

Collective identity formation and collective action framing in a Mexican “movement of movements”¹

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Abstract

In this paper I analyze the popular social movement in Oaxaca, Mexico (APPO; The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca) as it evolved since its 2006 beginnings. The key research question is: how did hundreds of autonomous groups with divergent agendas generate collective identities and coalesce around a particular set of issues in a repressive regime? In order to address this question, I first describe the emergence of the Oaxacan movement and then place it in the historical context of Mexican politics.

Based on evidence from multiple sources (field observations, in-depth interviews with activists and residents, local newspaper accounts, eye witness blogs, and follow-up electronic conversations with two local scholar-activists), I argue that this movement has features that may be characteristic of 21st century social movements, particularly in repressive regimes or post-colonial context: (1) the transformation from a popular uprising into a coalition of movements and citizens in conjunction with indigenous communitarian living and governing principles, and (2) collective identity formation based on the use of collective action frames (common origin, oppositional, and “prefigurative”) and the use of public space and place-based rituals.

Introduction

The recent movements of the “Arab Spring” in the Middle East, the Spanish 15-M and Indignado movements, and those initiated by “Occupy Wall Street” in the US inspire questions about the nature of social movements in the 21st century. The new technological tools – from cell phones with digital cameras to real-time internet access – facilitate visibility and mobilization with a speed not seen in previous times. At the same time, many of these new movements rely on traditions and rituals rooted in indigenous cultures that were effectively used by the Zapatistas, such as collective identity building around collective action frames the occupation of public spaces, and participatory democracy using assemblies. In addition, these movements demand direct democracy and reject established political structures deemed as corrupt or repressive. They not only

¹ The author thanks the NEH Summer Institute in Oaxaca, which jump started this research effort. In addition, I thank Maggie Grieves, Robin King, and Pedro Javier Torres Hernández for their help with interviewing and translation. Many thank also go to all who agreed to be interviewed for this project.

appeal to activists and social movement leaders but involve the mobilization of “regular people” who usually do not attend demonstrations.

Strategies involving coalition building, creative combination of new technology with the establishment of indigenous-inspired communities in key public spaces and ruled by assemblies were also practiced in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2006. Beginning in May of 2006, long-standing public discontent with a corrupt and repressive state government and related deteriorating social conditions spontaneously erupted into massive, relatively uncoordinated protests, so-called “megamarches” of hundreds of thousands of people in the streets of the state capital of Oaxaca.

The spark leading to this popular uprising² was the repressive reaction of state governor Ruiz to the annual strike of the National Union of Educators (SNTE). The transformative moment that formalized public resistance occurred on June 14, 2006, when governor Ruiz’ storm troopers raided the peaceful encampment of the strikers at night. This act of state violence resulted in numerous injuries and public outrage (see Waterbury 2007), expressed in another megamarch of an estimated 500,000 protestors. It also solidified the commitment of the strikers to continue their encampment community, mobilized the general public to support the strikers, and led to the formal creation of a “coalition of movements,” the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO; Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca). There is a debate among the activists and scholars interviewed in this research about whether APPO is a social movement organization (SMO), a network of organizations, or a social movement, a fact that will be discussed later in this paper. Based on my analysis I argue that the APPO became the umbrella SMO of the Oaxacan popular movement, which I refer to as a “movement of movements” in this paper³.

On the surface these manifestations of social resistance appear to mirror various Mexican upheavals in the 1990s, such as the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas. While the Oaxacan movement clearly shares characteristics with other Mexican social movements, I posit that this movement has features that may be characteristic of social movements in the 21st century, especially under repressive conditions and in post-colonial context. Similar to transnational movements like the anti-WTO and Global Justice Movement (see Flesher

² I use the term “popular uprising” to characterize the initial events in 2006 as opposed to “revolt,” “rebellion,” or simply “protest” because it involved spontaneous mass demonstrations based on political dissent and resistance rather than formal political organization (see Waterbury 2007).

³ The literature on social movements that are composed of a number of autonomous groups tends to focus on coalitions among organizations within a particular movement (see Staggenborg 1986) or cross-movement coalitions (see Rose 2000; Van Dyke 2003). A well-known transnational movement of this type is the “Global Justice Movement,” which also has been referred to as a “movement of movements” (Flesher Fominaya 2010). While Esteva (2007) refers to APPO as a movement of movements, I consider APPO as an SMO.

Fominaya 2010) and the more recent "Occupy Wall Street" movement, the Oaxacan movement bridges multiple ideologies, issues, agendas, and identities. This poses challenges to organizers' strategic choices in terms of collective identity formation and sustained cohesion. In addition, like movements in the former GDR and the Middle East, the Oaxacan movement faced particular challenges because of the repressive regime in which it emerged.

This case study contributes to the growing literature on coalition building across movements as a strategy of bridging intra-, inter-, and cross-movement diversity (Rose 2000; Flesher Fominaya 2010; Hewitt 2011; van Dyke 2003; Staggenborg 1986) and resisting repressive regimes (Houtzager 2001; Pfaff 1996; Ross 1994; Shefner 2004). It examines the organization and strategies of Oaxacan movement activists with particular attention to collective identity building. The analysis shows how public "moral shock" (Jasper 1998) about repression and increased threat levels (see Staggenborg 2003) created the political space in which the cross-movement coalition could arise. The paper also analyzes how activists strategically used collective identity formation based on (1) specific collective action frames and (2) public space and place-based rituals. It is hoped that insights from these observations can inform current and future efforts to increase the endurance of coalition-based movements.

After describing the research methodology employed for this study and the emergence of the Oaxacan movement in 2006, I provide a brief analysis of the historical and political context in which the uprising occurred. Next, I examine the strategies of the APPO involving collective identity formation. I argue that in order to create solidarity among diverse groups of constituents, "common origin" frames, oppositional frames, and "prefigurative" frames depicting a desirable society characterized by participatory democracy and social justice were used. The concept of "prefigurative politics" introduced by Breines (1982 and 1989) to characterize the "New Left" in the 1960s is applied here to show how the vision of an anti-hierarchical way of communal living based on participatory democracy was framed in Oaxaca as practiced in indigenous communities. My research indicates that these frames are rooted in indigenous community life and were reinforced in the occupation of public spaces, space-based rituals, and assembly decision-making practices. Finally, I address the debate surrounding APPO as related to questions about leadership and questions of movement endurance.

Methodology

This case study was part of a larger research project on Mexican grassroots organizations initiated in 2007. The data collection methods included fieldwork in Oaxaca in the summers of 2007 and 2008, semi-structured interviews with movement participants and local residents, review of local newspaper articles (Noticias), and eye witness blogs (NarcoNews.com) during the time of fieldwork and subsequent (until 2011) ongoing electronic conversations with two Oaxacan scholar-activists originally

interviewed in 2008. The author and two female graduate students gained entry based on contacts with local grassroots activists and their networks.

The description of the events leading to, during, and after the popular uprising in 2006 is based on eyewitness accounts in *Teaching Rebellion. Stories from the Grassroots Mobilization in Oaxaca* (Denham and CASA 2008), Nancy Davies' blogs at NarcoNews.com, and Esteva's 2007 account of "The Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca, APPO: A Chronicle of Radical Democracy," in addition to various other published reports. In addition, analyses using a longer-term view of the events related to APPO published in various journals and reports are also referenced in the text. Only data that could be cross-referenced and verified was included in the analysis.

Information based on interviews with 19 key informants, who are leaders in grassroots organizations, movement activists, or local residents is included. After verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant, the interviews with 13 respondents were conducted in Spanish and translated into English simultaneously; the remaining six interviews were conducted in English. The interviews took place where the interviewees worked or resided, varied in length from one to three hours, and were recorded in writing by the interviewer and one of two note takers. The author worked with the two graduate students, one of whom served as translator for the Spanish interviews. The two resultant transcripts for each interview were cross-referenced to ensure accuracy and reliability. The two scholar-activists were initially interviewed in 2008 and later engaged in several follow-up electronic conversations about the movement until 2011.

The interviews were designed to elicit background information about the respondents and their work and an open-ended assessment of APPO and the Oaxacan social movement. Respondents varied in age from 22-71 and 3 were women. Efforts were made to include more women but it became clear that they were mainly active "behind the scenes" and difficult to reach through our networks. The levels of education varied from less than a high school degree to a Ph.D. Eight of the respondents considered themselves "Mestizo" and one "white" (the local resident US scholar). No specific ethnic information was obtained for four respondents, who characterized themselves as "Oaxaño" or "Mexican." The remaining respondents named an indigenous tribal affiliation as their ethnic identity.

The analysis of the materials collected for this study involves a holistic approach to the data to tell the story of coalition building and collective identity formation in Oaxaca. I use evidence from the interview transcriptions and field observations to document instances of frame utilization, and uses of public space and rituals. The frames that most commonly emerged were those of common origin, opposition, and prefiguration of a better society. I will provide examples from movement-related discourse and observation in order to illustrate their relevance to solidarity building.

The Oaxacan movement in context

The 2006 popular uprising

In 2006 Oaxaca City became the microcosm of the clash between repressive state government and citizenry.⁴ On May 21, 2006, *Sección 22* of the SNTE began its annual teachers' strike with the usual encampment (*Plantón*) in the main square (*Zócalo*) of Oaxaca City. This marked the 25th consecutive year Oaxaca's educators were striking in civil disobedience for increased educational resources, better wages, and more support of public education. In the past these annual strikes resulted in the reigning governor hearing the demands, some negotiation, and some granting of demands (see Zafra 2007). However, Ruiz routinely used violent means at his disposal to suppress opposition to his policies and refused to negotiate with the teachers in 2006 because of his policies favoring the privatization of education.

This triggered widespread spontaneous popular mobilization: on June 2 and again on June 7, 2006 an estimated 75,000 – 200,000 people began marching in Oaxaca City in opposition to Governor Ruiz. These marches became known as the first of many "megamarches" because of their large size and popular support. In the night of June 14, 2006 Ruiz used military force to suppress this popular dissent: about 3,000 police in riot gear attacked the unarmed teachers' encampment on the *zócalo* at 4 a.m. with helicopters, tear gas, clubs and guns. This attempted eviction of the strikers was temporary because the teachers returned the next morning and continued their encampment community, which was now supported by the outraged general public. Residents of nearby neighborhoods erected barricades against police and military, effectively shut down inner city Oaxaca, and supplied the encamped strikers with food, water, blankets, and means of sanitation.

Public outrage, or what Jasper (1998) calls "moral shock," over state violence against peaceful protesters increased perceived threat levels and galvanized hundreds of different organizations into a coalition – a movement of movements. Contrary to expectation, state repression failed to deter public mobilization but rather shocked them into organizing their movement more formally (see also Pfaff 1996 for the case of the GDR). After several attempts at negotiation between teachers and the state failed and after another megamarch of 500,000, APPO was formally founded on June 17, 2006. It was an assembly of representatives from over 350 organizations and was organized according to the principles of democratic governance in the Oaxacan indigenous communities. A distinguishing feature of the APPO is that it was formed as a convener of assemblies along indigenous governance principles, in which hundreds of groups participated. It was designed as an association with a horizontal organizational structure, participatory democracy, and a decision-

⁴ The data on the accounts of the events in this section are taken from various published sources (for example, Denham and CASA Collective 2008; Davies 2007; Esteva 2007; Waterbury 2007).

making process rooted in the indigenous communal assemblies. The APPO assembly was intended to serve as an "equalizer" for the constituent autonomous groups in terms of giving equal voice to all members in the assembly, disregarding group size or influence.

Hence, APPO was formed as a coalition of grassroots organizations *after* the initial mobilization of the general public had already occurred. Both the first large demonstrations and the actions of citizens in solidarity with the strikers encamped in the *zócalo* arose organically from within the surrounding communities and neighborhoods – the residents themselves started megamarches, supplied the encamped strikers, and organized the barricades. These collective actions were not based on formal SMO organization but emerged from already-established interpersonal networks within the communities. Pfaff (1996) described a similar, somewhat "reverse" process of movement formation as instrumental in the collapse of the German Democratic Republic in 1989 and suggests that this may be a characteristic of popular mobilization in the context of repressive regimes. In his analysis of the movement in the GDR, which of course occurred prior to digital networking and access to the internet, he described the importance of word of mouth, trusted relationships among neighbors, and local interpersonal networking systems as crucial in mobilizing the public. The initial collective protests in Oaxaca were also loosely-structured events conducted without extensive planning, a defined leadership, or formal organization. However, in 2006 the use of cell phones was crucial to extensive networking and mobilizing. It seems that the popular uprising itself created a space in which various grassroots organizations with divergent agendas were then able to coalesce and take on more prominent roles as organizers.

In 2006 APPO was in control of Oaxaca city for about 5 months, a period that was called "the Oaxaca Commune" in reference to the Paris Commune of 1870 (Esteva 2010). This was the time period when the movement came close to establishing the community it envisioned based both on the indigenous past (common origin) and the desired future (prefiguration) in Oaxaca. However, during this time police and military violence escalated to include assassinations of various activists, attacks on media outlets, mass arrests, and "disappearances." On November 25, 2006, outgoing Mexican president Vicente Fox sent in 4000 of his "federal preventive police" troops to restore Ruiz's control over the city (Campbell 2008). According to the National Commission for Human Rights (LASA 2007), by December 2006, the official human toll of the conflict had reached at least 23 deaths, 370 injuries, 349 imprisonments, and an unknown number of "disappeared." According to various news and blog sources, these numbers are low estimates and rose by at least 3 deaths, over 50 injuries, and over 65 arrests in battles with police during 2007 (see NarcoNews.com newsletters).

The historical and political context of movement emergence

A number of economic, political, and social factors have precipitated the historic moment of 2006, which gave rise to the mobilization of the Oaxacan public. Among the key factors are the neoliberal market liberalization policies that created increased economic hardships for the majority of Oaxacans, the corruption of the political regime leading to a crisis in governmental legitimacy, and a long history of popular agency, especially among regional teachers unions and indigenous groups (see Denham, Lincoln, and Thomas 2008; Stephen 2007).

The effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the Oaxacan state economy, which historically has been heavily reliant on agricultural production, include the rural population's increased dependency on limited low income generating activities within household production (textiles, arts, crafts), often for tourist consumption. As a consequence of the shift from small family farming to agricultural mass production and shrinking opportunities in the agricultural sector, migration out of the region to large urban centers and the U.S. has increased rapidly since the mid 1990s (see Bacon 2008; Stephen 2007).

The surrounding indigenous communities are particularly marginalized by low access to educational and employment opportunities. As a response, various local groups have become actively involved in the cultural, social, and economic survival of their communities via grassroots organizing. Resistance to market liberalization and privatization of public enterprises gave rise to a large number of local grassroots organizations dedicated to improving different aspects of life in Oaxacan communities – from access to health care, education, sustainable livelihoods and social services to women's and indigenous rights (see Neal 2008).

When Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz (URO) of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) took office in 2004 under suspicion of election fraud, his government was immediately faced with widespread public discontent. Historically the Oaxacan state was prone to crises of legitimacy, to various waves of repression to coerce the population into consent, as well as to popular resistance. In fact, collective action was used to depose three previous state governors, in 1946, 1952, and 1977 (see Waterbury 2007). In Mexico public distrust of government, politicians, and political institutions is very high, and data from 2009 show that Mexico held rank 89 on the Transparency International Perception of Corruption Index (Morris and Klesner 2010).

The power of the PRI, which had ruled Mexico for over 70 years eroded over time under a cloud of corruption until it lost the presidential election to the right-centrist National Action Party (PAN) and Vicente Fox in 2000. In the 2004 state elections the left-centrists Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) won over the PRI but the highly unpopular Governor Ruiz (PRI) remained in office with little party or popular support (Chibnik 2007). These circumstances made the state essentially ungovernable by democratic means and the political

situation became highly volatile. Hence, by 2006 the Oaxacan political landscape was characterized by an economic crisis, fraudulent elections, government corruption and political instability, including political violence and repression so that the political space for public rebellion was opened.

Already starting in pre-Columbian times and continuing during and after Spanish colonization, indigenous popular resistance to domination and outright rebellion have shaped the Oaxacan political landscape. Oaxaca is, with Chiapas, not only the poorest, but also the most ethnically-diverse state in Mexico: Oaxaca is the home of sixteen ethnic groups who speak distinct languages and additional dialects and have their own cultural heritages. Muñoz (2004; 2005) offers a historical analysis of the unique process of the "politics of recognition" of indigenous rights in the state of Oaxaca, starting in the 1970s. He explains the comparatively rapid establishment of multicultural reforms in Oaxaca since the 1990s with the capacity of indigenous organizations to access the political decision-making process and to build alliances in the context of eroding government legitimacy.

Recently, Mexican popular movements, inspired by the *Zapatismo*⁵ of neighboring state Chiapas, have increasingly taken on broader issues, such as social justice and neo-liberalism (anti-NAFTA, migration), are networking beyond regional and national borders, and their "new organizers" are adept at using communication technologies (radio, TV, internet, digital cameras, and cell phones) to advance their causes and to create large trans-regional support networks. These new movements combine ethnic pride in cultural heritage, class-based politics, grassroots mobilizing strategies, and digital media to build collective identities in opposition to repressive governments and elites, and to frame their struggle as "inclusive," i.e. as including all Oaxacans disregarding gender, ethnicity, or class. These movements are often organized around a broader set of social values than class-based or identity-based issues, such as demands for human rights, direct democracy, and social justice, and are characterized by a more inclusive range of ethnic and other group identities rooted in local grassroots activism (see Binford and Campbell 1993; Shefner 2004; Melucci 1996; Hewitt 2011).

The diverse constituencies of Latin American popular movements, consisting of coalitions of workers, unions, indigenous groups, women's groups, peasants, and students, value economic and political justice as much as community agency over state rule, and reject the hierarchical structures of bureaucratic decision-making predominant in movements of the past. Like the US student movements in the 1960s, they explicitly oppose the traditionally dominant ruling parties and government corruption, and are voicing general demands, such as social justice and participatory democracy (see Breines 1989). As also seen in the recent Occupy movement, networks of local grassroots organization

⁵ Zapatismo refers to the philosophy of the Zapatista movement. For an account of the Zapatista rebellion, see Ross 1994.

are coordinated to mobilize people in a decentralized manner and share resources for direct action and protests. The target of this type of grassroots organizing in a global age is the protection of "ways of life, living standards, and other interests from the intrusion of global corporations, the ravages of global market forces, and the penetration of the global cultural apparatus" (Flacks 1996: 113).

Conventional wisdom and research in Western nations holds that mobilization is more likely to occur in open democratic regimes than in the "pseudo democratic," post-colonial, or repressive regimes often found in Latin America, Eastern Europe before 1989, and the Middle East because freedom of expression and assembly are granted. Conversely, repressive actions by the government via police or military may prevent collective action because of high levels of perceived risk and threat, fear and intimidation. While it appears that some different rules of movement building may apply in non-democratic or repressive regimes than in Western advanced societies (see Benford and Campbell 1993; Pfaff 1996; Houtzager 2001), recent movements in different parts of the world have utilized similar approaches to coalition building and collective identity formation.

Collective action frames as tools for collective identity formation

According to Melucci (1996), mass mobilization depends on developing a collective identity, which is based on a collective understanding of the goals (and the means and opportunities to achieve them) and the common vision of the movement. However, this identity is embedded in social networks and communities with shared values and, while necessary for mobilization, may precede the involvement of a formal structure in the form of a SMO (see Eckstein 1989).

Part of collective identity formation involves framing processes that (a) identify the overarching themes requiring collective action (collective action frames) and (b) connect individual identities to collective identities (collective identity frames) (see Benford and Snow 2000). Framing theory (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) states that familiar interpretative schemas (frames) are used by movement actors to attach meaning to events and experiences in order to inspire and legitimate an emerging social movement. Benford and Snow (2000) explain that part of the work of social movement organizations is to produce, negotiate, and maintain interpretive collective action frames. These "collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (Benford and Snow 2000:614). In the context of the Oaxacan movement, oppositional, prefigurative, and common origin frames were the most salient to encourage collective identity formation among various organizations and the public.

Oppositional Frames

Collective identities traditionally have been established around class (unions, intellectuals, workers), political (peasants) or cultural categories (ethnicity or indigenous status). As such, these identities create and uphold the boundaries among categories and are focused on particular group-specific goals and demands. In fact, while most Latin American movements were initiated by the Left, they often aligned themselves with party politics or relied on allies within left-leaning parties. By contrast, as in the new movements in Brazil, in the Oaxacan movement class is framed very broadly and is "defined not in conventional sociological terms, but as broadly as possible – that is, as the poor, the oppressed, and the working people ... who stood in direct opposition to the rich, the dominant class, or the capitalists" (Houtzager 2001:25). This distance to those in power is reflected in efforts to provide broad oppositional frames that explain the problem and identify the enemy (diagnostic frame [see Snow and Benford 1988]) and how to solve the problem and get rid of the enemy (prognostic fame [see Snow and Benford 1988]). As Hewitt (2011) shows, for inter-organizational solidarity building, the exclusive use of broad diagnostic frames may be advantageous because they do not require coalition partners to agree on solutions.

Mansbridge (2001a and b) refers to the development of "oppositional consciousness" when discussing the problem of opposing dominant structures. She explains that the recognition of injustice and shared interests and the demand for rectification are central to this process. In Oaxaca the governor, his party (and other parties), and his policies were identified as the common problem and the broad solution was the defeat of this regime and its replacement by participatory democracy in a just society. The regime became the target of the struggle and APPO purposely distanced itself from the "state apparatus" and all political parties. Hence a 35-year old indigenous activist clearly used oppositional framing - words like "war," "fight," "resisting conquest," and "rejecting invasion" to characterize the actions APPO engaged in.

The goal of what Flacks (1996) calls "democratic activism" and coalition building is to organize different groups around the defeat of a common threat, such as a corrupt government or neoliberal trade policies, thereby downplaying their initial different agendas. Of particular interest in the Oaxacan case is the framing of larger collective identities that can take priority over specific autonomous group identities. Organizational constituents and the public defined themselves in mutual recognition of affinity, interests, structural location, and common origin. During the megamarches, participants constructed the broad collective identities of "Oaxeños" and "el pueblo" (the people) to replace that of the specific "los maestros" (the teachers). Later APPO succeeded in broadening its SMO identity to be inclusive of the general citizenry as well, which is reflected in the chants and slogans: "shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, we are all the APPO" and "A people united will never be defeated." The view of the majority of the respondents is reflected in the following statement by an activist: "...this is an Oaxacan movement, it belongs to

Oaxaca. It is a cry of desperation against oppression started by the teachers but [it was] picked up by everyone who felt it in their bones: unemployment and extreme poverty."

In this process, the oppositional frame of an "us" against "them" implies not only the meaningful unity of in-group members (APPO, Oaxacans, the people) but also the relational nature of collective identities in opposition to dominant groups (Ruiz, major political parties, corrupt regimes). For example, the "anti-corruption" and "anti-repression" demands of the movement became the collective action frame of "anti-Ruiz," as reflected in the slogans "Ruiz va caer" (Ruiz will fall) and "Ulises ya cayó" (Ulises is out), which were prominently displayed on banners and chanted. Hence, in order to establish a sense of unity, fractions within and between groups had to be ignored and a common threat – the repressive regime - identified. A respondent for this study, the 40-year-old director of a key organization involved in APPO, credits the movement with developing in Oaxaca "... a higher consciousness not to accept the repression, the violation of human rights, or that governors act like kings..." According to him, APPO decided to "... 'citizenize' politics..." because "the parties are frauds and not representatives." Another 40-year old activist supporting APPO states about the coalition:

"This [repression] brought us to a union with the assembly of organizations. The agreement we made was to be in solidarity with the teachers and other organizations. We always say: not one pueblo, not one organization should fight alone. The best way to fight is in an organized form."

Prefigurative frames of communal living and participatory democracy

In contrast to oppositional frames, prefigurative frames are articulations of what the movement is for, not against. Prefigurative frames are only prognostic in the general sense that they are representations of a common vision for the future. They lack the specificity of prognostic frames detailing the solution to identified problem. In the case of Oaxaca, this vision entailed a society characterized by social justice, communal living and participatory democracy.

Breines (1983:6) defines the concept of "prefigurative politics" as follows:

The term *prefigurative politics* is used to describe characteristics of the movement, as well as parts of the new left leadership, and may be recognized in counter institutions, demonstrations and the attempt to embody personal and anti-hierarchical values in politics. Participatory democracy was central to prefigurative politics.

The notion of "community" is central to the prefiguration of the desired society and involves the creation of egalitarian social relationships and de-centralized communitarian institutions (see Gregory Calvert's 1966 treatise on the "beloved

community" of the Civil Rights era). Breines' (1983; 1989) research shows that this rejection of hierarchical power structures by the New Left in the 1960s in the US resulted in the dilemma of how to create effective "leaderless" movements, a dilemma also faced in Oaxaca. This community-oriented philosophy requires prefigurative activists to use anti-hierarchical leadership principles grounded in a participatory democratic process. The question of how to structure coalitions without invoking the usual hierarchical power dynamics in strategic power brokering is answered by the use of assemblies in present movements all over the world.

In Oaxaca in 2008, the 40-year-old director of a constituent indigenous grassroots organization explains: "there are no leaders in APPO... APPO is a construction of many organizational expressions." In his view the ideal form of indigenous governance – the leader-less assembly that is an expression of radical democracy - was actually practiced by APPO. Nevertheless, several other respondents were less idealistic and conceded that leaders did exist in APPO and that some became corrupt, leading to difficulties in the ranks. In fact, the key activists in APPO were targeted by the regime and quite a few are among the arrested, assassinated, or "disappeared" (see Denham and CASA 2008; Esteva 2008, Waterbury 2007).

Assemblies are central to the political process in the Oaxacan indigenous communities. They are based on the principle of 'usos y costumbres' (traditional usages and customs), which refers to indigenous communal decision-making practices. Gustavo Esteva (2006) defined a community in Oaxaca as "...a group of people linked by obligation, by mutual obligations, not by rights," and he described the consensus-based decision-making principle of the assemblies as follows:

"...we are an assembly when we are together and we are a web when we are separated. When we come together we have a very precise mandate from our communities, from our people, and we can discuss and compromise and come to a consensus, have an argument."

This process is neither fast nor smooth and critics among the interviewees for this study stated that the assembly members are mostly male, thereby excluding female voices from "the web." Others argue that while the consensus-building process can be very slow and conflict-ridden, it does lead to decisions that reflect the views of the majority.

Several respondents for this study mentioned the Zapatistas and/or Ricardo Flores Magón's philosophy of "Tierra y Libertad" (land and liberty) as inspirations of the movement and the future, and that they have had a profound influence on the movement. One 37-year-old director of a grassroots organization supporting APPO echoes the prefigurative theme of the movement's uniting vision: "Ricardo Flores Magón's (RFM) philosophy... [what] he expresses – be faithful to yourself and your identity.... APPO had to

move into a new direction – towards their ideal. [It] became an urban movement with rural components.” However, several voices from the indigenous communities in the mountains confirm the urban character of the movement by denying the existence of APPO outside the city and associating APPO with negative events like burning busses and urban violence. This view contradicts the quest for community as a place of peaceful coexistence.

Even if this vision for the future is one constructed based on a mythical version of past indigenous ways of community life (see next section on common origins framing), it serves to reinforce the hope generated by the movement. In this sense prefigurative framing, as a specific form of motivational framing, becomes a way to stir the collective imagination and to galvanize various groups on a combined vision of positive societal transformation. This “pro better world” framing clearly complements a purely oppositional framing in terms of fighting “against the status quo,” and may be particularly effective in gaining support from the public. Hewitt (2011) also found that prognostic or motivational framing can successfully combined with “anti” frames. However, these frames have to be broad because the divergent solutions to the common problem (what is being fought for) based on a range of ideological strains lead to friction; in Oaxaca this was the case between APPO and the public.

Common origin frames

According to Houtzager (2001), the success in movement mobilization in Brazil depended on collective identities being based on reinterpreting the dominant ideology and undermining claims of state legitimacy. In addition, he argues that these reinterpretations should correspond to “folk conceptions” of how normative society operates that build the glue of local communities and invoke a common origin. In the case of education in Oaxaca, the dominant neoliberal ideology that encourages privatization was reframed as being in violation of both the Mexican constitution and indigenous practices – privatization of education violates the rights of citizens to a free education. This “anti-privatization” frame was extended based on indigenous philosophies about communal stewardship to a rejection of any attempts by the state to privatize natural resources, public spaces, or cultural events. Examples include protests against privatization of the national oil company, against costly remodeling of the main square (*zócalo*) that included installation of parking meters, and against the takeover of sponsorship of the Guelaguetza festival by the state or Coca Cola, Inc.

The comprehensive strategy to build a collective identity for a movement of movements focused on creating and fostering internal solidarity among constituent groups and other participants after initial mobilization. The foremost task here is the reaffirmation of existing alliances among networks of autonomous groups, using informal networks within communities, and the identification of common issues. This requires that the key actors not only do the political work of identifying common goals and demands, but also do

cultural work; that is they have to invoke a common cultural origin, heritage and history of struggle for autonomy and rights. To that end activists use shared symbols and narratives from their regional cultural legacy to attach an umbrella identity to themselves that superseded any specific heterogeneous group identities (see Stolle-McAllister 2007). The articulation of the movement discourse and demands are rooted in the cultural traditions and practices of local peoples and local communities. Gustavo Esteva⁶ explains that “a movement of movements does not have goals, but compelling forces, impulses... Forces coming from the past, from experiences, compelling us to do something...”

The ideological view of the movement as a symbolic extension of past struggles, and an example of “myth-making,” is echoed in the words of a 30-year-old activist in the movement: APPO is “... a consequence of 500 years of colonization that resulted in interrupted lives of the people and oppression with the goal to eliminate culture. It grew out of the resistance of 500 years.” This idealized use of the past as leading up to 2006’s uprising is part of common origin framing to build collective identities – the historic struggle of Oaxacans. Clearly this strong articulation of unity in past and present focuses on an edited, entirely positive construction of a common history and downplays the considerable historical evidence of divisions within and between communities. Conflict and competition as well as corruption are part of the interaction within assemblies and networks, and most of the interviewees acknowledged this problem. While the frame of common origin and unity among communities is not quite authentic, it serves the purpose of collective identity building well and is the basis for the “prefiguration” of an ideal future society – or a return to a common mythical past.

The role of public spaces and place-based rituals in collective identity formation

Fernando Bosco (2001) contributes to the literature on the spatial dimensions of collective identity formation with a focus on the role of space in the sustainability of a movement. He argues that “place-based collective rituals” serve to maintain social network cohesion both spatially and symbolically. Places that are collectively identified as meaningful to the cause become symbols to build and maintain existing network connections (see also Leach and Haunss 2009; Creasap 2012). Collective rituals reinforce participants’ feelings of group membership, their “basic moral commitments and group solidarity and ... their activist identities” (Bosco 2001; p.315).

The identification of a central place that belongs to the activist community fosters interpersonal networking and sustains a shared identity. In Oaxaca

⁶ Gustavo Esteva is the president of the board of Unitierra, an alternative university in Oaxaca. He agreed to be interviewed in depth for this research and consented to have his name used.

movement activists were able to strategically use sacred places and rituals in Oaxacan indigenous culture, to reinforce the common origin frames. APPO recognized the relevance of repeated gatherings in particular public spaces and on culturally significant days in sustaining the viability and duration of a movement. In order to solidify a collective identity of "the people," collective rituals confirmed common interests, shared grievances, and common bonds. Between 2006 and 2008 culturally significant elements were successfully injected into political events – cultural processions turned into silent marches and fiestas into rallies in the same public spaces.

The expression of dissent, or more specifically resistance (social activism based on dissent), occurs most effectively in public spaces (see Roberts 2008). The occupation of public spaces for the purpose of continued resistance facilitates social networking among movement constituents, increases the visibility of the movement, and aids mobilization. The choice of the main square as the location of the annual teacher encampment community reflects the significance of the central public space as a "homeplace" of resistance (see hooks 1991; Bosco 2001). The *zócalo* is a highly politicized space – the symbol of the struggle and the space of resistance, collective memory and recruitment. The movement participants had a strong sense of ownership of public places and fought to protect and maintain control of the *zócalo* as the center of public visibility, media attention, and resource mobilization.

The *zócalo* is also where local indigenous crafts merchants and street vendors traditionally sell their wares because of ready access to tourists, who flock there to admire the adjacent churches and colonial architecture as well as enjoy the lively cultural activities and restaurants. In fact, tourists became a target and tool for the movement as organizers used large posters to educate tourists about the struggle and repression, stage fund raising installations like the *kilómetro del peso* (kilometer of pesos; a long marked line on the ground on which people put coins and bills) to help the families of those arrested in the struggle, and prevent tourists from spending money on state-sponsored cultural events.

Throughout 2006 and 2007, the square was filled with political banners and the permanent stands of the grassroots groups that constituted APPO. In addition, stands that sold political T-shirts, DVDs documenting the demonstrations and police brutality, and CDs with protest songs abounded. A permanent resistance art installation (*arte de resistencia/ performance instalación*) of a large web covered the entire square, symbolizing the social network and community of the movement participants, while on a stage and in the streets, song and dance performances expressed the message: "Oaxaca no está de fiesta... está de luto" (Oaxaca is not celebrating, it is in mourning). In addition, graffiti artists opened "...new spaces of expression by reclaiming every wall in the city for the people in resistance" (Denham, Lincoln, and Thomas 2008:36). Of particular note is an artist collective, ASARO (Revolutionary Artists Assembly of Oaxaca), who supported the movement by creating woodcut prints for sale and stencils for graffiti production that depicted symbolic scenes of the Oaxacan struggle, including common origin, oppositional, and prefigurative frames.

The extensive use of digital media – cell phones with cameras and access to the internet (youtube) - served to expose and publicize police brutality. Photographs of those brutalized by police graced long laundry lines crisscrossing the square. This space also marked the beginning and end point of the megamarches, many of which also included a visit to a monument of Benito Juarez, the first indigenous Mexican president.

Other marches included stops at the *fuentes de las siete regiones* (fountain of the seven regions of Oaxaca), which symbolizes common regional identity. This monument unifies the key features of the traditions in the seven regions of the state into a cultural mosaic. At the *plaza de danza* (dance square) pre-Hispanic dances were performed under the banner of a common cultural heritage and identity. The performance art in this space was expanded to include mock trials against the governor. Of particular significance are the collective ritual processions honoring the sites where violence took place; for example, the places where APPO members Jose Jimenez Colmenares and Lorenzo San Pablo Cervantes (Campbell 2008), and independent journalist Bradley Will (Waterbury 2007) were killed by police became shrines and regular stops during the megamarches. Similarly, *la marcha de silencio* (silent march) in 2007 featured family members who prominently carried the photographs of the victims of police brutality with the message: "For our dead and disappeared not a minute of silence but a whole life of struggle." These actions and messages reinforce the collective moral commitment and serve to maintain collective identity (see Bosco 2008 and Jasper 1997).

As Roberts (2008) further points out, the state can use its power to sanction and pre-empt the use of public spaces for the purpose of dissent. In Oaxaca this was done in 2008 by "renovating" and "modernizing" the central square in order to strip it of its historical significance as recognized place of resistance. The high value of public spaces to the local population is the cornerstone of protests against the governor's use of public funds to remodel the *zócalo* to enhance tourist attraction (see Chibnik 2007); the removal of ancient stone pavement, the installation of parking meters in the free public parking zone, and the eviction of indigenous street crafts vendors caused public outrage and extensive vandalism. In retaliation of the state taking over the people's public spaces, Oaxacans started taking over government spaces by putting up barricades on highways, blocking access to the *Guelaguetza* amphitheater, occupying toll booths on state highways, setting city buses on fire, and ripping out the newly installed parking meters.

Another example of the connection between use of space, framing, and collective identity is the annual *Guelaguetza* Festival in July, a celebration of cultural diversity that dates back to pre-Columbian times. In the Zapotec language *guelaguetza* means "reciprocal exchanges of gifts and services," but over the last decades it has become a state-run commercial enterprise to attract tourists. Local scholar Ronald Waterbury addresses the symbolic nature of

starting an annual *Guelaguetza Magisterial y Popular* (the people's Guelaguetza) to compete with the "official Guelaguetza."⁷ He states

"this is clearly a counter-hegemonic move (in a Gramscian sense) against the appropriation of indigenous culture by the state for its own economic and political goals. The terms "popular" in the title makes reference to the populace and to the APPO as the movement's symbol."

In 2007 the "official" festival was sponsored by Coca Cola Inc., which led to a public boycott of the festival, a blockade of the city's open-air amphitheater where it is normally held, clashes with police, and busloads of people being brought in by the state to serve as an audience for the TV covered performances.

The strategic use of space to voice resistance goes beyond physical space and includes the media (air waves) and cyber space. Early on the teachers' union broadcast news of their encampment via their radio station *Radio Plantón* (encampment radio) and when their transmitter was destroyed in the police raid on the encampment, students at Benito Juárez University started broadcasting from *Radio Universidad* in solidarity. Another example is the *marcha de las caserolas* (march of pots and pans) in which some 2000 women marched while banging on pots and occupied the state run TV and radio stations in order to broadcast news about the movement. Several women's groups were part of APPO, foremost COMO (Coordinating Body of Oaxacan Women), which was the women's branch of the movement. In general, women played an active role in the movement from the beginning because teachers are predominantly female and women supported the encampment with food, water and blankets (for women's stories, please see Yakira 2007). Of particular note are the specific actions organized by COMO in front of the Santo Domingo cathedral to help the families of the killed, arrested and "disappeared."

APPO was able to create a website that allowed them to portray themselves in a manner different from official accounts that showed them as criminals. This virtual space served to disseminate written and video information, recruit members, and mobilize resources. The internet was also crucial for international social networking and mobilizing international support via petition signatures to impeach the governor. It allowed the movement entry into a global public virtual space that enabled participation in real time social networking among people resisting repression across the globe. The recent uprisings in the Middle East and elsewhere show how immediate access to eyewitness accounts on social networking sites can fuel solidarity with a movement and facilitate social mobilization. Nevertheless, as Philip Howard (2011) warns, "...overemphasizing the role of information technology diminishes the personal risks that individual protesters took in heading out onto the streets

⁷ Ronald Waterbury is the director of the Welte Institute in Oaxaca. He agreed to be interviewed in depth for this research and consented to have his name used.

to face tear gas and rubber bullets." In the "Arab Spring" and in Oaxaca many died and were injured in the streets.

Endurance of a movement of movements

The allegiance of constituent autonomous groups to a movement of movements can be somewhat tenuous due to the fact that the overall collective identity is "artificially created," or purposely constructed by organizers. Jasper (2004), in his discussion of examples of strategic choices in political agency, mentions "the extension dilemma" in movements with diverse constituencies and coalitions. He argues that coalitions among member organizations make the movement goals less coherent, which results in rivalries and the fact that the coalitions rarely survive more than a few years. The more diverse and the larger the number of groups and alliances in the movement, the broader the collective identity has to be. Because the collective umbrella identity of APPO is not based on shared ideology at the grassroots, questions arise about its endurance. Collective identities in single focus movements, which are the social glue keeping movements cohesive, are not static but involve a process of bond formation based on social interaction, communication, and shared rituals (Melucci 1996). This process is complicated by the additional level of organization introduced by bringing together heterogeneous groups. Hence the collective umbrella identity of a movement of movements is by definition more general and has to be embraced both by individual group members and by the constituent autonomous groups.

According to most sources, during the peak of the megamarches and the barricades in Oaxaca the solidarity across groups and the public was strong. The sense of urgency created by the threat of violence enhanced the need for cross-group collaboration in a perceived state of emergency. Neighborhoods considered themselves under siege and residents defended their spaces against police and military forces without regard to group membership or ideological differences (see Denham and CASA 2008). Nevertheless, the fact that there remains disagreement of the nature of APPO reflects the splintering of solidarity. One of the interview questions for this research was: "In your view, what is APPO, and what are its goals?" The statement by a 55-year-old resident in an indigenous community interviewed for this research, "APPO is not the movement. The Oaxacan people are the movement," appears indicative of the split between the coalition of organizations constituting APPO and the movement of the general public. Thus, another respondent, a 35 year-old key activist in one of the indigenous organizations that was part of APPO commented that APPO "is an organization of communities that fights to get our [indigenous] rights," and that this is why he decided their grassroots organization should "...be in solidarity with the [striking] teachers and other organizations."

After the immediate threat passed, however, fissures at the ideological fault lines of the various groups re-emerged, giving rise to speculations about

corruption and greed within the APPO leadership ranks itself (Campbell 2008; Waterbury 2007). It appears that while the diagnostic oppositional framing was clear and broad, the discourse on the prognostic framing was very ideologically diverse even though the prefiguration of hope was broad. The divergent solutions to the common problem (what is being fought for) based on a range of ideological strains led to friction, particularly between APPO and the public.

Contrary to some of the respondents' view of APPO as leaderless, key figures in the constituent organizations were arrested, "disappeared," or accused of using the movement for their own agenda. APPO's motives and intentions were questioned and conflict over strategy and goals gave rise to infighting, which in turn led to a lack of public support. The same distrust that was used to mobilize against the common enemy – the Ruiz government – was now levelled against constituent autonomous groups of the movement, but mainly against the APPO. It was perceived as having gained too much power and as having its own agenda. While distance from the repressive power structure and rejection of institutionalization were prominent goals for APPO, in the end the accusation of practicing the same anti-democratic tactics were levied against it.

Local scholar-activist Gustavo Esteva acknowledges that there were major tensions between the teacher's union and APPO early on because the union stopped striking. In addition, conflict within APPO along the political fault lines of the constituent groups over strategies and ideologies have reduced the effectiveness of the movement and weakened the unity. Ron Waterbury adds that some larger groups, like the Popular Revolutionary Front (FPR; communist group) have taken over and are imposing hierarchical structures on the decision-making process. Hence he argues that "... APPO no longer represents the movement, it represents these particular groups [who are] squabbling over who is in control."

One 42-year-old leader in a grassroots organization states: "the movement has been sold out... but the effervescence of the movement is still there... [It] is enduring and maturing and it will return, and the government won't be able to do anything." The director of another key organization involved in APPO adds that it "was a good movement" and it "represented the hope of Oaxaca in its best moment." It is "an expression of the people who wanted to stop being subjugated and to convert themselves to people with rights." To him, in 2008 "APPO is a little divided but the movement is alive. APPO as an organizational structure is fractured. APPO as a movement is still alive and doing things." Again, different observers consider APPO a different entity and are divided over its effectiveness and endurance.

The Oaxacan movement ultimately did not succeed in gaining the demanded regime change. Part of the reason is that the movement was no match for the state's monopoly over the means of violence. The brutality and human rights abuses of the police, military, and paramilitaries (assassinations, beatings, torture, disappearances) against ordinary citizens were immense. The toll of risking health, life, liberty, and income by regular participation in demonstrations proved too much over the long term, especially given the small

probability of success in a repressive context. Waterbury states that the multiple causes behind the movement, such as government repression and corruption, poverty, neoliberalism's negative impact on the local economy are still present in 2011. However, the coalition of organizations and the assembly of the APPO already started disintegrating in 2007 and the regular demonstrations of the coalition have stopped by 2009. Instead, the constituent organizations are acting separately or in smaller federations to push their agendas "as though 2006 never happened."

In 2011 the Oaxacan movement seemed to be at a crossroads; while APPO no longer operates as a SMO, the movement appears to survive in a latent manner. Waterbury and Esteva expressed differing perspectives on the future of the movement in 2011. While Ronald Waterbury is decidedly cautious in his outlook on the future of APPO, Gustavo Esteva sees promise in the continued movement and its goal of major social transformation. Waterbury argues that the social movement, after its spontaneous beginning in 2006 is ongoing today; "but action is initiated by other organizations" and "APPO remains a very powerful symbol of the movement." By distinguishing APPO as a structure from the movement, he is able to see a fractured, dissolving SMO and an ongoing, if latent, movement. He argues that one of the lasting successes of the movement is the hope it instilled in the public that political change is possible, and that this, coupled with the anti-PRI sentiment generated by APPO, may have brought about the end of PRI rule after decades. Anti-PRI sentiments motivated many who usually do not participate in elections due to fatalistic beliefs and widespread resignation to the status quo of corrupt politics to actually vote. Overall, he is cautiously optimistic about the movement reaching some of its goals under the current government.

Gustavo Esteva is more optimistic about the resilience of the movement and describes it as "the product of a slow accumulation of forces and many lessons gathered during previous struggles" and as "born at the grassroots, from the core of Oaxacan society" (Esteva 2008:338). He further argues that the APPO is fighting institutionalized repression by paramilitary groups on one side and the attempts by the institutional Left to discredit it on the other. He agrees with Waterbury that mobilization of people is based on the hope for change. According to Esteva, in 2011 "the movement is very much alive. They are still marching and trying to bring about changes." He believes the various groups that were under the APPO umbrella will differ in their visibility and actions on the political front but they will not disappear because "the APPO represents above all a great awakening" (Esteva 2010: 990). Like Zapatismo, the APPO "... opened a new horizon of hope, whose innovative character, especially in terms of bridging cultural diversity and applying the assembly tradition to the present, is a source of inspiration for many other movements in Mexico and in the world" (Esteva 2010: 990). Hence frames of common origins in the pre-colonial past also were the inspiration for the prefigurative frames of these egalitarian communities in the future. For movements in the North this connection between past and future poses a dilemma because of the post-modern distance to the collective memory of "community."

Conclusion

The questions guiding this research involved the reasons for the formation of a coalition of divergent organizations under repressive conditions with specific emphasis on the role of collective identity formation based on framing and the use of space and rituals. Evidence from this research offers valuable insights for the research and activist communities. The findings suggest that after the initial public "moral shock," collective identity formation strategies involving common origin, oppositional and prefiguration framing, and the use of public spaces and rituals were instrumental for coalition building among heterogeneous movements and the public. Of particular importance in Oaxaca were the indigenous influences in the articulation of collective identities: use of assemblies and place-based rituals in spaces with cultural and historical significance and framing based on a common threat, origin, and future.

While assemblies, regular demonstrations, occupation of public space, and oppositional framing also are features of current movements in the North (anti-WTO, Occupy), it appears that common origin and prefigurative frames take on a different significance in post-colonial contexts. While the broad goals of all of these movements deal with sustainable livelihoods in the future, the vision of what this looks like varies in the North and South in a number of ways. The community ties and the cultural rituals in Oaxaca involve a deep sense of common bonds and heritage that may evoke higher emotional investment and feelings of solidarity than is found in Northern democracies.

In Oaxaca community is not merely a distant memory but a clearly articulated vision in Oaxaca. Based on Melucci's (1995) process-oriented view of collective identity, it appears that the interaction based on informal networks in communities was instrumental in linking the grassroots groups and the public. The organic involvement of established neighborhood networks allowed the public to take ownership of the movement. These insights extend Lichterman's (1996; 2009) work on "social capacity", i.e. the ability of mutually responsible people to engage in coordinated problem solving in an inclusive manner for public benefits. Furthermore, according to Evans (2002:56), "collective capabilities" of "organized collectives" can "...provide the arena for formulating shared values and preferences, and instruments for pursuing them, even in the face of powerful opposition." In this context Adler (2012) also discusses the concept of "community capacity restoration" in Oaxacan grassroots organizing based on "collective efficacy" (see Sampson et al. 1999).

These concepts all point to the relevance of *relational collective resources*, such as interpersonal connections based on affective loyalties (Berezin 2001), norms of reciprocity, and mutual interests that generate ties that go beyond instrumental coalitions established for short-term organizational purposes. Future research should continue to examine the dynamics of community in building social capacities for long-term solidarity, trust, and loyalty to the movement. A related expanding field of exploration for scholars and activists is the emotional dimension of collective identity formation. In a recent review Jasper (2011) outlines the value of research on various forms of emotional

energy for uncovering the hidden mechanisms at the core of activism, mobilization, and movement endurance.

I speculate that these features of popular mobilization and movement maintenance may be key characteristics of movements in the 21st century in which post-colonial politics are important, particularly in conjunction with the effective use of mobile technology, such as cell phones with cameras and internet capabilities. It will be the task of future studies to investigate these claims. However, the findings from this study clearly support recent literature (Flesher Fominaya 2010; Davis and Rosan 2004; Houtzager 2001; Pfaff 1996) suggesting that the understanding of recent movements, particularly in repressive regimes, requires a retooling of concepts from a variety of social movement perspectives. Additional research is necessary to refine existing concepts so that they are more sensitive to the special dynamics present in the current globalization context.

Technically, APPO no longer exists – at least not as the umbrella SMO it once was. The movement of movements also appears to have disbanded due to a lack of popular support. The government repression, killing, threatening, disappearances, and internal power struggles have taken their toll. However, according to local observers like Campbell (2008), Esteva, and Waterbury, various initiatives born from the movement continue to exist. In repressive conditions with major power imbalance in terms of the means of violence, continued involvement and risk taking by the populace is difficult to sustain long-term. On the other hand renewed moral shock and outrage can help refocus public attention and reignite protest (see Brockett 2005). Hence a strategic tool for activists is the rouse the public with new information that challenges accepted knowledge and yet appeals to the sense of community to inspire collective solidarities (see Jasper 2010; 2011).

In Oaxaca it appears that the collective identity frames did not withstand fragmentation and ideological in-fighting. One lesson is that organizers did not capitalize on popular support and outside allies in a sustained manner. Almeida and Walker (2006) show the importance of favorable public opinion in sustaining a movement. While the strategies to distance the movement from the state and official parties, and the rejection of formal organizational structures were in line with oppositional framing efforts, they also prevented using potential support from existing sympathetic elements within the power structure. More generally, the sustained enthusiasm and desire for change in the population at large could have been more effectively harnessed by using clearer expectations for the future. APPO was unable to maintain its momentum because it did not generate positive public awareness beyond the city and could not galvanize commitments from other potential allies.

In addition, this research points to the need for more sociological research on the issue of leadership in coalition and collective identity building (see Barker et al. 2001; Jasper 2010; 2011). While decentralized organizational structures in assemblies can be effective, the concept of a “leaderless” movement organization appears to be problematic in the long run. Internal hierarchies seem to develop

inevitably in movements of movements, resulting in the emergence of informal (and formal) leaders, even when the autonomous movements are ideologically and strategically opposed to this label. Both activists and scholars benefit from continuing reflection on how to combine participatory democracy in action with effective "key organizing team building" rather than focusing on a leader/non-leader dichotomy. As Jasper (2011) points out, organizing and strategizing work such as alliance building and fame alignment involves group dynamics at multiple (and not only horizontal) levels. As seen in Oaxaca, the ideological and strategic denial of having movement leaders, while effective in the short term, may be counter-productive in the long run.

Recently several Mexican movements, such as the Other Campaign and the "Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad" (Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity) have emerged with an emphasis on public involvement, anti-corruption frames, and decentralized, horizontal movement organization. They bring civic pressure on the Mexican government and cut across ethnic and class boundaries by invoking solidarity in civil society against a common threat. As in Oaxaca, they also rely on local community networks and established inter-movement linkages. Potentially successful strategies to draw public support include using broad master frames that are anti-violence and pro-community, focusing on existing informal networks within local communities, and "modelling" the prefigured future society within the movement. Here a promising concept is that of the "social movement scene," defined by Leach and Haunss (2009:259, emphasis in the original) as "a *network of people* who share a common identity and a common set of subcultural or countercultural beliefs, values, norms, and convictions as well as a *network of physical spaces* where members of that group are known to congregate." Of course the notion of "space of resistance" moves beyond the static physical realm into a process (see Creasap 2012) and into the virtual dimension by means of technology.

Both Esteva and Waterbury, coming from very different perspectives, agreed that the generation of "hope" in the populace based on prefiguration was a lasting contribution of the movement. The importance of this vision is eloquently stated by a 40-year old indigenous male activist supporting APPO: "When they kill the spirit, the hope, and the heart, even though we are alive, we are nothing." Hence one lesson for activists is that prefiguration may be a key component not only of coalition building but of sustaining a movement over time.

The realization that collectively Oaxacans or Mexicans can voice their demands and be empowered to act upon their rights as citizens is promising vis-a-vis the decades-long fatalism in the face of authoritarian rule. According to Richard Flacks (1996:104)

...movements are inherently the primary framework for direct democracy, providing the moments in which ordinary people directly and consciously participate in the exercise of voice rather than allowing others to speak for them.... It is in the movement moment

that the people show, at least spasmodically, that they can decide, can take control of their history.

In the Oaxacan case, the collective voice converged on common origins, opposition to the local regime, and the vision of a better society. Interviewed movement participants actively engaged in the "prefiguration" of the movement outcome, that is, they "prefigured" the desirable future society by articulating it as an anticipatory image. When the path to participatory democracy was violently blocked by corrupt elites in a repressive regime, Oaxacans decided to march despite high risks to themselves and their families. Future research should continue to investigate how prefigurative frames are used in conjunction with the formation of communities and social movement scenes (see Creasap 2012) in emerging movements in Latin America or elsewhere. It appears they are part of a global trend of numerous alternative movements fighting for a new world. They envision a more egalitarian society, a post-capitalist society, a community free of repression, corruption and violence, and use these positive ideas in collective action framing as strategic tools for mobilization.

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About the author

Marina Adler is professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA. Her research focuses on social change and gender, ethnic and class inequalities from an international perspective. As a native German, much of her research has been centered in Western and Eastern Europe, and particularly in Germany. She examines the effects of the move from state socialism to capitalism on women's work and family biographies, and the relationships among gender, labor market and family policies in the European Union. As a scholar-teacher-activist her work in Latin America focuses on local grassroots activism to combat the effects of global capitalism. Her current research examines the role of grassroots organizations in the promotion of autonomous communities in rural Mexico via alternative livelihoods, such as self-sustained communities, ecotourism and cooperatives. Email: adler AT umbc.edu

Thus, different aspects might influence the formation of collective identity and therefore drive collective action on social media. This study combines the perspectives of social identity- and identity theory in order to examine how members of an opinion-based group contribute to the collective group/social identity formation and therefore, to collective action. To this end, we applied automated text classification techniques to Instagram communication related to the social movement Fridays for Future. Analysing 1,137 comments showed that individuals mainly express Group Cohesion and Emotional Attachment rather than Solidarity by commenting on Instagram. This study further presents a proposed model of collective group/social identity of collective action. PDF | On Jan 1, 2012, Marina A. Adler published *Collective identity formation and collective action framing in a Mexican "movement of movements"* | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. Participation in social movements is a multifaceted phenomenon (Klandermans 1983) and the work of social movement organizations is to produce, negotiate, and maintain interpretive collective action frames (Benford and Snow 2000; Adler 2012). Collective action frames perform this interpretive function by simplifying and condensing aspects of the "world out there," but in a manner that is "intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Benford and Snow 2000, 625). ... collective action. In his insightful study, the question of how the indigenous political subject that is being represented is constructed is not discussed through a gendered frame. Footnote 12. Collective identities tend to be constructed through essentialist frames as a strategy to simplify reality and amplify the legitimacy of grievances. Footnote 28 This, we argue, is central for understanding how gender relations can be either idealised or simply absent from the discourse that frames a social movement's identity and platforms, as well as how other types of social relations between women. Some social positionings are not represented in a social movement field while some...