Conceptualizing Protest and Conflict

Report from an interdisciplinary conference exploring how governments and institutions of global governance can better respond to contentious politics

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- In recent years the world has been shaken by protests demanding real democracy and justice for socioeconomic grievances: recent examples include 2014's pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, and 2013's »Summer of Rights« and »Right to the City« movements in Brazil and Turkey.

- For the purpose of conceptualizing protest and conflict, meeting participants discussed the following questions: »Are protests expressions of aspirations, grievances and demands? Or are they conflicts to be subdued?«

- From the point of view of institutions of government and governance, protests disrupt smooth governance, requiring management by experts in conflict resolution. From the point of view of protest movements and social justice campaigns, the performance of contentious acts must be done by people themselves – «non-experts» – acting directly on their own behalf and for the transformation of their economies and societies.

- The current state of play is a »zero sum game«. To go beyond it, governments and institutions of governance need to listen to the grievances, demands and aspirations of protesters. Even riots should be seen first as expressions of injustice and demands for its reversal rather than as conflicts to be put down.

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Executive Summary

On November 5, 2014, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) New York and the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs organized a meeting for 20 experts including strategists from social and political movements, social and political science researchers, and government representatives and advisers on internal and external conflicts and democratic dialogue.

The theme of the meeting, »Protest? or Conflict?« was introduced by Sara Burke (Senior Policy Analyst, FES), who noted that the 2014 Pro-Democracy movement in Hong Kong, the 2013 Summer of Rights in Brazil, and the 2013 Right to the City movement that began in Istanbul's Gezi Park in Turkey all raised the question in the media and therefore in society: »Is this a protest to express aspirations, grievances and demands, or is it conflict to be subdued?« The answer to this question depends largely upon whether the one asking it is inside or outside the events in question. In institutions of government and governance, contentious politics is viewed primarily as a disruption to be managed by outside experts in conflict resolution and democratic dialogue. The objectives of their efforts are security and stability. In protest movements and social justice campaigns, on the other hand, the organizers and instigators of contentious politics are acting directly on their own behalf and for the transformation of their economies and societies. Even in the case of riots and violent protests—which communicate grievances, even if inchoate—the protesters' acts can be read as expressions of injustice and demands for its reversal.

In the first panel, Patrick Heller explored the tension between the outlooks of institutionalists (academics, policymakers, professional advocates, representatives of government) and »participatistas« in the streets. Looking at three instances in which a powerful participatory movement tried to go beyond representative democracy to build real participatory democracy—Kerala in southern India, Porto Alegre in Brazil, and South Africa after *apartheid*—he contrasted the great institutional transformations necessary for the participatory budgeting that were enacted in Kerala and Porto Alegre, with South Africa's cautionary tale in which a movement-driven, vibrant civil society saw all the participatory structures dismantled.

Next, Kalev Leetaru spoke about how he uses open source big-data to try to predict events of protest and conflict by registering people's feelings. The key challenge for him was how to reveal the hidden influence structures via social and local media to determine whether support is rising or falling for contentious politics playing out on the ground. Mohamed Berrada spoke about how the team behind the »World Protests 2006-2013« study found it necessary to document each protest episode not just in the mainstream media but also in local and activist sources. He discussed the systematic biases in professional media that lead to both under-reporting of nonviolent protest activities and blurring of distinctions between violent repression and violent protests, resulting in a failure to capture the true state of grievances and aspirations in society, while at the same time obscuring who is responsible when violence does break out.

In the second panel, Naomi Hossain introduced a recently completed study and report on food riots and food rights by the Institute of Development Studies. The researchers wanted to compare food riots—allegedly spontaneous, violent and unruly—with the growing global movement for the human right to food, which utilized the law and a more polite civil society discourse. The key finding of the study—that food riots work—means that institutionalists would do well to recognize that the riots are part of a democratic process: they are how people are holding governments to account.

Pablo González followed with a presentation on mapping conflict and protest in Latin America. There, he observed, many people have the intuition that there has been an increase in social protest and social conflict during the past decade, which seems paradoxical when one considers the substantial social gains achieved in the region. Nevertheless, he noted, we see the emergence of a new middle class with unfulfilled expectations entering into protest. The classical cleavages that mobilized people in the past—political parties, ideologies, class-based movements—have nearly stopped working. A key finding of his UNDP research is that most Latin Americans think protests are normal and necessary in a democracy.

Krisztina Bombera spoke about the rise of far-right extremist groups in Europe and the impetus given to those movements by co-opted former progressives and cen-

ter-right parties. She described how disillusionment is rampant not only with (»corrupt«) elites and politics (»as usual«) but also with the operating concepts of Western democracies, and she cautioned that the idea that the current radicalization of society is due only to the recent economic crisis is problematic because most right-leaning voters are not those hardest hit, but instead are middle class and even affluent.

In the final panel, Raúl Zambrano talked about using mobile technology to crowdsource more open government, which he described as having four levels of participation: 1) citizens have access to information; 2) government consults citizens; 3) citizens become part of the governing process; 4) citizens and elected government »co-govern«. One of the wonders of crowdsourcing, he emphasized, is that it does not require one big policy-making agenda but rather facilitates going to different regions or locales and capturing local needs.

Next, Vicente Rubio spoke about *Podemos*, a new political party in Spain that has grown out of social movements. As a political translation of the discontent expressed in the *indignados'* occupation of Puerta del Sol in May 2011, *Podemos* has translated that into the only language politicians understand: votes. Finally, Al-noor Ladha proclaimed development broken, because if the global economy were to grow at three percent, which is what is necessary in order for the »Ponzi scheme of modern capitalism« not to self-implode, it would require the commodification of 2.2 trillion US-Dollar in new resources—which is the global GDP in 1970—for 2015 alone. Given that reality, studying protest and social movements as a way to facilitate social change is the wrong way to go about it: »If you want to help the poor and powerless, study the poor and powerless, but then also study the powerful, and go tell the poor and powerless what they are up to.«

One of the main themes that emerged from a lively and sometimes heated discussion was a concern about how to safeguard data about protest, and more broadly about the ethics of creating databases on protests to begin with. Several participants felt strongly that—in the wrong hands—such data could be used for predictive applications that would facilitate repression by authoritarian governments. Others countered that the private data repressive governments want is far more dangerous to social movements than what could ever be assembled from the open source-data considered during the meeting. Discussion also addressed the themes of biased media coverage of protests, the paradox of rising protests in democracies that have made huge social gains in recent years (especially in Latin America), what to do when the Internet's democratizing potential enables anti-democratic movements, and what it might take to overcome the small scale of social movements in the face of global problems.

1. Institutionalists vs. *Participatistas*

Patrick Heller introduced movements and protests as fundamentally transformative because they »problematize the un-problematized«, which is a necessary function in capitalist democracies, whose electoral and fundraising cycles give little incentive for politicians to take up contentious and complicated social issues. That leaves the field open for a movement like Occupy, whose framing of the problem of inequality fundamentally shifted the discourse. A second shift of discourse would translate into new institutional designs. That is what European social democracy accomplished during decades of working-class mobilization, conflict, war, and quasi-revolutionary moments. The result was a highly institutionalized but effective welfare state that is pretty good at managing contentious issues.

The standard perspective of the political science establishment on movements and protests is that at worst, they make noise, and at best they might shift the discourse. This is wrong, Patrick argued. Take, for example, the *Sanitaristas*, a grassroots movement of Brazilian doctors and nurses who penetrated the local, provincial and national states. They have accomplished in 10 years what the United States has still been unable to do: provide universal primary health care. This institutional shift was the result of a contentious, militant movement that aimed to penetrate the state to transform the extraordinarily complex problem of health-care delivery. It illustrates what movements can do to scale up and successfully create new sets of institutions.

The tension between institutionalists (academics, policymakers, professional advocates, representatives of government) and the *participatistas* in the streets is directly related to the question of agency addressed in Sara's introduction. Institutionalists try to manage complex problems through blueprints and models, which are not conducive to self-monitoring or »learning by doing«, and they like the idea of participation as long as it does not go beyond consultation, preferably at the ballot box every four years. This is a significant problem because we cannot solve these governance issues without good institutions. *Participatistas*, on the other hand, advocate social justice. One of the key demands that protest movements advance is democracy itself. Although protesters' demands might be inchoate in the heat of a food riot, after the spontaneous moment, they often scale up and articulate more cohesive views.

In South India, Brazil, and South Africa the discourse on participatory democracy coming out of movements is almost isomorphic: they are saying exactly the same thing, and yet have had little or no exchange with each other. The folks in Kerala who did participatory budgeting had never heard of Porto Alegre when they started, but they have the same critique of representative democracy (that it is democracy only once every four years), the same critique of insulated, technocratic, bureaucratic institutions that are not accountable, or responsive, and have no feedback mechanisms. All of these movements have faith in the capacity of people to deliberate and participate. The conventional discourse in governance circles is that they lack the capacity for this degree of inclusion. This is merely a rationalization, an excuse for inaction. The proof is in the pudding: Kerala in southern India, which has seen one of the great institutional transformations in the last decade, has successfully built local, participatory democratic government. Similarly, the implementation of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, a city of a million people, was seen as too complicated for ordinary people to budget, but the response of the movement was to do the budget differently, accessibly.

South Africa offers a cautionary tale of seemingly ideal circumstances for going beyond representative democracy and building real participatory democracy. This process went terribly wrong. The setup was ideal because the transition was movement-driven, with a vibrant civil society, linked horizontally across sectors—church, unions, urban organizations—all committed to the core principles of formal democracy, but also adamant that the transition to democracy had to be about more than just elections; it had to involve civil society and build local fora for participation. This is included in the South African constitution's decentralization reforms and in every foundational document that defined how South Africa was to pursue the project of national democratic transformation. But within just two years of the transition, all the participatory structures had been dismantled: the forums were gone, and the Independent Civic Associations had been demobilized.

Unions still had a lot of power in a classic European, corporate set of structures, but in terms of involving townships and informal settlements and the urban poor in the processes of governance and development at the local level, that entire participatory initiative was dismantled quickly and for two reasons. One is that at the

end of the day, the African National Congress (ANC) is a political party that wants to stay in power and that felt threatened by an autonomous civil society, so it demobilized autonomous civil society. That did not happen in Brazil in part because the Brazilian political party system is terrible—oligarchical and driven by powerful patron-, boss-style politicians. But it is highly competitive and had to compete for the loyalty of social movements, which gave the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) leverage. But when there is one-party dominance, as in South Africa, the party will demobilize civil society: this is very clear.

Given how successful Brazil has been not only in shifting to a more social developmental vision of transformation, but also in terms of building a very rich set of participatory institutions, especially at the municipal level, which is really the key point of engagement between citizens and state, why is it that it saw such huge protests in 2012? This was an extraordinary moment: a lot of people read this as an institutional failure of Brazilian democracy, which had antipoverty programs, and a new national health-care system, yet the people were still in the streets. In a sense, that is precisely the point. What the system did was preserve the capacity and autonomy of movements to engage the state precisely when they feared it was getting off track. According to surveys a colleague has done, 60 percent of these protesters were supporters of the PT, so they were protesting a government they had put into power because they thought it was using its resources merely to reproduce its power. The social movements of 2013 in Brazil were a demand for accountability. They have been able to institutionalize the idea that access to public services is a matter of rights and not a political payoff.

2. What can big data tell us about protest and conflict?

Kalev Leetaru: Within the highly applied space of quantitative political science, there is great interest in protests. However, in the taxonomies one finds in CAMEO[1], which the U.S. Department of Defense uses and built in the '90s, protests were not seen as having

the potential to destabilize a nation-state. As we have seen in the Arab Spring, in Ukraine, and elsewhere, the theoretical constructs of quantitative political science are strongly mismatched with these realities on the ground.

I've been asked here today to show where this kind of work is going, and what big data can tell us about protests. The challenge: Can we find a way to »scoop up« all the world's available and open online information and bring it into a single form that tells us what's happening around the planet moment by moment? In a prototype »dashboard«, created in partnership with the U.S. Institute of Peace and accessible online at gdeltproject.org/globaldashboard/, the *Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone* (GDELT) project shows an overview of protests (in pink) and conflicts (in red) across the world, as monitored in online media sources. This creates a rolling, animated representation of the past 180 days, with a clickable map of major events monitored over the past 24 hours, updated each morning by 6am. Here, protests refer to any gathering identified by the news media as a »protest« or »demonstration«, whereas conflict events include military mobilizations, halting/reduction of aid or diplomatic relations, embargoes, boycotts and sanctions, coercion such as curfews, mass detentions and other forms of involuntary restrictions, and physical attacks.

Trying to understand data from around the world is far from straightforward. For example, since most of the major social media platforms are based in the United States and managed under the American legal infrastructure, it enables nation-states to utilize that infrastructure and its mechanisms to erase news reports. Egypt has become infamous recently for using the U.S. Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) »takedown request«[2] mechanism to get any negative coverage of the regime—from around the world—removed. Sophisticated techniques for manipulating social media also complicate the task of analyzing data. There are tools, for example, that facilitate the wholesale manipulation of the Twitter environment. Since it is possible for just a few hundred dollars to buy over a million Twitter followers, a country that is not well known for its connectedness has recently become adept at altering the discussion of political themes on social media by using tens of millions of Twitter accounts to continually re-tweet each other.

1. CAMEO, the »Conflict and Mediation Event Observations« http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/cameo.html is a coding scheme developed by political scientist Philip Schrodt in the course of research on conflict and mediation, and is seen as an innovation on the »World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS) and Conflict and Peace Data Bank« (COPDAB) http://libguides.rutgers.edu/content.php?pid=141644&sid=1286378.

2. See http://www.dmca.com/FAQ/What-is-a-DMCA-Takedown.

The dashboard map was complete the day before the president of Ukraine came to the U.S. over Crimea. At the time, you saw a lot of activity on the dashboard related to Ukraine, as well as possible instability. This interpretation became very controversial in the defense and security circles in D.C., and when there were indications strongly suggesting that Crimea and eastern Ukraine would experience conflict, that view was initially rejected. The message from a very senior U.S. policymaker was that the president had just signed a peace deal; protests were quiet in the square; therefore, Ukraine was formally at peace. That assessment could not be called an intelligence failure because the evidence was readily available. It was simply wishful thinking based on an outmoded paradigm for understanding certain roots of conflict.

This is where big data can become very powerful. Seventy-five percent of this data took the form of domestic broadcasts from Russian and Ukrainian sources while the usual practice in political science is to go to *The New York Times* or *Reuters* to understand the world. *The Times* is a wonderful outlet, but it is not necessarily the best way to understand these protests and conflicts. For prediction, you want to understand how people are feeling about events, not simply that there is a protest on the ground. There are a number of ways we can detect feelings. What people care about is reflected in how they react, which in turn is reflected in local and social media. Are they for the protesters? Or do they think they're a bunch of idiots that need to go?

This has profound implications for understanding how our societies really function. What are the hidden influence structures? They're very difficult to tease out. Even some of the in-country analysts may not fully comprehend the enormity that moves this complexity of interactions. Just today, GDELT will measure 2,200 emotions—everything from fear of the future to anxiety. And this becomes important not just for noting a protest, but for determining whether people are for or against it, now and in the future. Regardless of how people feel about it right now, if it is increasing anxiety about whether events will cause an economy to collapse, causing people to lose their homes and jobs, which might fundamentally alter people's tolerance for protest activity.

3. Hand-collected protest data

Sara Burke *opened the meeting stating that research behind the »World Protests 2006-2013« working paper[3] was originally undertaken on the hypothesis that protests had been increasing worldwide in the years since the financial crisis of 2007-08 and that contentious politics had taken on an increasingly important role in the political life of many countries. The aim was to be able to generate global statistics on protests grouped by country-income level and region. Data was gathered by hand searches of open, Internet-accessible news, social media, and activist sources—on a set of countries representing over 90 percent of world population. Main findings included four clusters of grievances and demands: economic justice; failure of political representation; rights; and global justice. Within each cluster, researchers coded 36 secondary categories. Data was also gathered on numbers of protesters, scope and place of action, methods used, opponents, repression, and achievements.*

The most powerful finding of the study was that the demand for »real democracy«—an aspect of the failure of political representation—was a driver of over one-quarter of all protests counted, more than any other single demand. Particularly striking about the demand for real democracy is that it was coming from a variety of political systems, not only authoritarian governments but also representative democracies, both old and new. Considered along with the large cluster of grievances related to economic justice, the call for real democracy emerged as the overarching demand because its absence is what has prevented economic issues from being addressed in a transparent and accountable way. FES dedicated additional resources in 2014 to review and expand the original World Protests 2006-2013 data set. Based on this review and also feedback from colleagues, the original methodology was refined to better emphasize the episodic character of political struggle.

Mohamed Berrada contrasted Kalev's algorithmic approach to data »scooping«, with the *World Protests* hand collection of data, made by a set of people whose individual contributions are each shaped by different social science research-, language-, and activist-expe-

3. Ortiz, I., S. Burke, M. Berrada and H. Cortés. 2013. »World Protests 2006-2013«. New York: Initiative for Policy Dialogue and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, New York Office. http://www.fes.de/lnk/1m5.

riences. The original team grappled with the fact that data sets for comparing protests across many countries were limited to begin with. Additional challenges were presented by new waves of protests after 2010, including multiple new actors making complex demands on various local, national and international opponents, and sometimes in campaigns spanning several years. In order to build a data set able to reflect a variety of protests—from demonstrations and rallies, to the campaigns of social and political movements, to unorganized and often violent crowd actions such as riots, the team was compelled to embrace a flexible methodology.

Each of the four original researchers brought a unique set of skills to the task, but a common thread was direct experience with some of the protest movements covered. They divided research responsibilities for 84 countries based on individual skills, then searched for information on a large set of preliminary categories including the timing of protests, demands and grievances, main actors, groups and organizations, targets, methods, repression experienced, what »sparked« the original demonstrations, and what were the outcomes or achievements, if any. Many of these categories remained mostly empty in the final analysis. Once most of the data was recorded, it was encoded and analyzed to look for trends by country-income group and region[4] as well as globally. The units of analysis used were 1) a »protest episode«, an event or sequence of events ignited by identifiable grievances or set of demands, and 2) a »protest event«, comprising part of an episode and lasting no longer than one year. This distinction proved challenging in both the initial data gathering and analysis, where short term protests sometimes acquired too much »weight« compared with long-term episodes that seemed to better capture the perspectives and actions of new actors in the political arena, including social movements whose activities would not likely be covered in major newspapers.

From the standpoint of improving the method, the problem was twofold: professional media sources have systematic biases that lead to both the under-report-

ing of nonviolent protest activities and the blurring of distinctions between violent repression and violent protests. So they fail to capture the true state of grievances and aspirations in society, and at the same time obscure who is responsible when violence does break out[5]. To minimize media bias and more accurately document grievances from protesters' points of view—we took note of Tilly and Tarrow's concept of an episode as a circumscribed »sequence of continuous interaction« and segment of a longer stream of contention that can be systematically analyzed. More stringent requirements to anchor data in alternative sources have helped to describe and plot the various points of an episode. This is because the grassroots work going on in the background in-between protests is not covered in mainstream news. New research on the database in Chinese brought still further depth of to the coverage of protest there, a task that had proved particularly challenging. All these refinements worked together to ensure better documentation of contentious episodes. The result is that some previously recorded items were dropped from the database, while others were aggregated into episodes. In addition, a few new episodes have been added and categories refined.

4. Emerging themes and discussion following panel 1

The discussion of multifaceted episodes—whether it is possible to assess them globally without in-depth case studies and the strengths and weaknesses of big data versus hand-curated data—proved an especially interactive part of the meeting. In the ensuing lively and sometimes heated discussion, well moderated by Michèle Auga, and which took the place of a formal conclusion to Mohamed's presentation, three central themes of the meeting emerged: how to establish causality, particularly about achievements of protests, the ethics of conducting research on protests, and why social accountability work in South Africa differs sharply from Brazil and Kerala.

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4. Country income group and regional classifications are taken from World Bank data sets, which use gross national income (GNI) per capita to classify every economy as either low income, middle income (subdivided into lower middle and upper middle), or high income. The Bank also classifies geographic regions; note that »high-income« is both an income- and a regional-classification in the Bank's system. (For more information, see http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications).

5. Day, J., J. Pinckney and E. Chenoweth, 2014. »Collecting data on nonviolent action: Lessons learned and ways forward.« *Journal of Peace Research* 0022343314533985, (first published on June 18, 2014 doi:10.1177/0022343314533985), pp. 1-5.

On establishing causality

Kalev Leetaru: It is difficult to estimate achievements. In some countries there are protests that the government violently represses or crushes entirely. Yet a lot of databases on protest activity only note that a protest has ended. Does that mean the grievance has been resolved? More often than not, with repression of that kind, the end of the protest doesn't mean that people have had their needs met. To register achievements, the data has to capture the other types of activity in play between protest activities, which from a big-data perspective would just be a small subset of the broader day-to-day information flows. Often the real achievements of protests may be recognized only years outward. So how do you connect those things over time? Can you affirm that a certain outcome is caused by a specific protest versus the possibility that some billionaire got behind it so the government finally decided to allow it? We see that here in the United States all the time. I teach people to think in terms of probabilities, not causations, but correlative probabilities.

Patrick Heller: This is fabulous data. Being able to document patterns of claim-making with precision is extraordinarily important. But I want to raise two notes of caution: One is that there are protests and then there is contentious activity. A lot of movement activity, rather than taking the form of protest, takes the form of day-to-day contentions that would not be picked up in these categories. For example, in the City of Delhi, which is now the largest city in the world at 24 million, about 60 percent of the city depends on its water being delivered by tanker trucks. This is supposed to be routinized, and it's not. This is a daily contentious negotiated activity. The tanker trucks arrive at different times, and there's always contention: who gets what water; how much are they paying; is it mediated by a politician or not, is there a local social group or human rights activist? The other quick note of caution goes to Kalev's earlier point: Measuring movement success is the hardest thing social scientists can possibly do. I have doubts that it can be done with large-end data. Something can be said, no doubt, but if you look at an issue like land reform, it took me seven years to write a book on this, and it was an incredibly complicated process, 103 different pieces of legislation, shifts in political party composition, et cetera. There needs to be more process-tracing and deep histories if we are really to understand the effects of movements.

Pablo González: The quality of data doesn't allow us to go deep enough to prove there is an increase in protests. In Latin America, does this apparent, but unproven, increase in social conflict have something to do with, for example, the political side of elections, with campaigns? Do issues that are contentious match and reflect the priorities of the traditional actors setting the political agenda? This is the kind of question we cannot answer with this policy data. It's not good enough to work with.

The ethics of conducting research on protests

Naomi Hossain: One of the things that I really came up against was an ethical concern about the creation of databases about protests. Do you worry about the fact that in the wrong hands—and your idea of what the wrong hands might be might differ from my idea of what the wrong hands might be—this kind of data could be used to predict protests in such a way that governments or authoritarian regimes know when to get their water cannons ready, which I imagine would put groups like Occupy and others at risk. How do you safeguard the serious ethical issues this poses?

Kalev Leetaru: On the question about safeguarding data, we adhere to the same standards that folks like Patrick Meier and the International Network of Crisis Mappers, have pioneered for touching citizen media, which is obviously tricky territory. Robert Kirkpatrick at UN Global Pulse who deals with call-detail records is dealing with individual people's cellphone movements; I think there are far more privacy implications there. One of the benefits of working at the mainstream media level, in white and gray literature, there is a lot less penetration to the individual level and the ethics that implies. But to the question of predicting protest, my answer to that is that repressive governments have much, much better ways of knowing where the protests are than academic researchers. The Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), under the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, has an Open Source Indicators (OSI) program to estimate protest activity in Latin America for which they claim 97 percent accuracy and actually provide a »guest list« of who will turn up, even to a protest organized entirely online. But I have my doubts about that. And the short answer to your question is that I think repressive regimes could get better data elsewhere for their purposes.

Participant: I think it's nonsense to think that governments have more than they need to keep track of protesters without big data sets based on communications like we have discussed this morning. That may be true in the U.S. It's not true in most of the countries that I deal with at the UN. I have never been in a situation where academics didn't explore the ethical implications of something but continue anyway because the drive to complete the project, the money, the status, everything is pushing people in directions where ethical considerations get raised—it's like at the UN— but then they're discarded because other habits kick in. It's a wonderful data set, but outside its use to brief those in power about innovations to strengthen the hand of elites who already have massive tool kits to work with, this failure to consider the end product in a thoughtful way makes it unconvincing as a tool for the oppressed.

Alnoor Ladha: Even the idea of studying social movements, to me, is starting backwards. Susan George has this great quote, which is like if you want to help the poor and powerless, then study the poor and powerless, study the powerful, and tell them what's happening with the psychotic one percent and tie it accordingly. That's kind of what I'm suggesting.

Sara Burke: This is an issue that came up in the very beginning of our work. When the police pushed Occupy out of Zuccotti Park and the movement began meeting in the lobby of 60 Wall Street, a so-called privately owned public space, people joked they wished they didn't have to take notes but could just get the recordings made by the authorities. Our expectations of the possibility of privacy are changing. Governments clearly want to be able to forecast conflict based on what they learn from open communications, as well as closed. What they do with those forecasts, as we know from the framework, is to apply the conflict management techniques consistent with their own regime, which all too often results in some kind of repression. The primary hope is that activists will not only utilize the resource, but will want to contribute to it, and will also be able to do their own analysis and thinking from it.

Michèle Auga: I would like to explain why Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is supporting this because it shows there is a growing movement side of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. If you look at our history in South Africa, with whom has the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Johannes-

burg worked as partners? They didn't work with the social movements. They didn't go to the countryside and speak to communities. No, they were in the same boat with the ANC, and they still continue to be in the same boat with the ANC, of course, because these are friends and we have longstanding relationships. We don't just kick off our friends because they have done something wrong. But there is a new way of looking into our own institution and demanding from our own institution to open up its eyes and to look to the left and to the right and address the concerns of social movements. For many years, we thought we could work with political parties and trade unions and that will do it. No, it doesn't. No longer. So this is why we're also doing this, to better understand social movements so we can work with them better.

Social accountability

Naomi Hossain: To Patrick I want to say that I heard Jonathan Fox speaking recently, about his work countering the World Bank view that participation has failed. It's in relationship to social accountability work. He says there are two different types of social accountability work: this tactical World Bank induced participation, which neuters the political energy; the other is more strategic, movement-based action. Is that what happened in South Africa, the project-ization, or NGO-ization of participation, such that the radical energy gets dissipated into locked frames?

Patrick Heller: To Naomi's point, »critical participation« in Vijayendra Rao's view is critical participation the way it's been done the World Bank way of doing it, which is participation by invitation. It's a completely institutionalist view: you need results in one year. But you don't get results in one year. Participation has to be nourished. It has to be nurtured. If you have metrics for participation, you've already made the first mistake. There's a lot of that in South Africa no doubt. I want to emphasize that I'm talking about political forms of participation, forms of participation that are a part of a political project, i.e., deepening democracy, enhancing citizen capabilities. The biggest problem in South Africa hasn't been so much the NGO-ification or the project-ization of participation. It's been the Leninist instincts of the ANC. It wants to control civil society. Most political parties want to control civil society. We have to recognize that there's a real tension

between what parties want, especially political parties that are in competitive political systems, and what social movements / civil society actors want. Most politicians don't like participation. The modal response when you ask them about civil society is to say, »Who elected those guys? They have no standing. I'm the representative.«

5. Food riots and food rights

Naomi Hossain introduced a recently completed study and report on food riots and food rights[6] by her group at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex and academic partners at the Universities of Dhaka, Nairobi, Jawaharlal Nehru in Delhi, the London School of Economics, Yezin, Maputo, and importantly, the Right to Food movement in India. This is research on movements that actually involves some of the movements themselves. The report looks at the period of 2007-2012, when there were a number of food-related struggles around the world. It looks at the ideas, ideologies, motivations and meanings of these protests as well as some of the outcomes within the time period. For the purposes of today's meeting, she focused on who was protesting and why.

The context: In 2007 and 2008, food prices started to rise very sharply. This was not directly related to the global financial crises except in terms of sequencing. The global financial crises hit immediately after the first price spike in 2008. To look at the historical perspective, real prices had been low for 20-30 years, then they spiked. They have been high ever since, and there have been protests that clearly have some links to the price of food in somewhere between 30 and 60 countries around the world. The motivation to do the study came from a dissatisfaction that both media coverage and research on the riots ranged from puerile to outright dangerous in the way it covered who was protesting and why. The researchers had the sense that coverage routinely depicted the protesters as characters shouting ridiculous slogans. The cartoonish aspect of this came out in pictures of a Yemeni protester who made a helmet out of bread and thus became an Internet meme[7].

6. *Food Riots* and Food Rights resources can be accessed at http://www.ids.ac.uk/project/food-riots-and-food-rights.

7. For example see the website *Know Your Meme's* entry for »Bread Helmet Man«, http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/bread-helmet-man (accessed January 9, 2015).

The research team thought it was important to try and get beneath, behind, or beyond these kinds of headlines to the ideological underpinnings. People don't just go out and riot because prices are high and they want the government to do something. They do it because they think they have some moral justification for it. During this period, it was not only the food riots going on, there was also a growing global movement for the human right to food. Her group of researchers wanted to compare these allegedly spontaneous, more violent and unruly types of protests with those that were using the law and a more polite civil society discourse. The research team also wanted to take a historical view, under the advice of social historian John Bohstedt, who has been studying the European food riots from 400-500 years back, to understand the ideology behind food riots, the moral justifications and political strategies, to see if there were similarities between those earlier riots and the food riots of today.

Initially, the study involved building political event catalogues based on local and national newspapers. Therein something interesting was revealed: food riots almost always happened »somewhere else«. In the Indian press, food riots were found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal, but not in India. In the Bangladeshi press, they were found in India and Pakistan, but not in Bangladesh. From a close examination of these catalogues, codes were derived, many of which remain empty because there is so little information in local and national newspapers. The international press would report food riots in Bangladesh, but the Bangladeshi press found nothing of the sort. From these political event catalogues, the group selected some cases, movements and protest groups that they examined closely, one rural and one urban in each country covered. They then did interviews to track policy responses and actions taken at the national level.

The findings showed, much like the World Protests study, that these episodes—these struggles—are always ongoing around what some historians call the »politics of provision«, struggles with the role of the government to secure basic economic goods, especially food, and ensure food prices stay stable. Although these are always happening, you only see them when there are protests, which erupt when there are price spikes or some natural disaster. However, when you interview movement participants, people say the movements and protests go back for years and years. Among them, the »moral

economy«, the very common shared sense that States are ultimately responsible to protect the right to food, however the right to food is conceived, is very strong. It is not always in the legal sense but in the moral sense that »we are all in this together«.

Democracy matters greatly in this debate. Not the so-called »real« democracy we have been discussing, but the simple matter of voting every four or five years. People seem to think that that's the point at which they can say to leaders, »You are useless. I'm not voting for you because the price of rice doubled under your watch.« This is what the research found among garment workers around Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, among street protesters in Maputo, with the Right to Food struggle in two parts of India, including the West Bengal food rioters, and in Kenya, in Matari, with a group called *Bunge La Mwananchi*, Ordinary People's Parliament. These were the case studies. They revealed that at the moments of food price spikes, there is real clarity that food markets are un-free and unfair, that they are almost always ways rigged in favor of the market, of rich, connected people who can make money. Their protests are not a rejection of capitalism or markets, but they advance the urgent sense that in times of crises capitalism and its markets are un-free and unfair, so the government must come in and act.

Some of the big studies on this topic have noted a strict correlation between food spikes and protests. The correlation is very close even in the tiny end study of the Food Rights/Food Riots research, but there is no direct causal link. What does happen is that food price spikes »raise the temperature«. People are angry, and then when something bad happens, like a report of corruption that becomes the trigger. It is not the food prices alone that trigger riots—the report found many cases of spikes where nobody protested. Rather, they happen when there is also some other specific outrage. Another key finding of the study is that the media often distorts the account of a riot or ignores its message. This is a huge challenge because good media coverage is so important to the Right to Food movement—getting journalists to turn hunger into a news story is considered the critical determinant of their success.

What is most interesting about these food riots is that governments do respond. Kenya has been an exception, but governments generally respond to threats of food riots because to a great degree their authority and legitimacy depends upon it. Interviews from the study revealed that a failure to respond undercuts the consent to be ruled by a government that can't assure basic food security. That is the key finding of the study, that food riots work. And for this meeting's consideration of institutionalists versus *participatistas*, it is important to note that you do have to go to the streets. This should not be considered so much unruly as expected. When food prices go up, we expect this to happen because this is how to hold a government to account. It's unruly; it's rough, but it works.

When we bring this understanding up to the global level and the question of global justice, we think of Nancy Fraser's concept of social movements »scaling up«[8]. We have *La Via Campesina*, which is a global peasant movement, but on the whole, they're mostly about producers and farmers and not necessarily about the poorest people. But poor urban consumers and the informal sector—*the precariat*—have no representation whatsoever at the global level. Their movement is »mis-scaled«. With food price spikes, there are local and national protests, but if commodity price speculation in Chicago or London is causing a global spike—which we still do not know for sure—there is a gap between the protests and whom they target for accountability. This gap is one of the key issues for trying to put together the global, the national, and the local levels of food rights and food protests.

6. Mapping conflict and protest in Latin America

Pablo González discussed a line of work he and his team are beginning to develop at the Regional Service Center for Latin American UNDP in Panama. Their team provides support to UNDP field offices in the region to manage situations of crises specifically related to conflict and dialogue initiatives. He explained that this hands-on approach allows them to talk to many people. Whether from an academic or policymaker, a civil society representative or member of the media, they have discovered that in Latin America many people have the intuition that there has been an increase in social protest and social

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8. See for example, Fraser, N. (2007) 'Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World' in Theory, Culture & Society, Vol. 24(4): 7–30.

conflict during the past decade. This is often heard, and many examples come to mind. Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador are all places where protests have been very effective to push important political changes. A lot of information is being produced including many studies and blog posts regarding social conflicts, especially social-environmental, which is probably the most prominent line in the region at the moment.

For many observers it seems paradoxical that—in a region that has shown significant advances in the quality of institutions and democratic procedures in the past few decades, which has in turn contributed to the widespread consolidation of democratic regimes—citizen protests are nonetheless increasing. Many people think this does not fit with the narrative because there have been substantial social gains made possible in part by the boom in commodities. Also, the fact that the region was not sharply affected by the global economic downturn allowing for generous social safety nets and cash transfers to develop. The bottom line is: There are substantial reductions in poverty levels across the region, and even inequality has decreased in some measure. Nevertheless, we see the emergence of a new middle class with unfulfilled expectations entering into protest.

What people are writing in Latin America about protest and conflict generally takes one of two forms: 1) protest is a threat to democracy, especially in countries where it may lead to episodes of violence and threaten peace and stability, or 2) protest is normal; it is not anti-democracy but instead needs to be incorporated and might actually contribute to strengthening institutions, because demonstrations show they are not working well for the citizenry. Both sides believe social protest and conflict have increased, but we lack consistent data at the regional level to show whether that is true or not, or to determine whether they are more violent, more radical, whether there is more polarization, et cetera. How do we argue that on firmer ground?

Although there is not a single standard, there are several databases produced by research institutes at the regional and national level. There are countless case studies, stories, blog posts and media productions regarding conflicts and reporting of protest. There are observatories created by civil society organizations, some instances of quantitative analysis, some isolat-

ed efforts at the national and regional levels, trying to build databases similar to the ones under discussion in this meeting. There is no standard methodology. These efforts vary in terms of how they conceptualize phenomena. Some scholars talk about »protests«, others about »conflicts«; some refer to »collective action«, others the frame of »non-conventional political participation«; some even talk about »contentious politics«, Tilly and Tarrow are cited everywhere. They also vary in terms of the sources used to build the databases, with a mixture of online newspapers, printed newspapers, both regional and local news outlets, and in some cases, a monitoring of social media and blogs. There are important variations: in terms of geographical and temporal scope, in terms of whether they are built deductively, using an analytical apparatus and then seeing if reality conforms to it, or inductively, by collecting information and deriving categories based on what they find in the media. Some distinguish between events and episodes; others do not. All of this is very »human coded«, based on people actually reading media and building the databases. However, there does not seem to be an analysis in the region that tries to map the consequences of this apparent rise in protest, or its successes or overall effects.

The usual suspects in these databases are workers, students, teachers, neighbors, peasants, business, environmental, general human rights, civil service organizations, users, consumers, and indigenous groups. Most demands concern working conditions, public services, participation in legal reforms, international agreements toward an action, democratic guarantees, transference, and corruption. Most of the demands target the executive, often the very president of the republic, for there is a strong presidential tradition in these countries; but as well ministers, the judiciary, parliament, ombudsmen, government, major businesses, army, police forces, et cetera. The performances that are identified in the region are quite typical: public statements, denunciations, meetings, assemblies, rallies, marches, strikes, work stoppages, attacks on private property, invasions, and hunger strikes. These are the most often used analytical categories in these databases.

What do we really know about social protest and conflict in the region? There were a couple of regional efforts to map trends comparatively. One of these is a UNDP publication, *Understanding Social Conflict in Latin*

America[9], which is based on the human coding of news regarding protests, conflicts and grievances in 17 countries. This includes 54 newspapers, mapping both conflicts and conflict episodes in 2003. They put together episodes by referring to single events. The study monitors one year of news coverage. It is a challenge to find what is common to all cases in the region and in most cases there is a wide fragmentation of actors. The classical cleavages that mobilized people in the past—the political parties, ideologies, even class-based movements—have nearly stopped working. Now there is an array of agendas and demands in the public arena, a trend consistent across the region. UNDP's analysis found three major types of conflicts across the region: 1) The most numerous were »social reproduction« conflicts, having to do with wages, economic conditions, land tenure; 2) In second place were institutional conflicts, e.g. the management of public administration and provision of public services, legal measures, and challenges to alternative involvement; 3) Finally, cultural conflicts, which are less numerous, have to do with collective actions related to the provision of public goods to specific groups, minorities, or populations organized around ideology, politics, network resources, or the environment. There is a significant change in the repertoire of contentious politics, the study noted. In cases like Costa Rica, for example, 100 percent of the actors involved in the conflicts that they monitored have their own platforms or blogs, Facebook pages and are connected to the Internet. There is some regional variation: Bolivia is probably the country where social unrest has the least Internet presence. In conclusion, a key finding is that most Latin Americans think protests are normal in a democracy. That helps us to solve the normative dilemma. A large percentage of people also agreed that marches, protests, and street demonstrations are indispensable to be heard by government.

7. The rise of far-right extremist groups in Europe

Krisztina Bombera began by reflecting on the disturbing co-optation of former progressives by the far right in Hungary and elsewhere in Europe. Among them are

Robert Menard, a Frenchman of Algerian descent who previously founded Reporters without Borders, or Hungarian Krisztina Morvai, an ardent feminist and advocate for victims of domestic abuse who turned into a far-right extremist, and with the support of the Party for the Betterment of Hungary, *Jobbik*, gained election to the European Parliament on an anti-EU and anti-Semitic platform. Krisztina emphasized that today when we think of the far right, we should concern ourselves not only with what they say and do, but with their influence on the democratically elected, center-right parties with which they are increasingly closely linked. What are not so linked, although they may seem to be, are far-right ideologies and anti-establishment movements. Support for far-right ideas has not risen, even since the economic crisis, but anti-establishment sentiments against both national governments and the European Union have risen sharply, both in Western and Eastern Europe. One need only look at national and EU election results from the past year to see the increase. In Great Britain, the Euro-skeptics took first place in the European Parliament elections. In Greece, there is a serious neo-Nazi party sending three guys to the European Parliament. Hungary probably has the largest far-right party in Europe, with three seats in the European Parliament.

In Eastern Europe the far right poses a particular threat to the stability of democracies, which are not yet strong, so that ideologies promoting group exclusions and radical social, political, and economic changes resonate more than they do in the West. They have fed on the historic socio-economic changes since 2008 and the rampant existential vulnerability of masses of people in Eastern Europe. Liberal is a word you do not use in Eastern Europe because that's character killing: liberal is a swear word. So these democratically elected center-right parties present themselves as the only force capable of containing the far right, as opposed to the discredited democratic and leftist opposition. They do this by incorporating the far-right agenda into mainstream politics and by gaining support for ideas that used to be on the fringes, like no welfare for the *Roma*, calls for a return to family values and the good old communist days, or historical revisionism about the genocide of the Jews.

Political Capital, Central Europe's leading political research institute, has an index called DEREX, the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism, which measures people's sus-

9. *Understanding Social Conflict in Latin America,* coordinated by Fernando Calderón, March 2013, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/Understanding%20Social%20Conflict%20in%20Latin%20America%202013%20ENG.pdf (accessed January 10, 2015).

ceptibility to foreign ideologies. They don't look at political parties or voters, just public opinion and tendencies. The index tracks four basic categories of right-wing ideology: prejudices; anti-establishment attitudes; right-wing value orientation; and bad feelings of distrust, pessimism and fear. With this index, Political Capital was the first to notice Russia's growing interest in the Eastern European far right. After 20 years, you would think that Eastern European countries would try to keep away from Russia, but there is a nostalgia for communism now because of the economic crisis, the perceived failure of the democratic transition with EU integration, and rampant crime and corruption. Only on the right and far right do they professionally organize young people and get them into the movement so that it is generationally refreshed.

Anti-Semitism is an important dividing line between European far-right parties. When considering an anti-Semitic »image«, radicals have to carefully consider whether it is compatible with the political culture of their country or not and also, whether their party aims for participation in the democratic process, for representation in National Assemblies, or would rather stay in opposition or underground. They treat anti-Semitism accordingly: In France, where sentiments against immigrants of Muslim origin are important tools for the far-right, anti-Semitism is a no-go. In Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary, where even the central-right government is subject to criticism by Jewish groups for hostile statements or actions, the climate for anti-Semitism is friendlier.

Those believing in a liberal and plural democracy have to take up self-examination as well when facing the radicals' criticism of the institutions and ideals of liberal democracy itself. Radicals do not hate the shortcomings of the system, but rather the system itself. Disillusionment is rampant not only with (»corrupt«) elites and politics (»as usual«) but also with the operating concepts of Western democracies. Anti-elitism is nothing new to Europe but more and more people feel they have no means at all to participate in public decision-making. Partly, this is why they have empathy towards »underdogs«. The democratic systems of Europe, aware of the risks of anti-establishment movements, are too used to the feeling of security provided by the systems set up to disfavor parties of extreme ideas, movements »on the fringes«. This security has been achieved mainly by high electoral thresholds, little or no state support with campaign funding or access to mainstream media, and

a sociocultural quarantining of the representatives of extreme ideas. But these systems may become too narrowed down against the will of the voters. It may lose support from the very voters the system was meant to protect. The sometimes unforeseen, shocking success of far-right parties is partly due to this phenomenon.

The paradox, however, or rather, a major part of the strategy of the far right is that while preaching anti-establishment sentiments most of them aim to enter mainstream politics and have access to funds and power. To achieve this, they have succeeded in enlisting affluent middle-class voters in large numbers, and not merely those who were hit the most by the recession or those who have first-hand, personal experiences with the difficulties of integration. What is more, few other recent political movements have succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of young generations to the same degree as some extreme right parties have in Europe. Political activism has left youth uninspired and untouched for decades but the far right is bringing a renaissance to youth movements.

The far-right party Jobbik has the greatest support among people under 22 out of all political parties. Many of those young Hungarian adults attend universities, are affluent, speak languages, travel to the West and enjoy amenities of liberal capitalism extensively. However, in the summer they attend camps organized by Jobbik with cultural, musical, combat sports, and ethnic folk traditionalist programs. They enjoy an unparalleled sense of community created for them by Jobbik. Without the masses of enthusiastic »grassroots supporters« far-right parties could not win as large shares of the electorate as they do in several countries, from France to Hungary. Consider the case of disadvantaged *Roma* women in the poor countryside of Hungary who became far-right voters. The women said these anti-Semitic, anti-Gypsy politicians and social activists were the only ones who ever showed up to ask them what they need or to offer help, so where were the progressives?

In conclusion, the key to understanding the spread of the far-right movement in Europe is its connection to mainstream politics and mainstream central-right parties. The far right is on the march across Europe, and the idea that the current radicalization of society is due only to the current economic crisis is problematic because most right-leaning voters are not those hardest hit, but

instead are middle class and even affluent. The idea that once the extreme right is in power they will collapse is not necessarily accurate: many far-right parties do pretty well and stabilize their popular appeal once they get into government. So one must not assume they can be driven back through the electoral system. Rule of law does not guarantee access to justice.

8. Emerging themes and discussion following panel 2

Nermeen Shaikh, *producer and weekly Co-Host of the alternative news show Democracy Now!*[10] *moderated this session, deftly teasing out the main themes: biased media coverage of protests, the paradox of rising protest in democracies in Latin America, what to do when the Internet's democratizing potential enables anti-democratic movements and overcoming the scale of movements in the face of global problems.*

Biased media coverage of protest

Nermeen Shaikh: One of the crucial points Naomi brought up regarding the various representations of these protests and riots is that often the people who are the most aggrieved have no means of organizing or representing themselves. The other side of this is how the media is now constituted. What is it within the media that precludes the possibility of covering these protests, which remain essentially nameless because they are outside of the realm of what should be covered? If it is covered at all, it's for a niche market. An example is the lone journalist of life in rural India, P. Sainath, who writes for The Hindu newspaper, and has found a niche covering the opposite of »India Shining«: the Mercedes-Benz driving, Paris-vacationing stories now found in most mainstream media. It's like the people before who went to the Third World and talked about the natives, except on a national level. Since *Democracy Now!* does not take corporate advertising, we do not have the resources to be as widely viewed a channel perhaps as CNN, NBC, et cetera, but we do have independence. We talk to the people we want to talk to, and they can say what they think, which is not heard elsewhere in the mainstream U.S. media.

10. http://www.democracynow.org

Krisztina Bombera: As someone who has been in the mainstream media for the last 20 years, it bothers me that it remains so difficult to get fair representation of certain minorities in the society, if they are neither stakeholders nor consumers of mainstream media. This is why I started working with disadvantaged *Roma* women on digital literacy so they could put their own stories on Facebook, on the Internet, on YouTube. If those stories were interesting enough, we would incorporate them into mainstream media, but they had to do the production themselves because the mainstream media doesn't go there and never listens to them.

The paradox of rising protest in democracies

Nermeen Shaikh: What is the condition of the possibility of protest? In Latin America, Pablo shows that as democratic regimes have become more numerous, as poverty has been reduced and inequality has also been reduced, protest or social movements have either increased or remained the same. So is it the case that with more democratic systems of government in place, protests are more likely or less likely to support the government in power—or are they indifferent to the system of government? Which is cause and which is effect? One shouldn't necessarily think that as the order becomes more just, the reasons for protest become less. Is it possible that as the order becomes more just, people feel more entitled or enabled to voice grievances that were not previously able to be voiced?

Pablo González: It is very difficult to generalize at the regional level in Latin America: Bolivia is very different, say, from Argentina or Guatemala. That's why we think it's important to triangulate a more qualitative, more in-depth approach. Fernando Calderón, the Bolivian sociologist at the Sorbonne, says most conflicts are on issues related to »social reproduction«, concrete needs like living conditions, wages, inequalities with resources, which varies from country to country. The idea he was trying to put on the table is not that these causes do not matter as a source of contention, but that they are nowhere articulated as a single platform for struggle. They are isolated and divided. Across the region, you can see an explosion of conflicts related to natural resources, especially mining but also hydroelectric dams. Many of these struggles in countries like Guatemala and Nicaragua don't have a very territorial base. They are led

by local communities, and are not necessarily linked to mass movements, labor unions, or political parties. This activity is strong; it is powerful, but it doesn't always lead to a reformist agenda.

When the Internet's democratizing potential enables anti-democratic movements

Nermeen Shaikh: Just as people used to say about the Internet, that it has a democratizing potential, the assumption was that what the Internet produces will be good. In other words, everybody will be able to participate in this virtual democracy and so on. But what was not taken into account is that the Internet is a means, so it can be used as a means by anybody with access. It can be filled with democratic and egalitarian rhetoric, or it can also be filled with exactly its opposite. Krizstina brought out that movements are themselves just a means, and that in the case of Hungary and elsewhere in Eastern Europe—and now throughout Europe—it is being well utilized by right wing groups. In many countries in the Muslim world, particularly after 9/11 in authoritarian regimes, the argument put forward was, »You have to keep us in power. The military has to stay in power. This government has to stay in power.« They relied on media and the Internet to enable the message that, »If you don't keep us in power, you will have ISIS or Osama Bin Laden.« With these threats, real or imagined, governments not only consolidate their power nationally but also get the backing of international financial institutions and multinational corporations.

Participant: How do we bridge this divide where we have institutions that don't handle challenges very well? Is there room for discussion about how certain international trends—privatization, selling off state assets and minimizing the state—contributed to this situation? Then there is the contradiction that the far right obviously sees the state as something of a resource worth capturing. What is the state of the State?

Krisztina Bombera: The »state of the State« currently has two answers: The first is illustrated by a story that decades ago the Prime Minister gave a speech that has been widely known in Hungary ever since, the famous »illiberal speech« praising China, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan on improving their economies via an authoritarian government. His message was, instead of

introducing political pluralism, tolerance, multicultural society, liberalism and a multiparty government, Hungary should have kept a firm grip like China does on society to get the economy going first. Maybe once we have the welfare of the most in a better state, then maybe we can think about step-by-step liberalization. The other answer is that the weakness of civil society, coupled with the high suspicion of both authorities and governments—and they of each other—that developed during the 40 years of communism, dismantled loyalty on the local level and the feeling of community on every level. Hungarians are still suspicious of their neighbors so people are very hard to mobilize.

Overcoming the scale of movements in the face of global problems

Chris Grove: A lot of movements that we're connecting with are increasingly scaling up their messages. But in terms of this conversation around media coverage, over the last 10 years, one of the things the Internet has done is make movements much more informed of the global character of the issues they're struggling with. It is significant what Pablo said, that a lot of movements now aren't using a class or political party framework. Movements in Latin America are pushing on inequality, and the impacts of the ongoing push for economic growth—via resource extraction, energy projects, et cetera—this global business benefits the most elite in society, with negative impacts on many communities.

Participant: The renegotiation of the international development system in 2015 is here; the negotiations have opened. Was there any sense from local protests that they see the role of the government and the positions that it takes in this negotiation as relevant to the Right to Food movement? Was there any acknowledgment of seeing the links between the local and the global?

Naomi Hossain: Regarding the world of the Internet and ICTs in the protests our group is looking at, there is very little that's online in some struggles and often there's no news coverage. For example, in Bolivia, social organizations basically do not have an online presence. Those are the ones that I think of as genuine, but when they connect into the global sections of that struggle, they do go online. So the garment workers in Bangla-

desh are connected to the international textile workers unions and so on, but an important finding is these struggles are extremely national: symbolically and ideologically in terms of to whom you're expressing views and for whom you expect action. They're not targeting Chicago or the IMF, but the national government—no matter how flawed it is—because in all of these countries they know they have to some extent voted these people in and so they think they have power over them, whether it is the withdrawal of consent or withdrawal of a vote. The nation-state matters. That's why I'm skeptical about how to go about global struggle. We don't have global governments.

Participant: How can we use the data that shows these patterns to apply pressure where it really needs to be, on institutions like the IMF and World Bank? It is not just individual governments facing pressure, but the international system as a whole …

Nermeen Shaikh: … and to what extent does the incapacity of these institutions—including multilateral financial ones, the IMF and World Bank—have something to do with how these protests are represented, in the mainstream media and in government? The mainstream media's perception of the protesters at Zuccotti Park at least in the beginning was nothing short of contemptuous. The implication was these people were losers or slackers and that they had nothing better to do. How many reporters made the attempt to talk to the people who were protesting to ask, »What's going on? Tell us what you think the problem is.«

9. Crowdsourcing open government

Raúl Zambrano[11], who advises governments in developing countries on how to use technology for development, explained that he sees his work as the part of democratic governance that is based in technology. In the hype on technology, he pointed out, we often hear about the growth of the mobile technologies, but rarely about how this growth can enhance democracy because it gives people who have basic mobile phones, SMS phones, the potential to have a meaningful voice in

11. Raúl Zambrano's views as presented here are his own and do not reflect those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the United Nations and its Member States.

the decisions that affect their lives. With such »e-governance«, which includes both governments and people who will have a say in policymaking, people are actually part of the process. You cannot just tell them what to do. In a democracy, we must ask people what to do: e-governance encourages governments to listen to people's demands. In this view, technology will not be just an end, but a means for an open government to address critical development gaps in poverty, education, and health.

If the goal is to increase accountability in both the public and private sector, we need transparency. But for transparency, we need to consider agency, meaning those of us involved actively in these processes for the issues in our lives. A citizen-centric approach envisions citizens with two »hats«, as both stakeholders and clients. The more traditional approach is that citizens are clients of the government, and the government is like a company from which they get some services for free (hopefully). In this view, citizen concerns are access-cost, quantity, and the time spent. In a more progressive approach citizens are also stakeholders: they have a stake in their own lives, so when policies are set, they need to be a part of the process. They care about accountability, participation, transparency and trust because, without trust there will likely be conflict. Trust is also an indicator of political will.

Open government has four levels of participation.

■ The first level is *access to information.* »I have a meeting. I have a paper. I'm called into a meeting. I read the paper, and you say you are informed. Thank you very much, see you later.«

■ The second level is *consultation.* We have the same meeting, and government says, »Will you please give me your comments?« The comments might or might not become part of the position paper.

■ The third level is complicated: *people must actually be part of the process.* People's inputs are required to make a decision. Without that step, government cannot make policy.

■ The fourth is *co-governing,* where citizens have as much involvement as governments.

When we talk about citizen/government collaboration for open government, in which citizens are directly involved in policymaking and implementation, we are talking about the last two levels of participation, but participation in what? We can meet to discuss issues, but nothing will happen if we are not in the policy cycle because democracy is not only about elections. You can have elections and still not be democratic in some countries, but via crowdsourcing, citizens should be able to plug into any point in the policy cycle where the action is, with the decision-makers, putting pressure on them to change, to listen to citizen concerns and then take them into consideration. Of course governments do not crowdsource because they are afraid of the results. Governments of developed countries took 150 years to get where they are today. They didn't do it in five years, so we must be mindful of time horizons.

Also, when we crowdsource something, if government is actually willing to open the door for crowdsourcing, or we put our pressure on and can get them actually to listen, they need the capacity to implement our decisions. Consider a poor country like Malawi crowdsourcing a consultation on a policy for which they get a million inputs. They don't have the technological capacity to analyze the information, make sense of it, make a decision and put it into the policy cycle in a timely way. This capacity can be outsourced, but it is important when we demand crowdsourcing to keep this possible dilemma in mind.

In conclusion, open government must be a partnership, and it is more feasible than ever before for governments to do this. Also, there is evidence that if we crowdsource development goals, we may get a better development outcome because citizens need to feel a sense of ownership. This need should become part of the institutional setup, and the best place to start is local. One of the wonders of crowdsourcing is you can localize policymaking. You don't require one big policymaking agenda; you can go to different regions or locales and capture the local needs. But mind the »policy gap«. In the UN and many other traditional institutions, there are techies and technologists who think tech is going to be the ultimate solution. But when you go into the UN, to the SDG meetings, people do not consider technological aids.

10. Spain's *Podemos* Party and accountability

Vicente Rubio spoke about *Podemos,* a new political party in Spain, which has in some sense grown out of social movements. He recalled that the outcome of the general revolt in May 1968 was to provoke elections, which is one strategy to deactivate a movement, and that this quandary faces *Podemos* as it simultaneously launches itself as a party and tries to innovate how to be directly accountable to its base.

A political phenomenon as fast and genuine as *Podemos*—which has utterly transformed the Spanish political landscape—is hard to capture or describe. In the European election of May 25, 2014 *Podemos*, at only four months old, gained five seats in the European Parliament—representing 1.2 million votes or eight percent of the total. A poll last weekend by *El Pais*, the main Spanish newspaper, put them in first place as a political force in Spain. The Center for Sociological Studies, an official institute, says *Podemos* could easily become the third most powerful party in Spain by breaking totally with the present two-party, Socialist Party/Populist Party setup. We can say that the debt crisis in Spain these two parties created together has had not only an economic but also a profound political (and cultural and ideological) impact on the Spanish system.

Podemos is thus a political translation of the discontent that was expressed in May 2011 and later in a manifold of protests, initiatives, and movements, which were systematically ignored and downplayed by the political system. The politicians patronized youth movements, and nothing was done. To a certain extent, what *Podemos* has accomplished is simple: it has translated a change in the social, political, and cultural atmosphere into the only language politicians understand, into votes. It is interesting to see their change of attitude as they realize something much deeper is going on than they thought.

What is *Podemos*? Certainly it is a kind of political »monster«. There is a quote by G.K. Chesterton that says where there is a monster; there is also a miracle. *Podemos* is that: strange, contradictory, of mixed character. On the one hand, it is partially a consequence of the May 15th Movement of 2011 with its rejection of traditional representative politics and its production of organizational innovations. On the other hand, *Podemos'* lineage

in the May 15 Movement is combined with the political and media savvy of its central group of academics: Pablo Iglesias, Iñigo Errejón and others based in Madrid at the Complutense University political science department, all of whom have high media visibility that they have built carefully over the years. Their presence in mainstream media serves as a tool for the production of political discourse and diagnosis. One of the most popular terms popularized by *Podemos* leaders is »the caste«, which is a very old-fashioned word for elites. This is the word they use to underline the link between political and economic power. Instead of Marxist discourse like »class warfare« or »power grab«, they coined this new word, *caste*, which you can hear on the street, in the bars, everywhere. Even the *caste* themselves use the word.

At the same time, there has been a process to create more than a thousand local and sectorial »circles«—that's the word they use—like local assemblies of participants and sympathizers. These circles are characterized by their use of assembly methods and diverse social composition, which connect to what Raúl has explained. *Podemos'* character is a response to wrongdoing in Spanish politics like generalized corruption and subordination to financial powers, which explains its commitment to the principles of transparency and accountability, all made explicit from the outset on their website and materials. *Podemos* is financed entirely by its sympathizers through crowdfunding campaigns. All organizational finance is publicly detailed on their website as well as all the paid positions, suggestions to hire consultants, salaries and so on.

Right now, *Podemos* is undergoing a two-month organizational process they call the »citizen assembly«. During this process, they will discuss the real formation of the party with more than 200,000 participants. It is difficult to say whether they are »militants« or »members«, but they are certainly participants: anyone can sign up. These assemblies have decided the political and ethical principles of *Podemos* as well as its organizational forums. This organizational process has produced tensions, but that is not necessarily negative. As the central theme of this meeting points to the disconnect between a discursive hegemony on one side and a more movement-oriented and participatory side on the other, it would not be accurate to use the term »clash«. It is more complex than that, but there have been tensions. The foundational assembly thus exposed two visions of *Po-*

demos. The central group has ideas of efficacy, a board-like scenario while still being against the *caste.* Others, like the group *Sumando Podemos*, fed 40 organizational drafts into one vision that stressed much more participation. In the end, the central group's vision was voted in: It is structured around a general secretary, democratic commission, and a citizen's council with representatives of circles, and then a citizen assembly, which will be the organ of decisions every two years, for setting the main direction of the party.

To conclude, these tensions should not be seen as a confrontation between different political currents or leaders. Part of the force of *Podemos* is the possibility of finding a creative tension between different political languages and uses of leadership. This tension is produced by politics as a process, an intrinsic deliberation, a massive collective lesson in democracy.

11. Why participate in a broken system?

Alnoor Ladha began by quoting George Orwell, who said all left-wing parties in highly industrialized countries are at bottom a sham because they make it their business to fight against powerful agents they do not really wish to destroy. On a structural level, the major macro trend and fundamental tension in the world right now is the concentration of corporate power in battle with decentralized social movements, which represent the people, or have legitimacy as expressions of popular unrest. This concentration of corporate power is the logical outcome of the set of rules we have. It is not an externality; it is baked into the system. In coder language, this is not a bug; this is the feature. We didn't need Piketty's 800-page book to tell us this. The logic of capital is that it will »congeal«. These days it congeals into multinational corporations. Their agents are states, which in turn rely on other agents—like the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund—to do »development«.

On the other side, the social movements are expressing mass discontent around the world. Western media portrays these protests as atomized individual struggles: the Arab Spring, the summer protests in Brazil, the anticorruption movements in India and Russia, M15, *Indignados*, Occupy … not to mention the 30+ African awakenings that they have not covered at all. These are not told in the systemic story. Our system marginalizes

the majority of humanity: that's what capitalism does, and it does it under a one-party system. It doesn't matter if it's socialist Ecuador, neoliberal United States, or neo-fascist Hungary, we have one way of buying goods and services—debt-based capital. If we don't approach the question of this meeting as systemic and »constellational« thinkers, we will not succeed in organizing against power. People who work against social movements know this. Social movements get corrupted when they require capital. Assuming they get capital, it either tears them apart—as happened with Occupy—or it creates a new dictator—as happened with the Bolsheviks.

The set of policies discussed in mainstream circles, everything from minimum corporate tax, debt jubilee, subsidizing sustainable development and creating basic income rights, all these will improve people's material conditions. But if we have learned anything from Pablo's research, we know the outcome is still going to be more protests because creating better material conditions alone is not good enough. We have a world now where out of every dollar, 93 cents goes to the top one percent. Every dollar of wealth created generates more inequality. Capitalism is not manmade; it is capital-made. We have to figure out how to delegitimize this system and create real alternatives at the same time, not just compromised alternatives like development within a debt-based system.

We have to work on what these alternatives will look like, e.g., off-the-grid sustainable communities that are taking the best of indigenous knowledge as well as solar panels, vertical greenhouses, and all of the important innovations that have come out the West, because FDI is not going to save us. That idea of development is broken, because if we were to grow globally at three percent, which is what we need to do in order for the *house of cards*, the Ponzi scheme of modern capitalism, not to self-implode, that means we have to commodify 2.2 trillion US-Dollar in new resources—the global GDP in 1970—this year alone. David Attenborough once said, »If you believe in infinite growth on a finite planet, you're either a madman or an economist.«

The question for us is, how do we play our role? How do we break out of thinking within the existing development paradigm of getting people to be more involved in broken democratic and economic processes in the absence of understanding the broader context of wealth

extraction and the inevitable collapse to which it points? Revolution is going to happen. Will we be partners in that change?

12. Emerging themes and discussion following panel 3

Chris Grove, *Director of the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 12 moderated this session, reflecting that—as someone involved in a network with social movements and other civil society actors, it was intriguing to have a conversation that looks seriously at protests and social movements as central to social change, and with an unusually diverse group of people (when most of us are used to conversing with the like-minded), but which he ultimately found very constructive. The themes that emerged from the final session dealt with the questions of open government, transparency and accountability, and political action for structural transformation.*

Open government, transparency and accountability

Alnoor Ladha: To the whole idea that somehow we are putting the onus on people to keep leaders accountable, that that is the point of a lot of this participation, my question is: Why participate in a broken system? Why are we investing our energy in doing that when—with our role and privilege and professional positions—we could be working on more structural issues?

Naomi Hossain: It is naïve to think that people can participate in a meaningful way in policymaking when some of the issues that we're talking about are so complex it takes a team of experts for the governments to figure out. That is not because policymaking should be complex, but because we are in a complex global economic system. It is very easy for people to be steered one way or another: that sort of crowdsourcing is easily captured.

Raúl Zambrano: To your point on the complexity of policymaking, there is a classic example. In India, there is a Right to Information Movement. They go very local and bring information to people about local issues using technology. So the facilitators access open data;

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12. http://www.escr-net.org/

they're on the budget for that community; they are the ones who bring this to the local level; they put it into newspapers and print it on walls in local languages. I'm talking about development claims, not political claims. So when people in Madagascar or in the Congo say, »We have no access to electricity; we have no access to water,« it's very simple for them to do the rest. They say to the authorities, »You guys are putting money into roads but we have no cars. You put in money to middle-class services but most people are not middle class.« We can reshape that demand to enable more grassroots level empowerment, more development. Everything else is much more complex.

Vicente Rubio: Raúl argues technology is an effective intermediary to facilitate more direct contact between the government and its citizens, but I am skeptical of that. Instead I want to propose that we rethink the political party form as a space for building a new kind of intermediary between people and governments. With the movements there has been a deep questioning of the traditional intermediaries—parties, unions, and other institutions—but at the same time, I am reminded that David Harvey said something very interesting about how the movements need to extract back from capitalism the capacities, skills and knowledge that capitalism is using right now for its own benefit.

Political action for structural transformation

Naomi Hossain: Nancy Fraser wrote a very nice piece about Polanyi, about The Great Transformation, in which she says what you have in this current movement is not resistance to the great transformation; that's just not there. What you have now, that you didn't have 150 years ago, is all these women's movements and queer movements and other groups who have benefitted from exposure to liberal markets, to jobs, and economic growth, to some extent; at least they're not at home with the patriarch telling them what to do anymore. It creates space; and yet, of course, it is also deeply problematic, so you have these tensions in the spaces where people you think should be organizing could be organized. That is a very interesting and productive friction, which we on the Left should be thinking more about.

Alnoor Ladha: We need three things. We need to think constellationally. We need to undermine the capitalist system as best we can based on our respective positions—I'm saying that as comrades; that's not necessarily what I would say as a media story. We have to support the 99 percent and the local social movements. Why? Because modern capitalism has failed. The fact that seven out of eight of our brothers and sisters live on less than 10 US-Dollar a day is testament to that. The fact that climate change is created by our economic system is testament to that. Our modern democracy is a failure. It was always supposed to be a work in progress to get to a place with direct democracy. With an electoral process, it will always get hijacked by the one percent. It is a system where capital rewards capital. How do we change that? We need to localize and re-localize. The role of government should be to support local communities who can best decide for themselves what to do. We are going to have to de-globalize in some ways, and there will be new globalization in other ways.

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13. Raúl Zambrano's views as presented here are his own and do not reflect those of the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] or the United Nations and its Member States.

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