between the first and second Intifada; the relationship between the social movements and the Palestinian state-in-formation; the forms of dependency between Israel and the occupied territories and their effect on the nature of Palestinian social movements; and finally, the growth of Islamic movements and the weaknesses of the secular left.

These questions are informed by a theoretical approach that views the third world state as a set of social relations which simultaneously express the forms of domination of external capital over the indigenous population, but also partly express resistance to this domination. In other words, domination cannot exist without resistance but is continually changing its form to absorb and deflect resistance, thereby engendering new forms of resistance.

The paper concludes with four insights from the experience of Palestinian social movements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WB/GS):

- The character of social movements in the third world is partly shaped by the relations of domination that exist between the state and exogenous forces. As these forms of domination change, so do the social movements themselves. In the case of WB/GS, the changes in the forms of economic dependency laid the basis for the first Intifada, and as these changed over the Oslo years so did the character of the social movements. In more recent times, organization on a local level has returned to forms reminiscent of the first Intifada.
- The social movements themselves impact on these forms of domination and thus act to change them. In the Palestinian context, Israel's system of control changed from the first Intifada, through the Oslo years into the second Intifada. There was a move from direct military occupation to the system of "remote control." These changes were partly in response to Palestinian resistance during the first Intifada.
- The role of the state cannot be read functionally from either of these two poles. The question of which pole may be predominant is a historical question that depends on the means of accumulation of the state (i.e., is it dependent on foreign funding or does it have independent sources of accumulation), the relationship between the state and the main classes in the dominated society, the character of state personnel and their historical background, and the relationship between the state and social movements.
- Social movements themselves are shaped by their relationship with the state as well as external and internal classes. The weakness of the popular committees in the second Intifada as compared to the first is partially explainable by the process of NGO-ization that took place during the Oslo years. As significant sections of the secular left became tied to external funding their actions became professionalized and separated from the grassroots. This weakened both the capacity for popular mobilization as well as the left itself. This process did not occur with the Islamist movements. The ruling party Fatah, although largely absent in the NGO scene, has been shaped by its inside-outside relationship with the state.

## **The Strategic Context of Social Movements in Colombia and Venezuela** *Justin Podur (journalist, ZNet/Z Magazine)*

Colombia and Venezuela are geographic neighbours with a considerable amount in common – culturally, socially, and historically. It is no surprise that there would be similarities in the development of social movements in both countries. There are important differences, however, in size (Colombia's population is twice Venezuela's), resources (Venezuela has more oil and is a larger player in the global oil market), and historical development. I discuss some of the similarities and differences in the context faced by social movements in Colombia and Venezuela by looking at various concrete examples.

SINALTRAINAL, the food-workers' union, is in confrontation with Coca-Cola, who employs bottlers who in turn employ paramilitaries who have murdered about a dozen unionists in recent years (the most recent murders having happened after the presentation, on April 20, 2004, in Bucaramanga). The case of Coca Cola and SINALTRAINAL serves as an example of the whole system of paramilitarism and its use in attacking social movements – a strategy being used in Venezuela as well, to which we return.

I contrast SINALTRAINAL's situation with that of the Pepsi-Cola workers in Villa de Cura in Aragua, Venezuela. These workers were able to count on the support of the mayor of their town in seizing the Pepsi plant on July 9, 2003. Pepsi had been an eager part of the National "Strike" in Venezuela, a "strike" by the elites whose intention was to sabotage the economy and overthrow the regime.

Similarly, the oil workers' union in Colombia, the Union Sindical Obrera, has been hit very hard by paramilitarism and by labour "reforms" by successive governments. Uribe's privatizations in particular have hit the labour movement very hard. Their attempts at striking were foiled by mechanisms similar to those used by the management and corporate elite in Venezuela during the "National Strike": by controlling the machines and the computers that control the tankers, managers and engineers can continue to keep the oil company running without the workers for long enough to break the strike (in Colombia); they were also able to shut down the oil company even though the workers did not want to go out on strike (in Venezuela). This situation has gotten worse in Colombia, but in Venezuela, the Chavez government responded by "purging" the state oil company of much of the management that had participated in the "strike."

The military institutions and aspects of the two countries also merit discussion. The Colombian Army has long been under the control of the United States - the current era of control having been initiated in 1962 with Plan Yarborough. By contrast, the Venezuelan Armed Forces have had a nationalist character and Venezuela has not sent its officers to the US Army School of the Americas. This, perhaps more than any other single factor, has led to the major political differences between the countries. For the United States, eager to control the resources of the region and stamp out independent social movements, the Colombian Army has been a very useful instrument, while the Venezuelan Army has been a brake on its ambitions in that country. The solution for the United States could well be to try to use the Colombian Army against the Venezuelan Army, and the belligerent military and political posturing of Colombia towards Venezuela is relevant in this context.

## PANEL 2: DISCUSSION

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In an effort to link the numerous issues and cases discussed by panel members, Pablo Idahosa asked how each of the interesting cases presented might relate to wider debates, and Ricardo Grinspun had questions about how effective different strategies are in achieving their goals. A number of other, interrelated issues ran through the discussion, including the roles and relationships of academics and journalists, factors causing demobilization, the contradictions of NGO-ization and questions about social movements and the state. Following are a number of concrete questions and the related discussion:

- Is social capital linked to other forms of trade? Is fair trade allowing us to do more than buy ethics at the supermarket?

Gavin Fridell pointed out that debates around fair trade are connected to a range of wider debates including those around social capital, NGOs and the decline of the welfare state.

An audience member with a marketing and fundraising background suggested that for fair trade to have captured 1% of the coffee market is a significant break into the mainstream market. Having big brands would facilitate big gains for the fair trade movement, yet various NGOs and social movements would have to come together to make it possible. Not only would this raise the living standards for producers, it could also raise consumers' consciousness in the North, and thus fair trade represents a tremendous opportunity from a social justice perspective.

Gavin Fridell offered some statistics to demonstrate that the fair trade market is limited and has already leveled off in Europe, suggesting that the market will not keep growing forever. He connected this to the huge surplus on the market, which was created by World Bank policies that promoted overproduction. Thus while fair trade focuses on local development, global policies are being dictated at the international level by agencies such as the World Bank.

- How are the indigenous movements Miguel Gonzalez (Political Science, graduate student) talked about linked to wider debates around indigeneity? Is the Zapatista's proclaimed disengagement related to the neoliberal approach to decentralization? To what extent is the move toward regional autonomy achieving certain goals?

Miguel Gonzalez suggested that there has been a process of political accommodation within the state. While it has become clear that the state is unable to address many problems, the extent of power transferred to autonomous structures has also been limited. The Zapatista "*caracoles*" face a number of challenges and internal contradictions; they depend on international NGOs, they benefit from a law that grants them space to move and organize, and they must attempt to achieve broader support for their constituency. Yet both in Mexico and Nicaragua such experiments with regional autonomy present models and strategies and indicate that there is room for action and for possibilities.

Ken Luckhardt (Canadian Auto Workers Canada) was part of a delegation to northern Guatemala, where autonomous Mayan communities are organizing around water and dam-construction issues. They are across the river from autonomous indigenous communities in Mexico, thus there is an important geopolitical question: How can autonomous communities in two separate nations communicate to struggle against the same forces, such as the Plan Puebla-Panama?

- What is the relationship of Islamist groups in Palestine to a wider global movement and for example, the distribution of funding from Saudi Arabia? How effective – or counterproductive – are strategies against the occupation? Is the growth of fundamentalism a part of globalization?

Hira Singh noted that the left movement is growing weaker in Palestine and elsewhere while there is a rise of Islamization, Christianization and Hinduization. Adam Hanieh (Political Science, graduate student) answered that the Islamic movement is at the forefront of resistance in Palestine but it is not a process of Islamization in this context. It is not so much Islamic policy but rather its part in the national struggle that has led to an increase in popular support. Similarly, for many people in the region, the Hezbollah in Lebanon is a nationalist, anti-imperialist force.

With respect to the question of how effective strategies are, Rafeef Ziadah (Political Science, graduate student) said that in the Palestinian context when people talk about resistance strategies they are usually referring to suicide bombings. In her opinion, it is important to see how it is a dynamic that Israel has forced on the Palestinian people.

- What are, or should be, the relationships between academics, activists and journalists?

With respect to the remark by Justin Podur (ZNet/ZMagazine) on the difficulty social scientists have in seeing beyond theory to the realities on the ground, Judy Hellman responded that it is often difficult for journalists as well to go beyond their storylines. She made a heartfelt appeal for **journalists, social scientists, social activists, NGO people and others** to be courageous enough to analyze what is happening on the ground. Liisa North noted that political activists also engage in theory and can overlook or deny such realities as, for example, the presence of racism in Latin America.

Elena Cirkovic noted how both journalists and academics can have a great effect and even cause what happens on the ground, citing General Mackenzie's comment on the Bosnian-Serbian war: "I wish they would stop killing each other for CNN." She also pointed out that academics can frame issues in ways that obscure reality, such as the very western notion of the nation-state.

Peter Vandergeest suggested that the SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) notion of academics concerned with producing knowledge that will contribute to theory portrays researchers as separate from what is going on. It is important to explore how we are part of larger networks and to think about how we articulate with journalists and activists when developing our research agendas.

Considering the role of researchers, Rafeef Ziadah suggested that if academics want to be involved there is plenty of work to be done. A variety of approaches have been adopted by academics around the world; some have suggested boycotting Israeli universities as structures that support apartheid, or "guerrilla teaching" (i.e. volunteering their time) in Palestinian universities that have been threatened by the Israeli military.

- How are social movements demobilized? What are the relationships between social movements and the state?

In response to a question about **how movements are demobilized**, Justin Podur offered the examples of Venezuela and Colombia as demonstrations of what the media can do to demobilize people or to mobilize people for anti-people agendas. In addition to physical realities such as checkpoints, other demobilizing factors include propaganda in corporate systems of

media, cooptation, NGO-ization, and the geographic and economic matrix. To this Rafeef Ziadah added a further example, noting that trade unions had been very involved in the first Intifada, but the creation of free trade zones along the Gaza strip weakened these unions.

Justin Podur suggested that **NGO-ization** can be demobilizing, when for example, movements in the South are accountable to NGOs in the North instead of to their own constituents. Adam Hanieh noted how following the first Intifada and Oslo, NGOs began to receive funding and became professionalized, replacing mobilization with the provision of services. As the United States started funding NGOs, they began to apply US laws, such as the Patriot Act, to those non-US citizens working in these NGOs. An audience member had a question about whether NGO-ization is reflected in international solidarity work here, and if there might be alternatives, and Hira Singh noted that the term “NGO” can mean almost anything; there is no single NGO strategy or identity or goal.

Justin Podur commented that we often talk about social movements and civil society to assert independence from the state and avoid talking about political parties, and we talk about globalization to avoid saying imperialism. This results in a lack of analysis of the **relationship to power and imperialism** and the effects of this were manifest in the coup in Haiti. The popular agenda is facing a major onslaught by powerful institutions, funding sources and arms, and we need to understand how to face that and still be independent.

The question of **relationships with the state** was taken up in several ways. Judy Hellman noted that autonomous movements in Mexico, global religious movements, Palestine and indigenous communities lack states but have their own identities and different sets of relations with states. As these relations are redefined we need theories that both take account of the state and go beyond it.

An audience member commented that the nature of mobilization with respect to the state depends on the goals of the movement. Adam Hanieh conceived of the state as a set of social relations that mediates forms of domination from the outside and also the forms of resistance from the inside. For example, the Palestinian Authority, with some parallels to the Venezuelan state, is a corrupt and nepotistic organization, but also maintains relations with and a big effect on resistance.

In closing, Ananya Mukherjee Reed (Political Science) suggested that at the local level, perhaps the Consortium could concentrate its energy on the emerging integration of solidarity networks. She expressed the hope that the Consortium can bring together academics, NGOs and activists, transcend the many dichotomies and contradictions that divide them, and create a context where academic work can become more self-reflective, aware and engaged.

## APPENDIX: List of participants

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### Speakers & Chairs:

Deborah Barndt	York (Faculty, Environmental Studies)
Gavin Fridell	York (PhD candidate, Political Science)
Miguel Gonzalez	York (PhD candidate, Political Science)
Ricardo Grinspun	York (Faculty, CERLAC)
Adam Hanieh	York (PhD candidate, Political Science)
Joel Harden	York (PhD candidate, Political Science)
Judy Hellman	York (Faculty, Division of Social Science)
Ananya Mukherjee Reed	York (Faculty, HDDG)
Justin Podur	ZNet/ZMagazine (Journalist)
Richard Saunders	York (Faculty, Political Science)
Peter Vandergeest	York (Faculty, YCAR)
Penny Van Esterik	York (Faculty, Anthropology)
Rafeef Ziadah	York (PhD candidate, Political Science)

### Participants:

Ofelia Becerril	CERLAC Visiting Scholar
Stephanie Belmore	York (Undergraduate, Business & Society)
Gary Bieler	York (Graduate, Political Science)
Julie-Anne Boudreau	York (Faculty, Political Science)
Max Brem	York (Staff, Environmental Studies)
Cheran R.	York (Sociology)
Elena Cirkovic	University of Toronto (Graduate, Political Science)
Anna Chudnovsky	(Education)
Siobhan Delaney	York (Undergraduate, Environmental Studies)
Rajula Devi	York (Graduate, Women's Studies)
Nina Dhawan	York (Undergraduate)
Don Dippo	York (Staff, Education)
Mira Dudley	Oxfam Canada
Jean-Paul Efford	
Kate Ervine	York (Graduate, Political Science)
Bill Fairbairn	CERLAC
Dolores Figueroa	York (Graduate, Sociology)
Mark Goodman	York (Faculty, School of Social Sciences)
Mark Hostetler	York (Graduate, Geography)
James Howard	York (Graduate)
Sarah Jacobson	Millersville University (Undergraduate)
Jennifer Johnson	York (Graduate, Women's Studies)
Vivian Jimenez	HDDG
Aaron Kamugisha	York (Graduate, Social & Political Thought)
Chris Kinkaid	York (Graduate, Social & Political Thought)

Dave Lavoie	Oxfam Canada
Louis Lefeber	CERLAC
Jean E. Lez	Church in Society U. C.
Ken Luckhardt	CAW – Canada
Alfredo Marroquin	University of Western Ontario (Graduate)
Susan McNaughton	York (Graduate, Anthropology)
Phedra Moon	York (Graduate, Environmental Studies)
Judith Nagata	York (Faculty, Anthropology)
Holly Nagy	Millersville University (Undergraduate)
Liisa North	York (Faculty, Political Science)
Yemi Oke	York (Graduate, Osgoode)
Vincent Pary	
Viviana Patroni	York (CERLAC/Division of Social Science)
Dwight Pears	(Graduate)
Catherine Phillips	York (Graduate, Environmental Studies)
Morgan Poteet	York (Graduate)
Nadine Quehl	York (Graduate, Anthropology)
Dominique Raguin	University of Waterloo (International student/Staff)
Satya Ramen	York (Graduate, Environmental Studies)
Darryl Reed	York (Faculty, Division of Social Science)
Carolina Rios	York (Undergraduate)
Scott Schaffer	Millersville University
Liisa Schofield	York (Undergraduate, Film)
Tanya Sewers	York (Undergraduate, Political Science/LACS)
Laura Shillington	York (Graduate, Geography)
Shana Shubs	York (Graduate, Environmental Studies)
Fabiola Sicard	York (MBA, Schulich)
Hira Singh	York (Faculty, Sociology)
Nancy Slamet	KAIROS
Susan Spronk	York (Graduate, Political Science)
Dieter Stefely	York (Undergraduate)
Carlos Torres	Centre for Social Justice
Kwabena Yafeu	York (Faculty, Education)
Mary Young	York (Graduate, Political Science)
Maggie Zeng	York (Faculty, YCAR)
Yixi Zeng	York (Graduate, Political Science)