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Protest Transnationalization and Issue Framing in the European Social Movement Context

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*To my dad,
who battled with cancer courageously!*

You are terribly missed!

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All mistakes are mine and mine alone.

Abstract (in English)

A critical issue facing the European Social Forum (ESF) as a protest movement is the proposition that European integration is itself a contested concept. Whereas it is already trivial to state that the ESF has an enormous importance in the process of coming up with alternative processes “from below” to the various regional and sub-regional processes that presently drive European integration, one distinct challenge it has to face is how to reach a broader audience by re-negotiating the meanings of critical concepts in the movement discourse.

In problematizing the discourse of European integration, the ESF stresses a fundamental criticism of a “top-down” representative democracy and proposes “a movement for a globalization from below.” On the Pan-European level, supranational institutions criticized for their apparent deficits in democratic accountability. On the national level, representative democracies are criticized for being ineffective in the face of increased internationalization (ultimately, of globalization) as well as for the insufficiency of their mechanisms of electoral accountability in the face of greater political and economic decision making power.

Abstrakt (in deutscher Sprache)

Ein entscheidendes Problem, das sich dem Europäischen Sozialforum (ESF) als einer Protestbewegung stellt, ist die These, dass die europäische Integration selbst ein umstrittenes Konzept sei. Während es geradezu trivial ist zu behaupten, dass das ESF von außerordentlicher Bedeutung für die Entstehung der Prozesse „von unten“ als Alternative zu den verschiedenen Prozessen auf europäischer und subregionaler Ebene sei, die derzeit die europäische Integration vorantreiben, ist die Frage, wie durch die Neuverhandlung der Bedeutungen der kritischen Konzepte im Diskurs der Bewegung ein breiteres Publikum erreicht werden kann, eine deutliche Herausforderung, der es sich gegenüber sieht.

Mit der Problematisierung des Diskurses über die europäische Integration betont das ESF eine grundlegende Kritik an der repräsentativen Demokratie mit ihren „top-down“ Prozessen und schlägt „eine Bewegung für eine Globalisierung von unten“ vor. Auf gesamteuropäischer Ebene werden die supranationalen Institutionen wegen des offensichtlichen Defizits an demokratischer Verantwortlichkeit kritisiert. Auf nationaler Ebene werden die repräsentativen Demokratien sowohl wegen ihrer Ineffizienz angesichts der verstärkten Internationalisierung (letztlich Globalisierung) als auch wegen ihrer unzulänglichen Mechanismen der Verantwortung gegenüber dem Wähler angesichts größer werdender politischer und ökonomischer Entscheidungsmacht kritisiert.

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List of Acronyms

ATTAC	Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide aux Citoyens
CA	Corporate Accountability
COBAS	Confederazione del Comitati di Base
CODE-NGO	Caucus of Development NGO Network
CSOs	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
ESF	European Social Forum
EU	European Union
EBF/FBE	European Banking Federations/Fédération Bancaire de l'Union Européenne
FSE-ESF	Forum Social Européen-European Social Forum
FDC	Freedom From Debt Coalition
GJM	Global Justice Movement
GLA	Greater London Authority
GSJM	Global Solidarity and Justice Movements
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEI	Multilateral Economic Institutions
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSMs	New Social Movements
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SMOs	Social Movement Organizations
SNR	Stop the New Round Coalition
SWP	Social Workers Party
TAN	Transparency and Accountability Network
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TUs	Trade Unions
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

The Beginnings—The World Social Forum and its European Counterpart

The *Noughties*¹ have witnessed the emergence of the Social Forum Movement, born out of the Seattle WTO protests in 1999, which first became visible on the world stage in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001, under the moniker, The World Social Forum (*WSF*). The forum intended to be the countermovement to the World Economic Forum (WEF), an annual meeting of world leaders and private industry leaders to “improve the state of the world” and “catalyze global cooperation to address pressing challenges and future risks.”² Why a countermovement? Participants of the WSF aim to counter the hegemonic neoliberal economic and political framework that presently dominates the direction of policy choices on the world stage. This policy direction, as various authors claim, is clearly seen in the tendency to favor economic and financial globalization which in turn treats “the majority of humankind as a discardable surplus” (Grzybowski, 2006, p. 1).

In different regions of the globe, regional counterparts of the WSF have emerged which include the Americas Social Forum, the European Social Forum, the Asian Social Forum, the Mediterranean Social Forum and the Southern African Social Forum. Each one derived its (1) principles from the WSF Charter of Principles and (2) character from the generally heterogeneous mix of participants that come together to unite against a common enemy—neoliberalism.

In Europe, the struggle takes on a markedly different [additional] dimension which is not

¹ For lack of name for this decade, the BBC News UK suggested the “Noughties.” http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1999/02/99/e-cyclopedia/585224.stm. Bendell and Ellersiek (2009) make reference to this decade as the period when the rise of private equity and hedge funds facilitated the recognition of the incoherence of basing public policy for corporations on the idea of “enlightened shareholder value” which claims to have an interest in both the social and environmental dimensions of business performance.

² See the WEF web page on <http://www.weforum.org/en/index.htm>.

present in other regions—that of the European continent undergoing a process of economic and political consolidation and integration (Wahl, 2005). Risse recently argued that, “Europe as a space of political organization and institutionalization has no clear boundaries” (Risse, 2004, p. 171). In agreement, Andretta and Doerr assert that ‘external actors’ images of the European Union imply a plurality of meanings and understandings, which means treating the European Union as a contested concept, a space of social cultural and political attributes over which a symbolic struggle is fought” (Andretta & Doerr, 2007, pp. 385-386). The European Social Forum (ESF) therefore takes on this dimension in its struggle against the present neoliberal form of globalization.

On November 6-10, 2002, the first European Social Forum took place in Florence, Italy, and gathered about 60,000 participants. Like the WSF, the basic idea was to create a space wherein different actors could come in contact with each other to network and discuss commonalities and differences (Wahl, 2005). Also, like the first WSF, the first ESF had an experimental character by offering plenty of opportunities for individual and informal meetings which in turn “created a feeling of identity and was an emotional inspiration, generating energy for those who attended” (Wahl, 2005, p. 97). The largest issue tackled was the imminent US led war on Iraq and according to police estimates, around 500,000 individuals took part in the anti-war demonstration. One clear outcome linked to the Florence ESF was the February 15, 2003 International Action day against the US led war.

The apparent success of the social forum experiment in Florence can be seen in the diverse collection of movements, groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and trade unions (TUs) who came together to contest the process of European integration. One critical aspect to note is how activists in the Florence ESF trace back their protest movement in a history of struggles which can be seen from the Call of the European Social Movements:

“We have come together from the social and citizens’ movements from all the regions of Europe, East and West, North and South. We have come together through a long process: the demonstrations of Amsterdam, Seattle, Prague, Nice, Gothenburg, Genoa, Brussels, Barcelona, the big mobilizations against neoliberalism as well as the general strikes for the defense of social rights and all the mobilizations against war, show the will to build another Europe” (European Social Movements, 2002).

Social movements are one of the principal forms through which collectivities declare their concerns about a wide range of issues about rights, welfare and well-being (their own as well as others’). Such declarations manifest through the engagement in various types of collective action that serve to dramatize grievances and demand that something be done about them. Social movements are frequently considered to constitute a so-called ‘extra-parliamentary’ opposition. They demand participatory democracy and social equality to open debate up to alternative political programs, tactics and strategies (Bieler & Morton, 2004, p. 98).

The traditional agenda of the study of social movements looked at the relationship of social movements and state governments and focused on three factors—“(1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement(s); (2) the forms of organizations (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and, (3) the collective processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action” (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996, p. viii). Social movement scholars have formulated explanations of the emergence and advancement of movements as well as episodes of contention by linking them to the characteristics of political opportunities present, the existence and quality of mobilizing structures and the framing of issues.

Whereas social movements are traditionally analyzed with respect to their relations with the state and state agencies, there has been a dramatic resurgence of social movements that transcend the state's physical and conceptual borders. During the late 1990's there has been an upsurge of "anti-globalization" movements against the spread of neoliberal globalization. These movements redefine the conventional notion of citizenship on a number of dimensions and varying scales as they oppose the continued contraction of rights, the emasculation of democracy, retrenchment of sovereignty brought about by the imposition of a 'new world order.' Confronted with the implications of the 'war on terrorism' post 9/11, for example, over 100,000 people convened in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for the third World Social Forum in January 2003 to march against the American led war and ultimately against neoliberalism under the common declaration that 'Another World Is Possible.' The first World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from January 25 to 30, 2001, was founded with the principles of participation, pluralism and respect for diversity, opposition to neoliberal globalization and any 'one way of thinking.' It consolidated this new kind of political space by way of demonstrating the possibilities for new forms of citizenship practices, or more aptly, post-national citizenship practices within and across national boundaries. This is not to say that such forms of citizenship practices did not exist prior to the World Social Forum, rather, by providing an "...open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking of effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards relationships among Humankind...,³" the World Social Forum has further expanded the space for such practices.

³ The complete WSF Charter of Principles can be accessed at <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br>.

Prior to the 1970s, however, meaning work—the struggle over the production of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meanings—were largely ignored. Prevalent in the social movement literature were broad references to meanings, beliefs, values and the more general notion of ideology but taken together, they still remained largely insufficient in analytical terms—which means they were either discussed descriptively and statically rather than analytically and dynamically; or “they were dismissed as being largely irrelevant to the development of social movements on the whole” (Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 135-136). Social movement scholars during the mid-1980s took interest in the framing concept. The framing perspective does not view social movements as merely carriers of extant ideas and meaning that grow automatically out of structural arrangements, unanticipated events or existing ideologies. Movements and movement actors are actively viewed as signifying agents dynamically engaged in the production and reproduction of meaning for constituents, antagonists, bystanders and observers. They are deeply embroiled, along with the media, local governments and the state in what has been referred to as “the politics of signification” (Hall, 1982, p. 64).

Not Seeing Eye to Eye—Global Governance and Social Movement Protest

Even before the Velvet Revolutions of 1988-1989 and the resurgence of various nationalist movements thriving in the former Warsaw Pact countries, scholarship on social movements ascribed political status and political significance to these movements. And to the contemporary observer of present day politics it would seem preposterous not to do so. Yet, before the 1960s social movements were viewed as a form of ‘pre-political’ behavior serving as warning to those in power (Smelser, 1963, p. 21). Social movements were treated as spontaneous, ephemeral and expressive rather than enduring and instrumental which reflected the dominant collective behavior paradigm during the period.⁴

⁴ The rationalist paradigm holds that any form of collective action is bound to ‘break down’ due to the free-rider

On a more fundamental level, scholars of political science (in particular, of contentious politics) observe that global governance is afflicted by a particular flaw—that of a democratic deficit.⁵ While citizens constantly interact with their states and their states' agencies and hold them accountable through democratic processes, such a relationship is conspicuously absent on the level of international organizations despite the fact that a considerable number of international policies have direct and immediate impacts on the lives of ordinary citizens on a daily basis. Obradovic (1996, pp. 192-193), for example, argues that for more than a decade now, the presence of a democratic deficit in the European Union structure has been prominent in discussions about European integration. "The tumultuous process of ratification for the Maastricht Treaty in 1992–1993 was widely seen as an expression of a certain deficit of legitimacy for integration". In a more general instance, international organizations have formulated policies and erected institutional arrangements to address a wide range of global issues such as global epidemics (AH1N1 flu or swine flu, H1N1 flu or bird flu, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, to name a few), global terrorism, nuclear proliferation, liberalization of trade. One glaring observation is that ordinary citizens are, for a large part, excluded from participating in the [global] governance of these issues despite the far-reaching and immediate impact on their lives.

At the international level, contemporary social, political, economic and financial relations are being transformed by the processes of globalization at an ever increasing pace. On the social level, we are witnesses to the deluge of migration from the global South to the global North in

problem in the field of Economics. See Olson (1971), Smelser (1963) or Samuelson (1954) for rigorous proof.

⁵ According to the European Commission's Europa Glossary the concept of Democratic Deficit is "a concept invoked principally in the argument that the European Union and its various bodies suffer from a lack of democracy and seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen because their method of operating is so complex. The view is that the Community institutional set-up is dominated by an institution combining legislative and government powers (the Council of the European Union) and an institution that lacks democratic legitimacy (the European Commission)." See the Europa Glossary at http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/.

search of better opportunities. Both legal and illegal immigration have far-reaching implications for the directions of both origin and host countries' choice of socio-political and economic policies.

On the political level, statesmen are beginning to realize that the Westphalian system, which forms the bedrock of today's international regime, is time and again found wanting in terms of its ability to confront and adequately address contemporary transnational issues of environmental degradation, migration, terrorism and energy security, to name a few. This 'post-Westphalian' situation is characterized, on one hand, by the emergence of non-state actors that, in addition to states, are instruments as well as sources of international regulations. On the other hand, the increasing magnitude and complexity of transborder socio-political, economic and ecological questions that are in a sense 'borderless' highlight need for extra-state coordination. States continue to be important actors in the international arena, albeit in a comparatively and significantly reduced capacity.

On the economic level, investment capital is considered an important driver of economic growth. This realization led to the institutionalization of the WEF whose members are the top profit earners in their industries—typically enterprises with more than 5 billion dollars in turnover.⁶ However, with the very nature and purpose of capital as profit-seeking coupled with its ability to move across borders, states courting capital tend to (re)align their policies to the interests of mobile capital. In many instances, notably in countries that lack effectively functioning institutions to serve as checks, environmental, labor and safety standards as well as aboriginal rights are compromised or at times utterly disregarded in pursuit of the greater

⁶ In addition, these enterprises (1) rank among the top companies in their industry and/or countries; and, (2) play a leading role in shaping the future of their industry and/or region.

economic welfare of society using the principle of eminent domain.⁷

On the financial level, national financial markets are becoming more enmeshed with each other in the global financial market further highlighting the interconnectedness of financial markets. Moreover, progressively sophisticated technologies have exponentially increased the velocity of global financial transactions such that one minor perturbation at any level of the interconnections would have significant effects on the rest of the system. Recent examples include the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the present global financial/economic crisis. Both of which snowballed from a small glitch in the financial system. The Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide aux Citoyens (ATTAC), France holds that liberalized finance has entailed increased inequality and instability on a world scale (ATTAC France, 2003). Looking at the numbers, 80 percent of international financial flows are concentrated in about twenty countries which make up only 22 percent of the world's population.

Fuelling contemporary [transnational] activism is the reality [or perception] that the present direction of globalization and economic liberalism, gaps in terms of wealth, income and power and myriad other aspects of human development have widened excessively between social groups within countries as well as between countries of the global North and global South. Over the years international development circles have increasingly reached a consensus that this inequality is destructive, it diminishes prospects for growth, it has negative effects on efforts at poverty reduction and effective governance. For instance, as the recognition that a significant number of countries 'can not' reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, governments and international organizations have focused on the social and political barriers to achieving the MDGs as it is there barriers that entrench and exacerbate the unequal access to the

⁷ This principle refers to the inherent power of the state to expropriate or seize a citizen's private property with due compensation even without the owner's consent. The most common usage of this principle normally involves the provision of public infrastructure that would benefit the greater majority (e.g dams, highways, etc.).

resources of society and the distribution of economic and political power within and across countries (Watkins, 2007).

Two arguments are advanced to argue why this persistent inequality matters and why international development policies should directly address it. First is the intrinsic argument which is rooted in the concepts of social justice and morality. The persistence and interconnectedness of the different aspects of these inequalities imply that some groups have consistently inferior opportunities—economic, social and political—than their fellow citizens. Though the endeavor to define social justice is not an easy task because one would encounter a number of plausible definitions, it is still quite possible to extract its essence—equal rights, and opportunities regardless of background or procedural justice, as well as equal access to the benefits of society.⁸ Such a definition takes cue from Rawls’ statement of principle in his *A Theory of Justice* where he says that, “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason, justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by the greater good shared by others” (Rawls, 1972, pp. 3-4)

The second argument is of an instrumentalist nature and is stated on three levels: (1) with imperfect markets inequalities in power and wealth translate into unequal opportunities, leading to wasted productive potential and to an inefficient allocation of resources; (2) Economic and political inequalities are associated with impaired institutional development; and, (3) reducing inequality is seen as a crucial public goal—disparities in health and education, for instance, reduce the capabilities of disadvantaged groups from taking part in economic development (The World Bank, 2007, pp. 7-9). It is apparent that the second argument directly attacks the present neoliberal direction of the policy responses to globalization.

⁸ For the purpose of this research, this definition of social justice will be used all throughout.

Scope and Outline of the Thesis

The question that this thesis will address squarely is whether the framing processes, which provide the lens through which issues are viewed, serve to “civilize” transnational governance. To provide a workable, yet well-rounded delimitation I will focus on the ESF and its slogan, ‘Another Europe is Possible.’ Right from the outset the ESF’s tag line is blunt and straightforward—that a capitalist driven globalization, ‘a-la top-down globalization,’ is not the way to go, as Appadurai aptly summarizes, it “...is demonstrably creating inequalities both within and across societies...” (Appadurai, 2000, p. 2). The slogan of the ESF itself derives directly from the World Social Forum’s—‘Another World is Possible.’

Does participation in the political space created by the Forums ‘civilize’ globalization and democratize global governance? In terms of consolidating interests and creating reference frames, the (specific) thesis question may be formulated thus: As an arena for public contestation of existing [neoliberal] institutions and [neoliberal] institutional arrangements, does the European Social Forum enable a ‘just’ form of regionalization?

First, the thesis will argue that the pluralistic nature of the political space provided and promoted by the ESF is an attractive avenue for social groupings with diverging interests and, at times conflicting interests, to act as: (1) transmitters by bringing their grievances and proposals to the public space for public scrutiny; and, (2) as recipients of other groups’ grievances and proposals. The process, in essence, follows the form of a dialectic with multiple stakeholders and multiple perspectives but all falling on one side of the globalization debate.

The thesis takes a critical perspective on European Union (EU) politics and integration by viewing the integration project as a post-national endeavor which calls for a deconstruction of

the traditional nation-centered concepts of citizenship, political participation and social contention. Contemporary scholarship on social contention reflects this process. Beginning with social movements contesting state encroachment into the private space, to social movements pushing for greater welfare policies, to identity-related social mobilization in the form of new social movements (yet still within the confines of the nation state), to the [seemingly] global struggle against the encroachment of neoliberal principles and policies as well as the promotion of a higher degree of participatory democracy in transnational decision-making.

Second, the thesis will argue that participation in the forums is not only made manifest by physical mobilization. Rather, and more importantly, the progression from the realm of physical mobilization to the realm of ideas and discourse allows for the creation of an epistemic community which continuously and increasingly problematizes existing forms of globalization. It is this community of shared knowledge and expertise which lends more credence to the advocacies of different social movements as well as allows particular movements to adapt and innovate on the technological and organizational efficacy of other movements.

Lastly, the thesis will argue that the European Social Forum (and the Forums, in general) as an avenue for networking and coordination of ‘repertoires of contention’ as well as knowledge-transfer between and among social movement organizations (SMOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) across countries results in coordinated and calibrated responses to transnational public policies—which individual states themselves are powerless to counteract—and transnational private interests—in the face of which, states are held ‘hostage’ by mobile capital. This detail is effectively captured by the activism-policy nexus. In the short-term, we may observe an increase in the public’s consciousness on the issue. In the medium-term, we may observe the modification of existing institutional and policy arrangements which are seen as propagating the existing [undesirable] structures.

Despite the apparent importance of dealing with the notion of collective identity and the formation of such within and among movement mobilization, this research will choose not to deal with this topic exhaustively. It is, however, functional to state that the use of the collective identity concept in relation to social movement analysis was initially an alternative to the structural limitations of the political opportunity framework and resource mobilization theory. Polletta and Jasper (2001) observe that the concept, as it was used, has been treated as an alternative to structurally given interests in accounting for the claims on behalf of which people mobilize, an alternative to selective incentives in understanding why people choose to mobilize and participate, an alternative to instrumental rationality in explaining the tactical choices activists make, and an alternative to institutional reforms in assessing a movement's impacts. Although many scholars who have researched the framing processes perspective have also suggested its instrumental nature for the formation of collective identity, such a relationship will not be touched by this thesis and will be left out altogether. The author, however, acknowledges the significance of the concept and will make use of it in presenting the section on the creation of epistemic communities.

The research locates itself in the realm of 'contentious politics' and takes on the three components of the classic agenda of the social movement literature and looks at their relevance with regard to efforts in explaining transnational episodes of contention. The end in mind for this research would be to argue that the framing processes surrounding the issues that social movements advance, though not perfect, substantially serve to 'civilize' transnational governance (in this case, regional governance).

The overarching theme of the research reflects Karl Polanyi's concept of 'double

movement’ and positions contemporary State-Business⁹-Civil Society Organization dynamics under this lens for analysis. In proceeding with the research, Chapter 1 lays the groundwork by taking on the view of critical scholars that politics is power and that political science involves the study of the processes and consequences of the manner in which power is acquired, distributed and exercised (Hay, 2002) and locates the analysis within the literature on regional integration. Consequently, it presents the contributions of different critical perspectives to the study of European Union politics. Chapter 2 scrutinizes the traditional social movement agenda under the backdrop of the ESF as the regional counterpart of the World Social Forum (WSF). In particular, the chapter focuses on the general thread that European social movements take when framing relevant issues.¹⁰ Chapter 3 explores the notion of political power and positions it within State-Business-CSO relationships under a neoliberal paradigm of globalization. It further looks into the emergence of epistemic communities on the global stage and how it leads to the production of knowledge which not only feeds into reflexive state policies but also contentious politics at every level of political activity—local, national, transnational, global. Chapter 4 features the case of the European Social Forum’s initiatives to raise the consciousness of issues up to a European level. This chapter further looks at the ESF as a prospective Pan-European public sphere. Finally, chapter 5 applies the notion of an activism-policy nexus to contentious politics and reflexive government policies. The chapter concludes firstly, by accepting the general perception of a ‘movement of movements’ embodied by the social forums; secondly, by contending that these forums open up political space for greater democratic contestation.

⁹ While surveying the literature on ‘transnational contentious politics’ one immediately notices the usage of the terms ‘corporation’ and ‘business’ to mean essentially the same thing—the profit-driven private sector. The marginal difference is that the term ‘corporation/corporate’ is used to denote a legal entity engaged in profit generating activities in the economy while the term ‘business’ is used as a sociological moniker for the profit-driven sector. As they stand, both terms will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

¹⁰ Much of the recent analyses tend to converge around the issue of policy and institutional reform related to development aid, debt relief, trade policy, international taxation and corporate accountability.

1. Framework

The WSF is inspired by the slogan ‘Another World is Possible,’ which expresses a need to construct alternatives from out of the resistance to neoliberal globalization and neoliberalism in general. Scholars hold that the social forums embody the resurgence of social democracy in and around Europe [and the globe] as a direct consequence of the broken promises of neoliberal structural adjustment policies.

This section surveys the theoretical underpinnings of popular contention in the social forums starting with the traditional Left-Right first and second ways giving credence to the emergence of a ‘third way’—a concept originating from writers of the Left who intended to keep the objective of socialism salient in the face of increasing internationalization and globalization. The third way later on received criticism for seemingly facilitating the rise to hegemony of the neoliberal paradigm of the right and in so doing, failed to be a ‘center’ compromise between social democratic principles of the left and rationalist neoliberal economics principles of the right. Proceeding from this, the section also presents the significant contributions of critical perspectives in investigating the myriad issues surrounding European Integration and European Union politics.

1.1. The Social Democratic Left and the Third Way

By the mid-1980s, the traditional social democratic left in Europe was unsure of its future. The emergence of a growing number of civil groups and social movements as early as the 1960s became a clear sign that the socialist project “could no longer be grouped around the traditional paternalism of post-war social democracy” (Worth, 2007, p. 93). The left suffered from an internal resistance to change and was ultimately undermined by the reorientation of states toward neoliberal economics and the escalating internationalization of state relationships. Perhaps this decline is best demonstrated by the failure of the French Socialist Party to ratify its own agenda

while holding office in the 1980s. In acknowledging the reality of the new dynamics brought about by ‘globalization’ and in efforts to restate the inherent objectives of the socialist project in order that they remain relevant, the Left emphasized the new visions of social renewal. Such a vision was crystallized by an attempt to create some level of dialogue between left-wing parties across Europe especially within the France-Germany-UK axis. It was under this backdrop that the concept of the ‘Third Way’ was brought to existence. “The third way was the linchpin of the center-left in Europe with Schroeder and Jospin creating a united front with Tony Blair across the EU” (Worth, 2007, p. 94).

By re-articulating the principles and objectives of the political Left as normative instruments to engage globalization and benefit from it instead of simply directly opposing it, the Left gained a strong platform. Although, this gave an impression that the Left accepted the idea of the inevitability of globalization. On the other hand, the ensuing rhetoric and consequent policies significantly moved away from the conceptual objectives associated with socialism and social democracy. Rather, they gravitated towards a framework of action that favored a model of inclusion/exclusion and which proposed engagement with global capitalism as opposed to ‘challenging it’ (Beck, 1997; Giddens, 1994). In his book *Beyond Left and Right*, Giddens’ critique of historical materialism goes as far as arguing for a dismantling of social democracy inspired by Keynesian economics to give way for a centrist approach to politics that could realize the objectives of socialism far more realistically (Giddens, 1994). Following on this theme, Beck in the 1990s called for a ‘third way’ in looking at political society. In the wake of the transformation of modernity, according to Beck, the left and right political order as the ideological origins of the first and second ‘ways’ needed to change (Beck, 1997). Beck’s radical centralism was a call to move out from the traditional cul de sac of Left and Right politics to be better able to interact

with the nature of ‘reflexive modernity.’¹¹ For both Beck and Giddens, the third way has escalated from a concept that was initially supposed to reconstitute the objectives of socialism and keep them relevant in the wake of increasing internationalization to a concept that moves beyond re-engagement with socialism. On one level, Beck holds that post-Keynesian social democratic ‘paternalism ended with the ideological constraints of the cold war and since socialism provided the central critique in this period, it “accompanies the Left-Right dichotomy to the historical dustbin in both theory and practice” (Beck, 1997, p. 150). Still on another level, he holds that the shape of critique embodied by Marxism may have “captivated the critical intelligentsia for a century” (Beck, 1997, p. 176) but is now clearly inapplicable. For Giddens both the neoliberal right and socialist left ultimately failed to come to grips with the social reproduction of capitalism and he outlines a ‘radical program’ of new social democracy in pursuit of widening markets for those currently excluded as well as public-private partnerships (Worth, 2007, p. 96).

In the Gramscian sense, Giddens and Beck’s work seemingly aimed to consolidate a hegemonic position through societal pacification. “Growing skepticism in France and Germany forced many center-leftists in Europe to abandon the rhetoric behind the third way” (Worth, 2007, p. 97). This contributed to the systematic decline of the third way even before the rejection of the Socialists in France and the demise of the SPD in Germany. Moreover, as a result of successive EU enlargements, the third way became less effective as a political strategy

¹¹ Reflexive modernity is Giddens’ theory of the uniqueness of modernity. He draws a distinction between traditional and modern social formations along two dimensions. First, he notes, the modern is more dynamic and it draws its dynamism from three distinct processes: (1) the separation of time and space or ‘space-time distanciation;’ (2) the ‘disembedding’ mechanism of modern culture; and, modernity’s reflexive character. The second feature is the existence of modern institutions: the nation state, modern political systems, mechanized and technological production, wage labor, commodification and urbanization. For Giddens, ‘postmodernism,’ ‘post industrial society,’ the globalization of communications technology and the ‘new world order’ are indices of a ‘second modernity’ or ‘reflexive modernity.’ This is where the reflexive characteristic of modernity effectively liquidates the non-reflexive bonds of tradition. See Giddens (1990, 1991, 1992).

“since western-European social democrats were not able to coordinate the core ideas behind the third way with those from a different historical trajectory” (Worth, 2007, p. 97).

1.2. Contribution of Critical Perspectives to the Study of European Union Politics

In the face of the declining fascination for the third way, critical scholars sought to break through the boundaries of traditional political science by questioning the fundamental assumptions about political systems, institutions, economic rationalities and methodologies which were all rooted in the interest of their forerunners in analyzing the dynamics of the United State political system.¹² Over and above this impetus, critical scholars situate their work within a shared commitment to uncovering the preconceptions of historical reality and the nature and origins of knowledge as well share in the desire to change politics. In this particular regard, critical perspectives of European Union politics, although highly differentiated, are aligned with a common commitment to the ‘emancipation of humans’—the liberation of humans “from the negative consequences of modernity” (Manners, 2006, p. 78). This section sets out to survey the region of the literature that provides critical perspectives to the study of European Union politics: historical materialism, (Frankfurt) critical theories, postmodern sciences, and feminist perspectives.

Historical Materialism

Historical materialist theories on European Union politics grew out of Marx’s work, despite their now apparent salience, they were largely ignored by traditional integration theory prior to the end of the Cold War (Smith, S., 2004). In the course of the Cold War, very few scholars investigated European integration under the lens of Marxist perspectives. These scholars included Mandel and Rossdale (1970), Galtung (1973, 1980) and Holland (1980). They

¹² See Manners (2003a) and Smith, S. (2004) for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject.

maintained the critique of the ‘ahistorical’ and ‘decontextual’ nature of contemporary integration studies (Manners, 2006) and the seemingly overarching enthusiasm over the larger dynamics of capital and its relationship with the elite class.

Two distinct approaches took root in historical materialism—Open Marxism and Neo-Gramscianism. Scholars of the historical materialist perspective generally turned their focus away from Marxist theorizing of the capitalist state and turned towards transnational human social and economic relations. While both begin with a historical materialist appreciation of the capitalist context of social, economic and political relations, they diverge in their treatment of the relative primacy of human relations compared to critical economy (Bieler & Morton, 2004).

Open Marxism on one hand necessarily investigated European Union politics in terms of class, imperialism, labor commodification and institutional bias. The distinct works of Bonefeld (2001), Burnham (2003), Moss (2005), Smith, H. and Rupert (2002), among others are found at the forefront. Bonefeld and Burnham argued that the politics driving the agenda of the monetary union forward can be explained by the desire of capitalist classes in member states for greater capital accumulation, or in their terms to “reinvigorate capital accumulation” (Manners, 2006, p. 79) while depoliticizing fiscal restraint (Bonefeld, 2001; Burnham, 2003). Moss (2005) redirects the emphasis towards the European Union as a neoliberal construct that is subject to the competition and rivalries prevailing among the capitalist classes of its member states. Smith, H. and Rupert (2002) investigate the different aspects through which the European Union treaties commodify labor through the harmonization of laws. By scrutinizing the apparent institutional bias in the European Union policies and decision making processes, Smith, H. (2002) went further than most Marxists (Manners, 2006). The institutional bias manifests itself in the overemphasis in the analysis of institutional decision making and in the allowance of European Union institutions to control the field of study.

Overall, the Open Marxist approach went in the general direction of analyzing the conduct of European integration and how it serves the [political] elite of member states. For instance, within the single market framework and single currency framework the dynamics between national elites and working classes have radically changed (Manners, 2006).

On the other hand, scholars exemplified by Stephen Gill (2003), Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton (2001), Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (2002) and Magnus Ryner (2002), among others, take on a transnational historical materialist perspective in analyzing European Union Politics. In direct contrast to Open Marxism, Neo-Gramscian accounts focus on the role of “social forces, engendered by the production process, as the most important collective actors” (Bieler & Morton, 2001, p. 6). Gill (2003) argued that the economic and monetary union, since the early 1990s, institutionalized the neoliberal policies and principles and constitutionalized them within the European Union and ultimately led to the formation of a neo-Gramscian ‘transnational historical block’ which socially and politically embedded [and continually embeds] neoliberalism. Bieler and Morton (2001) are at the forefront of the argument for neo-Gramscian counterhegemonic European Union strategies by labor and social movements, specifically within the political space provided by the European Social Forum. It is however important to note that, drawing from Gill’s analysis, Bieler and Morton contend that the impacts of neoliberalism on industrial relations have resulted in a greater degree of trade union incorporation into what they call “competitive corporatism.”¹³ Overbeek, van Apeldoorn and Nölke (2007) argue that

¹³ Competitive corporatism’s primary objective is the regulation and increase of national competitiveness by facilitating a restructuring of wage, social and tax policy. These are achieved through various forms of *national social pacts* such as the Dutch Wassenaar Accord or the German “Alliance for Jobs” negotiations. Three features define these pacts: (1) committing the trade unions to wage restraint, wherein wage increases remain below productivity increases and wherein an increased segmentation of wages and incomes is accepted; (2) flexibilizing the labor markets and the welfare-state institutions and reducing social wage costs; and (3) restructuring the taxation system so that taxation gradually shifts towards indirect taxes in particular so that corporate taxation rates are reduced. See Ryner and Schulten (2003).

the European Union and its processes of integration are embedded in the neoliberal discipline shaped by the hegemony of the transatlantic, transnational class as manifest in the role of the European Roundtable of Industrialists. In engaging in a neo-Gramscian critique of mainstream theories of European integration, van Apeldoorn (2002) focuses on the ways in which neofunctionalist, intergovernmentalist, multi-leveled and liberal constructivist approaches lack a “more comprehensive, critical, transnational, historical and materialist theory of European integration.”

Cafruny and Ryner (2003, pp. vii-viii) raise the question of whether the European Union’s attempts “to erect a fortress of resistance to the United States-led transnational neoliberal hegemony” are now in shambles. The emancipatory colors of the European Social Forum’s slogan ‘Another World is Possible’ is clearly present in their argumentation. As neo-Gramscian scholars, they argue that the European Union itself needs to become more social-democratic and should turn to successful models such as those in the Nordic region for “inspiration in the search for emancipatory alternatives to neoliberalism” (Cafruny, 2003, p. 300).

The astonishing growth of the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum since 2001 gives an indication that political participation is continually being reconfigured by the increasing transnationalization of neoliberal politics. Neo-Gramscian scholars lend credence to this by raising critical questions about the role of hegemonic practices in European Union politics which effectively challenges traditional integration theories for their decontextualized treatment of neoliberalism; and, consequently argue that neoliberalism has already become transnationalized, within the European Union in particular (Manners, 2006). One clear manifestation is that the anti-Constitution camps widely shared the European Social Forum banner during the referenda rejections in 2005.

Critical Theories

Like historical materialist theories, critical theories (originating from the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research) remained discontented from the explanations forwarded by European integration theory (Hoskyns, 2004). The Frankfurt School is the origin of two perspectives of critical theory: one based on the work of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno termed ‘critical social theory’; and the other, based on the work of Jürgen Habermas termed ‘deliberative theory.’

Unlike historical materialist approaches, critical theories need not contend with the intellectual and ideological consequences of the end of communism. Further, outside the European Union, with Habermas (1984, 1989) as one of the primary sources of critical social theory, the Frankfurt Critical Theory became widely accepted during the 1980s and 1990s. However, it was only during the latter period that the social, political and cultural consequences of European integration, globalization and ‘Europeanization’ were seriously engaged and investigated from a critical theory perspective. In the context of European Union politics, both deliberative theory and the earlier Frankfurt school critical theory share a common concern for understanding and challenging the social production of knowledge; historicizing and contextualizing subjectivity; and a commitment to progress and emancipation as the goals of research (Warleigh, 2003). Their critical difference lies in the fact that Habermas’ advocacy of ‘communicative action’ in the public sphere is a clear sign that deliberative theorists are more interested in the promotion of democracy than the critical questioning of the socio-cultural production of human knowledge characteristic of critical social theory (Manners, 2006). In stark contrast to this, scholars drawing their critical social theory from the work of Horkheimer and Adorno share an agenda for a progressive and radical critique of modern society (Calhoun, 1995).

Building on Habermas, various scholars such as Dierdre Curtin, Andrew Linklater, Christian Joerges, Jürgen Neyer, Kirstin Jacobson, Eric Oddvar Eriksen, Jon Erik Fossum, Helen Sjursen and Alex Warleigh sought to understand the development of deliberative processes and democracy within a post-national European Union polity. As it stands, deliberative theorists hold that the European Union as a post-national and cosmopolitan democracy wherein the concepts of citizenship and democracy are to be developed beyond the traditional Westphalian state on the basis of ‘constitutional patriotism’ (Manners, 2006). In effect, for Habermas, the European Union would “aim toward a common practice of opinion- and will-formation, nourished by the roots of a European civil society and expanded into a European-wide political arena” (Habermas & Pensky, 2001, p. 100) and “inspire the Kantian hope for a global domestic polity” (Habermas & Derrida, 2003, p. 297).

Linklater (1998, p. 85) argues that critical theory [along with discourse ethics] is “explicitly concerned with an emancipatory project with universalist aspirations which transcend national frontiers.” Furthermore, he argues that this is immanent in the cosmopolitan democracy, citizenship and civilizing process of the European Union. Curtin (1997, p. 58) derives from the connection between communicative action, deliberation and civil society in advancing his point that “the European Union post national democracy should be built on deliberation in the public sphere.” Habermasian deliberative theorists, over the past decade and a half, have shifted the theoretical debates beyond arguments over how to best examine European Union politics towards how to best realize cosmopolitan and deliberative democracy in the backdrop of a post-national European Union. It is in this regard that deliberative theorists are very much concerned with questions of democratic deficit, legitimacy and citizenship within the European Union member states and European Union institutions (Manners, 2006).

Delanty and Campling (1995) and Rumford (2002) bring social theory and political sociology to the examination of European Union politics by putting forward the possibility of a European identity [in the wake of the Holocaust].¹⁴ They contend that the difficulty in studying globalization, cosmopolitanism and the European Union lies in the pervasive view which is rooted in the nation-state paradigm. Calhoun's critical approach to the study of European Union politics emphasizes the politics of identity, democratic integration and the public sphere. He argues that it is vital to "build institutions that encourage and protect multiple, discontinuous, sometimes conflicting public spaces and modes of public engagement rather than attempt to nurture or impose some unified European culture" (Calhoun, 2001, p. 38). Benhabib (2002, 2004) looks at the politics of migration and citizenship in the EU from a critical social theory perspective. She investigates the way the "disaggregation of citizenship in the European Union" has produced mixed results. In particular, she argues that such a disaggregation is dangerous for "large groups of third-country nationals" in the face of promises of development for post-national European Union citizens (Benhabib, 2002, p. 33). As a valid response, she advocates moral universalism rooted in Habermasian discourse ethics which involves the recognition of the rights of all to speech and participation in moral conversations. For her, cosmopolitanism necessarily involves "multiple iterations of cosmopolitan norms" between layers of international law and democratic legislatures (Benhabib, 2004, pp. 176-177).

Kauppi's (2005, p. 22) structural constructivist approach to European Union politics primarily focuses on the European Parliament as "a revolutionary site which contributes to changing the structural features of member state political fields by introducing new institutions and practices." In order to understand the [dislocating] effect of European integration, Kauppi (2005, p. 22) argues for an imperative need to develop Bourdieu's structural constructivist theory

¹⁴ Adorno and Horkheimer (1997) posed the same question in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

of politics because it “offers powerful instruments for a critical analysis of political power” and “remedies some of the weaknesses of most versions of social constructivism, such as their diffuse conception of power and ideational notion of culture. The structural constructivist theory of European integration therefore moves towards examining the European Union as a multi-level and polycentric evolving field (Manners, 2006).

The questions raised by critical social theorists in their study of European Union politics are by no means new or novel in relation with the integration process. Questions of identity, culture, imperialisms and ethnicity have always been present right from the beginning of the European integration process. Critical social theorists, however, problematize these questions in a new way in the wider context of a European Union polity rather than in the individual member states.

Postmodern Sciences

Postmodern science (Lyotard, 1984) involves perspectives aimed at “producing not the known but the unknown” in order to “wage a war on the totality of metanarratives” (Manners, 2003b, pp. 254-255). Running along the lines of historical materialism and critical theory, postmodern sciences consciously avoided traditional integration theory which has been seen as mainly concerned with ‘producing the known’ in the form of metanarratives (or all-encompassing stories) about European Union politics. Postmodern scientific inquiries have increasingly contributed to the study of European Union politics since the 1990s and through the contribution of scholars such as Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva, as well as later contributions drawing from methods from Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida (Manners, 2006, p. 83).

Scholars such as Ian Ward and Peter van Ham have led the way in analyzing the postmodern condition of European Union politics. Ward (1995, p. 532) argues that the “European Union can best be understood as a postmodern text, and perhaps a postmodern polity” because “from a political perspective, the European Union apparently continues to defy objective determination.” Ward further argues that to be able to more fully understand the European Union and develop a public philosophy, we need to think beyond sovereignty, democracy and constitutionalism toward, citing Derrida’s words, “a sense of justice which lies ‘beyond’ rather than ‘before’ the law” (Ward, 2001 citing Derrida, 1992). Van Ham attempts to investigate questions of governance, democracy and identity from a postmodern perspective and perhaps gives the most comprehensive account. In line with Lyotard’s definition of the postmodern as ‘incredulity toward metanarrative,’ van Ham’s multifaceted work does not attempt to “come to an understanding of the vastness of political life on a European scale” (van Ham, 2001, p. 22). In analyzing the European Union’s postmodern condition, the postmodern perspective attempts to understand the consequences of unbundling the concepts of sovereignty, territory and governance. The assumptions of the modern state form have to be problematized in a global environment characterized by global economic competition, overlapping international jurisdiction and radical cultural changes (Manners, 2006).

The approaches based on genealogy, governmentality and discourse were led by scholars such as Stefan Elbe, William Walters, Jens Henrik Haahr and Henrik Larsen, all of whom draw on the works of Nietzsche and Foucault. For these approaches, the European Union is a site of power relations and it is the location where knowledge and power meet and this meeting has consequences for understanding the past, present and future through disciplining, governing and discursive practices (Manners, 2006).

Elbe (2003, p. 114) holds that Nietzsche provides an alternative perspective from which to look over and above the 'evil' of European nationalisms, "to become good Europeans" who "would find their meaning in the diverse and enigmatic aspects of existence." As Nietzsche (1998, p. 98) argued, "perspectival seeing is the only kind of seeing there is, perspectival knowing the only kind of knowing." Walters and Haahr (2005, pp. 16-17) locate their genealogical perspective in Michel Foucault's reading and contend that genealogy is the "excavation of singular events in order to understand the construction of the present." Their approach is based on Foucauldian 'governmentality' combining discourse analysis with a focus on the history of governance (Manners, 2006). In adopting the perspective of governmentality, they are more able to examine European Union politics through the power/knowledge themes of political analysis, including but not limited to the forms, rationality and technologies of power (Walters & Haahr, 2005).

These methods of genealogy and governmentality provide a means of analyzing and understanding the power of the EU to shape the idea of Europe, European identity, the market, internal affairs, and foreign affairs. By engaging a historical approach it becomes possible to understand how European Union politics assumed the governmental attitude of technocratic coordination. Moreover, the analysis of discursive constructions of regulation and policy allows for the sense-making in the different aspects of European integration. Power politics manifests itself not in the ability to shape the agenda nor in the ability to sway the negotiation, but in the ability to shape preferences themselves (Manners, 2006).

European Union scholars concerned with the construction and structure of 'truth', 'self' and 'others' follow the poststructuralist tradition and are informed by the work of Foucault and Derrida. These scholars share a commitment to deconstructing narratives within Europe and the European Union for the purpose of revealing and understanding the alternative truths and

possibilities (Manners, 2006). Notably, Derrida's work emphasizes the extent to which European integration is a 'journey towards the other' (Derrida, 1992). For him, such a journey is "necessary to make ourselves the guardians of an idea of Europe, of a difference of Europe, but of a Europe that consists precisely in not closing itself off in its own identity and advancing itself in an exemplary way toward what is not... to advance itself as a heading for the universal essence of humanity" (Derrida, 1992, p. 29). Kristeva (1982, 1991) and Kristeva and Roudiez (1993) advance a psychoanalytic approach based on poststructuralism and contends that the other is always part of the self. Her work focuses on the "creation of the self as an internal psychological process" and in which the "other exists in our minds through imagination even when he or she is not physically present (Kristeva, 1982, p. 155). Her view of European integration is that it is a part of a cosmopolitan ethic that recognizes the strangers to ourselves and the 'othering practice' of nationalism (Manners, 2006). Diez's (1997) contribution towards the understanding of the integration discourse is his investigations into the role of language in constructing European Union politics in using Foucault and Derrida to deconstruct and 'open up space' for alternative constructions of Europe, a contribution which clearly resonates with the slogan of the World Social Forum and European Social Forum.

In the process of using deconstruction to analyze and understand European Union politics, poststructuralists are seeking to denaturalize stories about European integration which are taken at face value, or as common sense. In this search for emancipation, the questions of where the European Union is headed, what it actually is, the how and where questions become more and more problematized. Post-structural scholars advocate the alternative possibilities of European Union politics in terms of non-teleological political cultures, reconciliation with otherness, reflexive foreign policy and the securitization of migration in the European Union (Manners, 2006).

Feminist Perspectives

The construction of difference is perpetually present in the landscape of European Union politics and feminist perspectives address the most perennial of these differences—that of gender differences. The feminist literature highlights the pervasiveness of power relations embedded in social institutions such as European political science and European Union institutions themselves as well as how these structures propagate these differences. Two of the most pronounced feminist perspectives stem from the Wollstonecraft dilemma within feminist perspectives—referring to the choice of whether feminists should seek equal rights or recognize and support difference. European Union feminist scholarship has generally taken three directions to achieve gender equality: equal treatment; positive discrimination and gender mainstreaming (Rees, 1998).

The first critical point of the European Union feminist scholarship was Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome which states ‘that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work’ (Rees, 1998). Much later, after the activism in Belgium on behalf of Gabrielle Defrenne, the direct effect of the equal pay principle was established in 1976 (Hoskyns, 2004). Building on this success, further feminist scholarship focused on equal treatment then later on pay, employment, social security, self-employment, pregnancy and parenthood (Hoskyns, 2004). Feminist perspectives on European Union politics have continually raised the most important questions about the European Union polity as a democratic, participatory and just polity.

2. The Classic Social Movement Agenda

In the mid-1990s, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) identified three overarching sets of explanatory factors among which students and scholars of social movements and revolutions were increasingly gaining consensus:

- i. the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movements;
- ii. organizations (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and
- iii. the collective processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action.

Whereas this research focuses on the third factor, it will still be worthwhile to go through a discussion of the first two factors: political opportunities and mobilizing structures. Douglas McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (2001), three of the most prominent social movement scholars, however, have added a fourth aspect and suggest that the literature of social movements since the 1960s has focused on four aspects: (1) political opportunities; (2) mobilizing structures; (3) collective action frames; and (4) repertoires of contention—that is, the array of means by which participants in contentious political settings make collective claims (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). Different social movement scholars refer to these four aspects as mediating factors between social change—which is the ultimate origin of contention—and contentious interaction—which is the dependent variable. Moreover, scholars stress that the classic social movement agenda for analyzing and explaining social contention stemmed from questions that scholars ask to link these various aspects together (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001):

- i. How does social change influence: (1) the opportunity available to potential political agents; (2) the mobilizing structures that promote communication, coordination, commitment and resource availability within and among potential agents; and, (3) the framing processes that produce communal definitions of events.

- ii. How do mobilizing structures shape political opportunity and to what degree is the relationship causal? What are its effects to framing processes and contentious interaction?
- iii. How do opportunity, mobilizing structures and framing processes structure the repertoires of contention?
- iv. How do available repertoires mediate relations between opportunity and contentious interaction, on one hand, and between framing processes and contentious interaction on the other?

Although the synthesis presented by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly is increasingly receiving attacks,¹⁵ most analyses of social movements and social contention remained rooted to one or more of these aspects.

2.1. Political Opportunities

Tarrow (Tarrow, 1994, p. 54) defines political opportunities as:

“...consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources for social movements.”

They refer to various aspects of the political system that affect the success of groups to mobilize effectively. Koopmans (1999, p. 97), on the other hand, describes political opportunities as “options for collective action with chances and risks attached to them, which depend on factors outside the mobilizing group.” Studies which employ this framework tend to focus on the dynamics and processes of three clusters of variables that may influence the outcome of

¹⁵ See Goodwin and Jasper (2003) for a discussion of the proponents and the critics.

particular social movement mobilization (Tadem, 2009). First, these studies “tend to look at political opportunity structures which include opening up access to power, shifts in ruling alignments brought about by cleavages within and among elites and the availability of influential allies” (Tarrow, 1994, p. 18). Second, changes in political opportunity structures are also investigated as these may either encourage or discourage mobilization and affect when and how contentions lead to reforms (Tadem, 2009). Further, the political opportunity framework seeks to explain “why movements take on different trajectories because of the difference of political opportunity structures across contexts over time” (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002, p. xi). However, political opportunities are not only “perceived and taken advantage of by social movements, they are also created” (Khagram, Riker, & Sikkink, 2002, p. 17).

Another important aspect to note with political opportunities is that they also need to be understood as perceived opportunities rather than simple objective realities that have causal relationships with social movements (Tadem, 2009). Social movement participants act on different interpretations of their perceptions of the presence or absence of political opportunities as well as whether these opportunities open up options of present constraints. Hilhorst (2003) emphasizes that in the emergence, sustainability or even [structural] collapse of social movements, it is important to understand the collective action frames used by movement participants and the processes through which these frames evolve and translate or fail to translate into collective action. Therefore, analyzing the discourses that are woven into social contention becomes an integral element of any investigation of mobilizations.

2.2. Mobilizing Structures

Mobilizing structures refer to “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996, p. 3). This framework was introduced initially during the 1960s as resource mobilization

theory as a criticism of the then dominant collective behavior paradigms which tended to view social movements as a reaction to feelings of deprivation and grievances from social stress and change. Resource mobilization theorists have continually stressed the role of organization and the capacity of aggrieved groups to gather and mobilize various kinds of resources (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006).

Social movement scholars distinguish between two basic types of mobilizing structures: (1) formal organizations; and, (2) informal networks. The Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide aux Citoyens (ATTAC) movement exemplifies the first type while the second type can be seen in the web of interpersonal contacts and exchanges among movement activists and participants exemplified by the different national, regional and world forums (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). Both types represent vital resources for any form of collective action and della Porta and Diani (1999, p. 20) define mobilizing structures as “informal networks based on shared beliefs and solidarity which mobilize about conflictual issues through the frequent use of various forms of protest.”

Both political opportunity structures and mobilizing structures impact on “the mode of collective action social movement actors engage in, the manner in which they frame issues for public consumption and how the objectives they address emerge from the intersection of structures and meanings” (Whittier, 2002, p. 290).

2.3. Framing Processes

The third main component of the classic social movement agenda which captures cultural dimensions of social movements is the framing process. Of the three aspects of the classic agenda, this is the most loosely defined as it has been used with such a varied array of meanings as to virtually become synonymous with culture (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). The

analytical application to sociology of the concept and process of framing is due to the influence of Goffman's (1975) book on the same topic.

Historically, not until the mid-1980s did the literature on social movements pay attention to the analytic utility of framing processes, and in general, the construction of meaning in contentious politics. This is largely due to the fact that much of the post-war social movement theorizing was influenced by Marxist theory and as such, it had often assumed that collective action came out of material interests and that collective actors were economic classes (Williams, 2004). For many scholars, social movements meant the labor-socialist movement.

With the emergence of New Social Movements which are not mainly motivated by economic interests and in which movement participants are not essentially out for material gain, the cultural component of social movement theory became more visible and could no longer be ignored. New social movements¹⁶ were often thought to be moral crusades and being such a new phenomenon, it needed to be theorized distinctly for the historical moment in which they occurred (Williams, 2004). The cultural component had to do with the (1) content of the movement ideology, (2) the concerns motivating activists, and (3) the arena in which collective action was focused (Williams, 2004). Focusing on culture as an arena of action and cultural change as a consequence of movement efforts added an important aspect to structural approach perspectives such as political opportunities and resource mobilization. Poletta and Jasper (2001) argue that new social movement theorists' work on 'collective identity' and its role in movement emergence was an important step forward. It provided a path away from the rational actor theory of structuralist perspectives—in particular, the 'free-rider' problem that pervaded the study of collective action during the period.

¹⁶ For new social movements, the arena lies in cultural understandings, norms and identities rather than material interests and economic distribution.

This ‘cultural turn’ in social movement theorizing has since been geared towards “bringing meaning back in” and it has focused on the movements’ use of symbols, language, discourse, identity and other dimensions of culture to recruit, retain, mobilize and motivate members (Williams, 2004). The apparent cultural turn in social movement theorizing suggests that between the late 1960s and mid 1980s scholars in one manner or the other increasingly considered the interpretative process as something that cannot be taken for granted in relation to social movement analysis (Snow, 2004).

The most widely articulated of these cultural approaches is the framing perspective. Building on Goffman’s (1975) book, Benford (1993), Snow and Benford (2000), Snow (2004), Goodwin and Jasper (2003), among others, have presented, elaborated, reviewed and criticized the framing perspective. Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford (1986) joined together the growing yet scattered work and empirical observations under the heading frame alignment processes. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996, p. 6) define framing processes as “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.” Snow (2004, p. 384) introduces a more comprehensive definition taking into consideration the evolution of the concept since the mid 1990s: “Framing processes focus attention on the signifying work or meaning construction of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.” Snow’s definition and treatment of the concept provides a conceptual overview of the framing perspective by focusing on collective action frames and the way in which they are similar to or different from everyday interpretative frames. He argues that the framing perspective is rooted in the symbolic interactionist and constructivist tenet that meanings do not automatically or naturally attach themselves to objects, events or experiences we encounter, but often arise through interactively based interpretative processes (Snow, Soule, & Kreisi, 2004). In keeping with this, the evolution

of the framing perspective in the literature has consistently focused on the signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by social-movement activists, participants, and other actors (e.g. antagonists, elites, media, countermovements, etc.) relevant to the interests of social movements and the challenges they mount (Snow, 2004).

Williams argues that the most important contribution of the framing perspective to the literature on social movements is the fact that it calls attention to and explicitly theorizes the symbolic and meaning work done by movement activists “as they articulate grievances, generate consensus on the importance and forms of collective action to be pursued, and present rationales for their actions and proposed solutions to adherents, bystanders and antagonists” (Williams, 2004, p. 93).

Whereas prior inquiries into social movements dynamics take for granted the ideas and beliefs carried by social movements themselves, the framing perspective, in contrast, problematizes this basic assumption. It portrays movements as signifying agents engaged in the production and maintenance of meanings (Snow, 2004). Hall (1982, p. 56) calls this the politics of signification because, he contends, “that just like local governments, the state, representatives of various authority structures, the media, and interested publics,” social movements make and remake meaning. Social movements “frame or assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198). The resultant products are called collective action frames.

Just like picture frames, collective action frames focus attention by punctuating or specifying what in our sensual field is relevant and what is irrelevant. In relation to the object of orientation, it specifies what is ‘inside the frame’ and what is ‘outside the frame.’ More

importantly, frames function as articulation mechanisms by tying together the various punctuated elements of the presented scene so that a particular set of meanings is conveyed to the recipient instead of another. On the flipside, frames may also perform transformative functions in the sense of altering the meanings of the objects of attention and their relationship to other objects in the scene, as in the transformation of grievances and misfortunes into injustices in the context of collective action (Snow, 2004).

In analyzing the overall development of the literature on the concept of framing as applied to the analysis of social movements, Snow and Benford (2000) focus on four fundamental areas: (1) the conceptualization of collective action frames and the delineation of their characteristic features; (2) identification of framing processes relevant to the generation, elaboration and diffusion of collective action frames; (3) specification of various socio-cultural contextual factors that constrain and facilitate framing processes; and, (4) elaboration of consequences of framing processes for other movement processes and outcomes.

Collective Action Frames

Framing as the process of constructing meaning or signification denotes an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention even at the level of reality construction—active in the sense that it entails that something is being done and processual in the sense of an evolving process (Snow & Benford, 2000). The process involves the participation of social movement organizations acting as individual agents in pursuit of their goals. The framing process is contentious because it involves “generation of interpretative frames that may not only differ from existing ones but may also challenge them” (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 612). The outcome of such a framing activity is what Snow and Benford label as ‘collective action frames.’

For Goffman (1975) frames denote ‘schematas of interpretation’ that enable individuals to “locate, perceive, identify and label” (Goffman, 1975, p. 21) occurrences within their life space and the world at large. These frames aid in generating the significance of experiences as well as their meaning and as such function to organize experience and guide action (Snow & Benford, 2000). Collective action frames serve this interpretative purpose but in ways that are “intended to mobilize adherents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198). It is in this sense that Snow and Benford (2000, p. 614) argue that collective action frames are “action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of social movement organizations.”

Collective action frames are characterized by two distinct features: one concerns their action-oriented function, or a social movement organization’s core framing task (Snow & Benford, 1988); the second refers to the interactive and discursive processes that attend to these core framing tasks and as such are generative of a collective action frame (Gamson, 1991).

Since the very purpose of social movement mobilizations is to seek remedy for or alter some problematic situation, it follows that this contention is contingent on the identification of the source of causality, blame, and culpable agents. The process of constructing collective action frames consists of movement participants (1) negotiating a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, (2) making attributions as to who or what is to be blamed, (3) articulating an alternative set of arrangements, and (4) urging others to act in concert to affect change (Snow & Benford, 1988). These aspects are referred to respectively as diagnostic framing, or problem identification and attribution, prognostic framing, and motivational framing (Snow & Benford, 1988). In the process of engaging in these framing tasks, social movement agents address the problem of consensus mobilization and action

mobilization (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). Consensus mobilization assists in the formation of agreements and action mobilization fosters action.

On diagnostic framing, Gamson (1991) developed the concept of ‘injustice frames’—as a precursor to collective noncompliance, protest, and/or rebellion, injustice frames are modes of interpretation generated and adopted by those who define the actions of an authority as unjust¹⁷ (Snow & Benford, 2000). Numerous studies populate a sub-category of injustice frame studies and seek to identify the victims of a particular injustice and consequently amplify that aspect.

The second core framing task, prognostic framing, refers to the formulation and articulation of a proposed set of solutions to the problems or issues identified in diagnostic framing. Snow and Benford observe that the identification of certain problems and issues in diagnostic framing “tends to constrain the range of possible ‘reasonable’ solutions and strategies” that social movement organizations may advocate (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 616). Klandermans and Goslinga (1996) asserted that it is important to bear in mind that prognostic framing occurs within a multi-organizational field which consists of various social movement organizations, their adversaries, their targets of influence, media and bystanders. As such, counterframing activities, or refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents along with rationales for the advocates’ proposed remedies (Benford, 1993), are not uncommon.

The process of generating motivational frames involves a ‘call to arms’ or a generation of the rationale for engaging in the collective action (Snow & Benford, 2000). Gamson (1991) identifies this as the development of the agency component of collective action frames which Benford (Benford, 1993, p. 196) isolated into four generic vocabularies which appear in the

¹⁷ Several case studies focus on the development of injustice frames. See Anheier, Neidhart and Vortkamp (1998), Čapek (1993) and Klandermans and Goslinga (1996) for examples.

course of interaction among social movement participants and non-participants: movement activists, rank-and-file supporters, recruits and others. These are vocabularies of severity (the immensity of the danger), urgency (the urgent necessity to achieve the proposed situation), efficacy (the power of the new awareness and your role in unfolding the drama, and propriety (your awareness is needed to achieve the proposed situation). Such socially constructed vocabularies provide adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and for sustaining their participation.

Variability in Collective Action Frames

Collective action frames also possess variable features. Social movement scholars elaborated on the following features: (1) problem identification and direction or locus of attribution; (2) interpretative scope and influence; and, (3) degree of resonance. Snow and Benford (2000, p. 618) hold that the first feature, that of problem identification and direction of attribution, is the most obvious way in which collective action frames vary. This is due to the very nature and origin of social movements, as a manner of expressing grievances and manifest contention with regard to particular problems or issues affecting a particular collective. In its most fundamental sense, collective action frames vary along this feature because different populations or collectives may have been affected by problems in dissimilar manners.

Another feature of collective action frames concerns their variation in scope and influence owing to their flexibility/rigidity and inclusivity/exclusivity. Collective action frames vary along this dimension in terms of the number and breadth of themes or ideas they incorporate or articulate (Snow & Benford, 2000). In many instances, the scope of collective action frames associated with most movements is often limited to the interests of a particular group or set of related problems. However, some collective actions frames are broad in terms of scope and these frames often function as “a kind of master algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations

and activities of other movements” (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 618). Snow and Benford (Snow & Benford, 1992, 2000) term these relatively broad and inclusive collective action frames as master frames. In their survey of the literature they argue that only a handful of collective action frames are sufficiently broad and inclusive to qualify as master frames. For example, rights frames (Williams, 2004), choice frames (Davies, S., 1999), injustice frames (Carroll & Ratner, 1996; Gamson, 1991), environmental justice frames (Čapek, 1993), culturally pluralist frames (Davies, M. & Ryner, 2006; Davies, S., 1999), oppositional frames, hegemonic frames, and a return to democracy frame.

Resonance, as another dimension in which collective action frames vary, acquires its salience in the analysis of frame generation and propagation when we consider the question of why certain frames ‘resonate’ while others do not. Resonance in this sense concerns the characteristic of collective action frames to be accepted by movement participants and in turn, be propagated in their networks. According to Snow and Benford (1988) two sets of factors influence a collective action frame’s degree of resonance: (1) the credibility of the frame; and, (2) its relative salience.

On one hand, frame credibility is a function of three factors: (1) frame consistency, (2) empirical credibility, and (3) credibility of the frame articulators or claim makers¹⁸ (Snow & Benford, 2000). A frame’s consistency is evident in the correspondence of a social movement organization’s beliefs, claims and actions. Consequently, inconsistency can emerge from apparent contradictions between beliefs and claims; as well as in perceived contradictions between frames and [tactical] actions (Snow & Benford, 2000).

¹⁸ Also see Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford (1986) and Snow, Soule and Kreisi (2004).

Further, empirical credibility concerns whether the empirical references of frames afford a degree of persuasiveness in that these frames are accepted to be *real indicators* of the social movement organization's claims. Gamson (1991) and Williams, R.S. (2004) both contend that the more culturally plausible and believable the claimed evidence and the greater the number of observed evidences, the more credible the frame is and the broader its appeal.

As with any struggle for meaning, the perceived credibility of the articulators has tremendous impact on the persuasiveness of the message. This is a well established fact in the social psychology of communication and the same is also true for collective action frames by social movement organizations. Variables such as social status, expertise and its relevance to the issue have been found to have undeniable impact on the persuasiveness of issue articulations. In principle, social psychologists hold, the more relevant the status and/or perceived expertise is to the issue being articulated as well as the relevance of the represented organization's track record, the more plausible and resonant the framings are.

Admittedly, European integration is not only multilevel, it is also symbolic (and contestation is consequently present on the level of symbolisms)—the increasingly relevant role of ideas as a precondition for the definition of the interests of different sectors. Subsequently, the steps and effect of integration are not straightforward consequences of the 'exogenous' interests of the [main] actors. Instead, their 'imagined Europe' is seen as exerting substantial influence (della Porta & Caiani, 2009, p. 18).

With this in mind, an instrumental analysis of European integration seems decreasingly able to sustain the integration process or, at the very least, legitimate such process. The symbolic construction of Europe and a European identity become more and more relevant (della Porta &

Caiani, 2009). These two processes need to be advanced side by side to be able to come up with a more compelling roadmap for European integration.

3. Neoliberal Globalization and Its Implications for the Politics of Contention

“Globalization, understood as a particular, contemporary configuration in the relationship between capital and the nation-state is demonstrably creating inequalities both within and across societies, spiraling processes of ecological degradation and crisis, and unviable relations between finance and manufacturing capital, as well as between goods and the wealth required to purchase them” (Appadurai, 2000, pp. 15-16).

Arguably, the world has witnessed globalization in one form or another since the beginning of human existence but only recently have we seen an ever increasing speed and velocity of international integration owing largely to the rapid turnover of technological innovations in the financial and communication sectors. However, the term “globalization” may mean different things to different people(s) and to have a substantially meaningful discussion of the globalization phenomenon it becomes imperative that we acquire an awareness of the conceptual lenses through which different people(s) view globalization.

Scholte (1999, 2005) outlines how contemporary scholars conceptualize globalization: as internationalization, liberalization, universalization, westernization/modernization, and deterritorialization. Accounts of globalization stressing the aspect of increasing international integration and interdependence as well as transborder relations and transactions: flow of capital, goods and services; transborder migration; and the expanding integration of communication tend to view globalization through the lens of internationalization. Liberalization, on the other hand, shifts the spotlight to the move to reduce if not remove barriers to trade and controls on capital which in turn would lead to the development of a global economy. The universalization lens

offers a different perspective. It highlights the progressive global standardization of experiences, cultural norms and tastes, and governance style. The westernization/modernization lens plays up the dominance of Western values and institutions in the diffusion of norms and values across the globe and often highlights the perception of cultural imperialism and threats to traditional 'backward' cultures. Lastly, viewing globalization through the lens of deterritorialization highlights the decoupling of activities from territorial, often physical, logic and constraints (Scholte, 2005).

Moving from an acknowledgement of the different conceptions of globalization one then encounters the controversy of identifying its causes and effects. The disagreement revolves around the myriad aspects of causes and effects generally lumped together under the concept of globalization with each aspect interacting with the rest. Kratochwil (2002, p. 40) suggest that the globalization discourse lumps together an assortment of different processes of change, "each one being propelled by its own complex casual chains and interactions". Under this light, one must not think of globalization as having one cause (Kratochwil, 2002) as the globalization process itself is also an amalgamated effect of specific disjoint processes. From this point, some scholars suggest that globalization may be conceptualized as "simultaneous interactive cascades of change" with each cause of future effects of previous changes at earlier stages (Fuchs, 2007, p. 112).

Faced with such methodological difficulties in isolating causes from effects, scholars who have examined the varied processes of globalization argue that we can identify broad enabling structural conditions as driving forces behind globalization (Scholte, 2005). These structures are: (1) technological progress, especially in the areas of communications, data processing and transport; (2) economic incentives; and, (3) facilitative regulatory frameworks

The technological revolution has tremendously increased the speed and quantity of extra-territorial transactions. In his book *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Harvey (1997, pp. 239-240) calls this process ‘time-space compression’ which refers to sub-processes that accelerate the experience of time and reduce the significance of distance in a given [historical] moment. In his words, it refers to “processes that... revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time.” Paul Virilio (1986, p. 142) uses the term “dromology” to refer to the “science [or logic] of speed” and emphasizes its importance when considering the structuring of society in relation to warfare and modern media. Further, recent technological developments have made possible the creation of material infrastructures locally which allow for greater supraterritorial political, economic and social relations (Wriston, 1992). Consequently, ideas and values easily diffuse globally and permeate traditional state boundaries. The advent of ‘digitization’ radically reduced the significance of physical barriers and formed the basis for the speed and quantity of global communications. Collectively, these developments created opportunities for the formation of a ‘global consciousness’ characterized by a growing consciousness of events outside our individual sphere of action.

Economic incentives have provided a second enabling condition for globalization. In increasingly open and monetized international markets, the ability to gain profits has proven to be a dominant driving force for agents’ global orientation and desire to extend economic activity beyond their immediate physical territory. To illustrate this point we look at the prevailing investment behavior of corporations, transnational corporations in particular. Guided by the dictum of ‘maximize profits and minimize costs,’ these corporations compile their investment portfolio in terms of the favorability of the investment climate in certain territories (i.e. political stability, infrastructure, level of tax burden, presence of labor unions, etc). As such, local and national governments compete to attract these investments by lowering tax burdens and reducing any risks and uncertainties on the part of the companies, often to the detriment of local

labor and health standards. Looking at the European Union enlargement to illustrate this point, one of the major issues surrounding the fifth enlargement of the Union is the concern on the ‘underdeveloped’ nature of the economies of the acceding countries: Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Old members’ national trade unions expressed concern that businesses would relocate their operations to new members’ territories to enjoy lower taxation and lower labor and healthcare related costs. As Hunya (2004) notes, there is sufficient evidence in the shifts of capital, labor and investment of foreign investment enterprises to support a ‘flying geese’ development model. He observes that transnational corporations from the medium income to high income countries relocated to low and low-medium-tech export-oriented subsidiaries in the low-cost Central and Eastern European countries in the period from 1998 to 2002.

3.1. Epistemic Communities with Epistemic Authority

The growing complexity of global issues have time and again shown that traditional nation-centric policy approaches have produced dismal results both on the national and international level despite the disproportionate amount of resources behind such policies. The growing interdependence among states has all but nullified the returns that self-serving behavior of states brings. In recognizing this trend, many scholars have tried to get out of the blind alley of traditional realism. The overarching trend which prompted scholars to do so was the seemingly dwindling relative power-monopoly of states in the international system. Therefore, inventing overlaying structures could help explain the new trend in state behavior—cooperation as opposed to the realist ‘anarchic’ system with self-serving state behavior.

Keohane (1989, p. 173) acknowledged the need for a ‘reflective’ approach and expressed disappointment in the absence of “a research program that shows in particular studies that it can illuminate important issues in world politics.” Krasner (1985) notes the importance of shared

beliefs in explaining the Group of 77 (G-77) cooperation. Moreover he underscores the role of shared understanding in regime creation. Keohane (1984) posits the possibility that states may learn to recalculate their interests. As political actors interact with each other, the ambit of their shared meanings increases and even more so if and when they recognize a common interest and common political opportunities. Gilpin (1981, p. 227) describes situations when states [and political actors] “learn to be more enlightened in their definitions of their interests and can learn to be more cooperative in their behavior.”

In the last decades, much attention has been focused on the cognitive aspects of human decision-making. George (1980, p. 55) observes that “developments in psychology have produced a major paradigm shift referred to by some as ‘a cognitive revolution.’” Previous cognitive models portrayed man as a consistency-seeker—suggesting that potentially valuable and useful information would be disregarded and or discarded unless it fits in the existing world-view of the individual. The ‘post-revolutionary’ model portrays man as a problem solver—suggesting that individuals actively seek out relevant information in order to solve a particular problem.¹⁹ Portraying individuals as information-seekers would lead us to consider that information-providers can have significant influence on the individual’s attitudes and his behavior (Sundström, 2000).

The epistemic communities approach is what amounts to a reflective response to the challenge that Keohane brought forward. Going from [individual] human volition to local, national and international action requires that agents have a minimum amount of shared

¹⁹ Although the traditional and post-revolutionary models are presented in juxtapose, it is important to note that the view that man is a problem-solver by no means supersedes the view that man is a consistency-seeker. It may be argued that the post-revolutionary model only tries to build on and expand the scope of the traditional model. George (1980, p. 56) notes: “This recent emphasis on viewing man as a problem-solver does not mean that is no longer fruitful to view man as a consistency-seeker in certain contexts. What it does is to overcome the narrowness of the earlier model of man as merely a consistency-seeker...”

understandings about how different variables interact and which combination of actions will lead to widely acceptable outcomes. Authors who investigated the emergence of epistemic communities—networks of knowledge-based experts—have recognized that between systemic conditions (i.e. local/national/international structures), knowledge and outcomes lies human agency.²⁰ These scholars contend that epistemic communities play a vital role in articulating the cause-and-effect relationships of complex issues, helping states identify their interests, framing issues [even] before they are brought up, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points of a wide range of issues (Haas, 1992). Haas (1992, p. 3) further argues that the “control over power” and the “diffusion of new ideas and information” can lead to varying patterns of behavior which leads him to propose that control over knowledge and information is an important dimension of [political] power.

An epistemic community is a network of professionals with a certain level of recognized (and often) shared expertise in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain of issue-area (Haas, 1992). These professionals continually build upon each others’ work in an atmosphere of critical debates which results in continuous refinements of their (often) divergent arguments. It is specifically this activity which lends credence and authority to their claims. Furthermore, Haas lays down the particular characteristics of epistemic communities:

- i. a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members;
- ii. shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired

²⁰ See, for example, Wendt (1987).

- outcomes;
- iii. shared notions of validity—that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and,
 - iv. a common policy enterprise, that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence.²¹

Epistemic policy coordination has a simple causal logic with the major dynamics being uncertainty, interpretation and institutionalization (Haas, 1992). The forms of uncertainty that arise and tend to stimulate agents' demands for information stem from the strong dependence of each agent's choice of action for obtaining the necessary results on other agents' choice(s). In the case of states, this manifests in their strong dependence on other relevant (and at times irrelevant) states' policy choices for obtaining specific results.

Table 1 below illustrates the major analytical paradigms that examine plausible drivers of policy change by comparing the epistemic communities approach with other approaches to the study of policy change advanced by international relations scholars.

²¹ Adler and Haas (1992) note that characteristics of epistemic communities that are worth considering include: members of an epistemic community share intersubjective understandings; have a shared way of knowing; have shared patterns of reasoning; have a policy project drawing on shared values, shared causal beliefs, and the use of shared discursive practices; and have a shared commitment to the application and production of knowledge.

Table 1: Approaches to the study of policy change

Approach	Level of analysis and area of study	Factors that influence policy change	Mechanisms and effects of change	Primary actors
Epistemic communities approach	Transnational; state administrators and international institutions.	Knowledge; causal and principled beliefs.	Diffusion of information and learning; shifts in the patterns of decision making.	Epistemic communities; individual states.
Neorealist approaches ²²	International; states in political and economy systems.	Distribution of capabilities; distribution of costs and benefits from actions.	Technological change and war; shifts in the available power resources of states and in the nature of the game.	States.
Dependency theory-based approaches ²³	International; global system.	Comparative advantage of states in the global division of labor; control over economic resources.	Changes in production; shifts in the location of states in the global division of labor.	States in the core, periphery, and semiperiphery; multinational corporations.
Poststructural approaches ²⁴	International; discourse and language.	Usage of meanings of words.	Discourse; the opening of new political spaces and opportunities.	Unclear.

Source: Haas (1992, p. 6)

3.2. Transnational Networks, Transnational Protest and Policy Change

By focusing on the interaction involving nonstate actors in international relations, Keck and Sikkink (1998) distinguish three different categories of transnational networks according to their motivations: (1) those with essentially instrumental goals, especially transnational corporations and banks; (2) those motivated primarily by shared causal ideas, such as scientific groups or epistemic communities; and (3) those motivated primarily by shared principles ideas or values (transnational [protest] advocacy networks). In addition to their intrinsic motivation, these categories of transnational networks also differ in their endowment of resources and patterns of influence. Among actors with instrumental goals, one would expect that economic resources would carry the most influence. In epistemic communities, technical expertise and the ability to convince policy makers of the significance of these expertises become the currency. In transnational protest networks, although very similar to epistemic communities in their reliance on information, framing along with interpretation and strategic use of information is most important (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

²² For examples, see Gilpin (1981), Krasner (1985), Waltz (1979).

²³ For examples, see Cardoso & Faletto (1979), Evans (1979, 1989), Galtung (1973, 1980), Wallerstein (1979).

²⁴ For examples, see Der Derian & Shapiro (1989), Ashley & Walker (1990).

During the early years of the epistemic communities approach, theorists excluded activist groups from their definition. Epistemic communities were seen mainly as groups of scientists, limited to more technical issues in international relations. On the other hand, activists and protest networks were considered as actors who were “not considered by canons of reasoning” and who framed issues in simplistic terms by dividing the world into “bad guys” and “good guys” (Peterson, 1992, pp. 149, 155). In recent years, this partition has slowly blurred in recognition of the increasing number of ‘technical and scientific experts’ entering and propagating the discourse in protest networks.²⁵ In Dobusch’s and Quack’s (2008) work, they analyzed the transnational dynamics present in the case of the Creative Commons.²⁶ They looked at the organizational and ideational features of the Creative Commons (1) as a transnational community with its own shared identity, and (2) its roles in international rule setting. Table 2 compares the key features of epistemic communities and social movements as presented by Dobusch and Quack.

Table 2: Comparison of the key features of epistemic communities and social movements

	Epistemic Communities	Social Movements
Common Political Project	Yes	Yes
Shared Interests	Yes	Yes
Shared Principles Beliefs	Yes	Yes
Size	Limited	Large
Boundaries	Relatively clear	Fuzzy
Internal Heterogeneity	Low	High
Causal Beliefs	Consensual	Disputed or absent
Knowledge Base	Shared	Not necessarily shared
Means of Changing the World	Persuasion by facts and arguments	Persuasion and pressure by action and framing

Source: Dobusch & Quack (2008, p. 10)

²⁵ See Bendell & Ellersiek (2009) and Calavita (2002), among others.

²⁶ The Creative Commons was founded in 2001 as a US-based non-profit organization pushing for the inclusion of a “reasonable, flexible copyright” into existing restrictive copyright laws. Creative Commons develops licenses that enable people to dedicate their creative works to the public domain—or retain their copyright while licensing them as free for certain uses, on certain conditions. It was initially seen as an experiment in favor of the free use of intellectual products such as texts, music and software. Other organizations in the wider transnational community also actively support the ideas of “free use” and “share alike.” In the field of free and open source software, the Free Software Foundation; in artistic production and information, the Wikimedia Foundation; in science, different open access initiatives with the Budapest Open Access Initiative as an example.

4. CASE STUDY: Transnational Protest, European Integration and the ESF

4.1. Protest Going Transnational

“For two exceptional centuries, European states and their extensions elsewhere have succeeded remarkably in circumscribing and controlling the resources within their perimeters... But in our era... at least in Europe, the era of strong state is now ending” (Tilly, 1994, p. 3).

The progression of social movement protest from the national to the transnational requires a broader historical perspective by confronting it with previous forms of collective action and social movements (Cattacin, Giugni, & Passy, 1997). Table 3 portrays the relations between social movements and the state since the seventeenth century. Cattacin, Giugni and Passy (1997) distinguish between five phases in the course of the development of European [civil] society. Each phase is determined by a central social conflict which structured potential political contention during the period.

Table 3: Phases of development of the European society and social movements

Dimensions and periods	Central conflict	Main movements	Types of state and mode of state intervention
Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries	State expansion	Anti-tax revolts and other forms of resistance to state expansion	Absolutist state; war/direct extraction of human and financial resources
Nineteenth century	Class struggle and poverty	Labor movement	Liberal state; rights, action frame
1900-1960	Distribution of welfare	Institutionalization of the labor movement	Welfare state; planning/nationalization
1960-1990	Bureaucratization of society and risks linked to economic growth	New Social Movements	Welfare state; planning/regulation
Since 1990	Justice and democracy on a global scale	Global Justice Movements	Multilevel governance; neoliberalism/loss of control

Source: Adapted from Cattacin, Giugni & Passy (1997) cited in Giugni, Bandler & Eggert (2006, p. 4).

The first phase, roughly covering the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is the period of the expansion of the nation-state, subjecting its population to its authority in “more direct and intrusive ways” (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006, p. 4). In this phase, the nation-state is

extensively engaged in war-making to expand its territories. Consequently, the main form of contention during this period was the resistance to the expansion of the absolutist state. The second phase, roughly around the nineteenth century, saw the consolidation of industrial capitalism and the creation of the proletariat class (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006) which in turn gave rise to class conflict. The central conflicts then were class struggle and poverty and it was the labor movement that became the main social movement engaged in collective action. The third phase saw the distribution of welfare as its central conflict during the period covering more or less the early twentieth century. The labor movement remained the principal actor during this period despite the emergence of new types of movements—peace movements, for example. New social movements (NSMs) are typically traced from the late 1960s until the early 1990s. This fourth phase saw the emergence of resistance to the increasing bureaucratization of society (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). Peace movements, ecology movements, antinuclear movements and women's movements mobilized around this central issue against the increasingly planning and regulating welfare state. Around the 1990s, a new form of contention emerged—transnational contention which today is embodied by the Global Justice Movement (GJM). Arguably, this new movement combined the claims for welfare distribution of the labor movements with the claims to emancipation of the NSMs.

Cattacin, Giugni and Passy (1997) also analyzed the impact of social movements along the dimension of their central claims and means of action. Table 4 below illustrates four dimensions of social contention according to their central claims. First, anti-tax revolts and other forms of resistance to the state were intended as opposition to the direct extraction of resources by the state. These manifested themselves largely as local revolts whose impacts were narrow and unsustained. Second, labor movements pushed for the improvement of working and living conditions as well as for redistribution policies. One clear impact of labor movement protests was the institutionalization labor movements in interest representation. Third, NSMs have

broadly mobilized for a diminution of risks in society and advanced greater individual autonomy (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). Their agendas of contention have generally demonstrated the pluralism of civil society. Fourth, despite the heterogeneity of the composition of the GJM as well as the diversity of the claims it advances, the struggle against neoliberalism and the promotion of democracy can be considered its central claim. The need to struggle against neoliberalism is almost universally shared by the participants of the GJM largely due to the widely held view that neoliberalism further entrenches inequalities in society. The gap between the global North and global South has been the focus of this contention and, by way of extension, culpability is ascribed to international economic institutions considered to be the main drivers of neoliberal globalization—the World Bank, IMF, WTO, multinational lending institutions, etc.

Table 4: Central claims, privileged means of action and major impacts of social movements

Dimensions of movements	Central claims	Privileged means of action	Major impacts
Anti-tax revolts and other forms of resistance to state expansion	Opposition to taxes and to the direct extraction of resources by the state	Local revolts	Local and temporary (often weak)
Labor movement	Improvement of work and living conditions/ redistribution policies	Strikes/mass demonstrations	Institutionalization within the interest representation circuit/acceleration of the establishment of the welfare state
NSMs	Diminution of risks in society	Mass demonstrations/direct actions/lobbying/media	Acknowledgement of the pluralism of society
GJM	Struggle against neoliberalism/promotion of democracy	Mass demonstrations/social forums/ democratic deliberation	Democratization of society

Source: Adapted from Cattacin, Giugni & Passy (1997) cited in Giugni, Bandler & Eggert (2006, p. 6).

The number of protests directed at EU institutions can be linked to the “undeniable deficit in representative democracy—supposing that protestors could produce disagreements and criticisms, these would be difficult to mobilize against an unaccountable and opaque target” (della Porta & Caiani, 2009, p. 42). Bendell, Ellersiek and Vermeulen (2008) point out that various groups of activists thus seem to recognize their own concerns in the critiques put

forward by large coalitions and join them or build their own coalitions. Hence, coalitions often overlap and are composed of all kinds of activist groups and among them are non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, community organizations, churches, environmentalists, pro-democracy campaigners, communists, peace groups, anarchists, farmers, indigenous people's groups, etc.

In the last few decades we have witnessed the expansion of political expression from the “traditionally public” issues of the welfare, security and job provision by the state to “post-materialist”²⁷ and “post-industrialist” issues of gender, environment and world peace. However, in spite of the varying definitions and manner of employing the three facets of the classic social movement agenda, the present explanations of political contention via social movements share one common characteristic—they are all based on a nation-centric view of social movements (Giugni, Bandler, & Eggert, 2006). Tilly's ground-breaking works (1984, 1986, 1994) laid the foundations for modern protest politics during the period of transformation from an old to a new repertoire of contention and since then, social movements have consistently been examined within the confines of the nation-state.²⁸

The general understandings of social movements have developed with the mostly implicit assumption that the modern nation-state serves as the [only salient] context for political contention (Tilly, 1984). Despite the growing recognition by social scientists that the globalization process has transformed traditional state structures, the view of the nation-state being the main venue for and the defining element of political opportunities for collective action

²⁷ Contemporary theorists have related the emergence of new social movements to the notion of postmaterialism advanced by R. Inglehart. In Inglehart's (1977) book, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, he refers to a new religious moral against “consumerism;” some major contemporary theorists who have had important contributions to articulating the concept of postmaterialism within the context of their own intellectual sphere and traditions include: Manuel Castells, Alain Touraine, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Claus Offe, Alberto Melucci, Immanuel Wallerstein and Jürgen Habermas.

remains pervasive (Tarrow, 2001, 2005). In particular, while it is the case that state structures are the ones that govern policy making and activities of political association, resource mobilization and political expression, research and experience suggest the view that states are embedded in an “increasingly influential global polity that affects political conflicts” (Smith, H., 2002, p. 2). And McAdam (1999, p. xxxi) notes it accurately when he states, “[b]y orienting their analysis to shifts in domestic opportunities, scholars in the political process traditionally have generally failed to appreciate the multiple embeddings that shape the interpretations of actions of political actors.”

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (1995) highlighted the centrality of globalization and transnational contention to the study of social movements. Giugni (1998) puts forward a general framework for explaining why movements in different national settings tend to assume similar forms. These cross-national similarities Giugni attributed to three global-level processes:

- i. globalization, which leads movements in different contexts to respond similarly to common transnational threats or opportunities;
- ii. structural affinity, whereby global pressures lead states to mimic structures and policies of other actors in their environment, consequently producing similar opportunity structures for collective action; and,
- iii. diffusion processes, which occur as information and ideas about collective action in different countries.

In analyzing cross-national similarities between social movements, Giugni (1998) singles out concrete items which could be tested by empirical observations. He examines six movement aspects that tend to be shared. First, social movements may address similar issues, themes and goals. States and societies all over the globe have witnessed the rise of the same movements such as peace movements, women’s movements and environmental/ecology movements. NSMs

illustrate how issues and themes of protests in different contexts can resemble each other irrespective of the territorial location. Although movements across countries may vary in size, their goals tend to converge or are at least similar. Moreover, Giugni observes that the targets of protest actions often coincide: nuclear power plants, air and water pollution, the army, nuclear weapons, abortions rights, to name a few.

Second, movements “may display similar levels of mobilization”—they organize similar numbers of protest actions and/or involve similar numbers of participants in these said protest actions (Giugni, 1998, p. 91). NSMs, for example, have been shown to have mobilized to a roughly similar extent in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland from 1975 to 1989, while in France the level of organization was comparably much lower. However, it is important to note that the difference is less pronounced among the four countries’ whole social movement sectors since ‘old’ social movements were stronger in France than in any of the three other countries (Kreisi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Giugni, 1995).

Third, the strategies, tactics and forms of action may converge. Giugni notes though that research on this dimension has so far focused on the cross-national variations of action repertoires (Giugni, 1998). Even though protests vary in their degree of radicalism across national contexts, street demonstrations for example, prevail everywhere. The popular adoption of non-violent ‘sit-in’ protests is also a good example.

Fourth, it may be observed that social movements have similar organizational structures—which refer to the level of resource and other organizational features (centralized/decentralized, formal/informal, integrated/isolated, etc.). Taking the example of NSMs, at the early stages of their development they utilized non-hierarchical, participatory forms of organization (Giugni, 1998). In Gerlach’s (1999, p. 87) terms, “segmented, polycentric, informal networks” or SPIN.

Fifth, cultural frames, ideas and discourses may show similar patterns (McAdam & Rucht, 1993). In specific terms, these refer to the ideological, symbolic and interpretative substance of protest and mobilization activities: the Marxist-Leninist and Maoist slogans employed by European student mobilizations in the sixties; the small-is-beautiful slogan of the early ecology movements pushing forward the sustainable development concept; the nuclear-free zone concept, to name a few.

Sixth, the [parallel] timing of the protests (Giugni, 1998). This point is illustrated by the almost simultaneous rise in student protests in the late 1960s, mobilization against the deployment of NATO missiles in the 1980s, and the strong opposition to the communist regime in Eastern Europe, protest against nuclear power plants which peaked in many of the Western industrialized countries between 1975 and 1977 (Giugni, 1998).

4.2. The European Social Forums

“The European Social forum is an open meeting space designed for in-depth reflection, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and planning of effective action among entities and movements of civil society that are engaged in building a planetary society centered on the human being” (FSE-ESF.org, 2008).

In hosting the first European Social Forum in November 2002, Florence played host to a gathering of movements and activists from all over Europe with the purpose of expressing their disagreement with the outright commitment of European governments to free market policies, growing [international and regional] militarism. This chapter sets out to portray as well as provide

a critical analysis of how the annual ESF provide a transnational public arena for (1) contestation, and (2) legitimization of the European integration project from below.

In pioneering research into political spaces, Melucci (1985) argues that social movements do not operate along conventional political lines but are concerned instead with the democratization of everyday life. This in turn, requires these movements to organize as networks occupying and thriving in an intermediate public space between state and civil society. Taking this as a point of departure, I will argue that the process of European integration thus far has stimulated enough political opportunities and structures for the emergence of a 'European public sphere' which goes by the name of the European Social Forum.

Due to a significant push provided by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (formally, the Treaty on European Union) and the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 (amending the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts), the accession of new countries in to the Union and the launch of the Euro currency, European integration progressed forward at an institutional and administrative level. However, as many authors point out, the advances at the political and economic levels have not coincided with advances in legitimating structures and as such there has been a crisis of legitimacy within the European Union (Fraser, 2007; Koopmans, 2004; Liebert, 2009; Nef, 2002; Rittberger, 2005). The perceived crisis comes from two dimensions: (1) a lack of popular identification with the EU, and (2) the undemocratic nature of European Union institutions.

In looking at the ESF as an emergent transnational public sphere that draws together ideas and proposal on countless alternative European policies one also notes how the resultant interaction among activists from different political backgrounds stimulates the formation of a more fluid form of transnational contestation. Consequently, the experimental and inclusionary

nature of the ESF lends credence to the possibility of more legitimate forms of political participation in the European setting.

First European Social Forum—Florence, November 2002.

Owing to preparatory meetings in Brussels, Vienna and Thessaloniki, more than 600 organizations participated in the Florence ESF in an effort to promote democratic participation from below.²⁹ Italian organizations hosting the event proposed the following thematic framework for the actual form of the Florence ESF:³⁰

- i. The creation of a Citizen's Charter for Europe;
- ii. An agenda for mobilizations against war, militarization of politics and the production of weapons in the European Union;
- iii. Europe's role in the world with particular attention to Central Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area;
- iv. The organization of cultural events and mass demonstrations in new forms.

The above choice of focus issues reflected the growing dissatisfaction of the public with the policies and decisions that make up the current process of European integration. The two broad themes underlying the proposed framework were: (1) the processes of European integration, and (2) the question of social citizenship based on the creation of an alternative charter of social rights. Participants stressed the need for inclusiveness and representation in the ESF for groups and individuals who suffer from social and economic exclusion (women, migrants, the movement of the 'have-nots,' for example).

²⁹ See the Carolan (2002)

³⁰ See the Appeal for the Vienna Preparatory Meetings on www.fse-esf.org.

The structure of the forum allowed for the possibility of conducting workshops ad hoc in parallel with well organized conferences. This further underscored the idea of a public space and gave freedom to various groups to prepare meetings during the course of the forum.

Second European Social Forum—Paris, November 2003.

The eastern suburbs of Paris hosted the second ESF one year after the Florence ESF. In preparing for the Paris ESF, some 300 French social movements, NGOs and trade unions spent a year organizing the event. A monthly French assembly endorsed the work of the organizing committee run by volunteers from organizations that had the resources. The three preparatory meetings in Paris (December 2002), Brussels (February 2003) and Genoa (May 2003) reinforced and coordinated the efforts of organizers.

The Paris preparatory meeting took place in the trade union centre of Saint Denis. With more than 300 delegates from 25 countries worldwide, the preparatory meeting discussed the proposed framework for the Paris ESF. Bernard Cassen from ATTAC, France, pushed the argument that in order for the Paris ESF to successfully widen the scope of the Florence ESF, it should ensure a wider participation of Central and Eastern countries to create a more united and representative forum towards the European Union's initiatives and directives.³¹ The Brussels meeting specified the objectives of the Paris ESF along with its main course of action. It was Pierre Khalfa of the French preparatory committee who stressed the importance of articulating an in-depth critique of the state of Europe and European integration as well as to define the *alternative* Europe that the activists wanted. He further stressed that the significance of the forum in the creation of a European social movement and reiterated the Forum's dual function as a site

³¹ See the minutes from the Paris meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

for debate and discussion and a basis for mobilizations and social movements.³² It was during the Brussels meeting that the thematic frame work of the Paris ESF was adopted. The themes of the plenaries revolved around:³³

- i. Against war: for a Europe of peace and justice open to the world;
- ii. Against neoliberalism and patriarchy: for a social and democratic Europe of rights;
- iii. Against the singular pursuit of profit: for an ecologically sustainable society of social justice and for food sovereignty;
- iv. Against commercialism: for a Europe of democratic information, culture and education;
- v. Against racism, xenophobia and exclusion: for the equality of rights, dialogue between cultures; for a Europe open to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The Genoa meeting included the finalization of the program: plenaries, seminars and workshops; the logistical organization of the ESF—venues, travel, translation, etc.; and, the enlargement of the ESF.

At the meeting for the program, a debate about the diminishing attention on opposing the war on Iraq and imperialism stirred up the organizers and participants as only two out of the fifty-five plenaries were dealing with the subject. In response to this, some participants pointed out that the Florence ESF had focused almost too narrowly on opposing the impending war on Iraq that it left a number of issues unaddressed. For example, the efforts to provide alternative economic and social aspects against a neo-liberal Europe were barely addressed in the Florence

³² See the minutes from the Brussels meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

³³ See Paris 2003 Reports on www.fse-esf.org.

ESF. Susan George from ATTAC, France, brought up the point that the “EU’s future constitution establishes liberalism as the official doctrine of the EU, when it should protect and guarantee the social rights of Citizens.”³⁴

During the Paris ESF itself, 51,000 delegates gathered in solidarity. Participants had the possibility of participating in a large number of activities in both the official program as well as various side-events spread around the city. The closing demonstration on November 15, 2003 saw almost 100,000 participants denouncing the present form of globalization. This image was markedly different from the picture of the generally diverse composition of the plenaries during the two-days of plenaries.

Third European Social Forum—London, October 2004.

London as the host for the third European Social Forum came up as a proposal in Paris and it was an agreement between the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). This decision was a source of tension during the initial stages because (1) it was approved in a closed meeting, and (2) London as an option was never debated among British movements. GLA’s involvement was a demand made by certain actors, such as ATTAC France, to ensure that the event was financially viable (Nunes, 2004).

Another source of tension was that the presence of the SWP and GLA was seen as an antithesis to the participation of British trade unions and networks which employ the ad hoc and horizontal ways of organizing—without hierarchies and decision-making centers. This prompted the Preparatory Assembly that occurred in London in February 2004 to demand that the British

³⁴ See the minutes from the Genoa meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

groups should work towards some degree of stable coordination between the verticals (SWP, Socialist Action(SA), trade unions) and the horizontals(the rest) (Nunes, 2004).

During the Berlin preparatory meeting, the choice of themes for the plenaries was a difficult negotiation between the verticals and the Continental actors (composed of the Confederazione del Comitati di Base, Transnational Institute, ATTAC, the Greek Social Forum, etc.). The SWP (on the side of the verticals) wanted to make exhaustive use of the theme of the opposition to the War on Terror so as to augment the influence of the Stop the War Coalition, while the Continental actors favored the enrichment of the political agenda to include issues covering neo-liberalism, the European Constitution and citizens' rights. Eventually, six themes were adopted for the London ESF:³⁵

- i. War and Peace;
- ii. Democracy and Fundamental Rights;
- iii. Social Justice and Solidarity: Against Privatization; for Workers, Social and Women's Rights;
- iv. Corporate Globalization and Global Justice
- v. Against Racism, Discrimination and the Far Right: For Equality and Diversity;
- vi. Environmental Crisis, against Neo-liberalism and for a Sustainable Society.

³⁵ See the minutes from the Berlin meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

Fourth European Social Forum—Athens, May 2006.

In organizing the Athens ESF, 167 movements, organizations and trade unions participated in three preparatory meetings—Athens (February 2005), Prague (May 2005) and, Istanbul (September 2005).

The Athens ESF shied away from adopting a static thematic framework and this was evident in the correspondences during the preparatory meetings. On the first preparatory meeting which occurred in February 2005 in Athens, the Preparatory Assembly expressed the need to renew the preparatory methodology, the format and the territory of the Forum. The preparatory committee decided not to finalize the priority thematic axes. The following fourteen thematic axes were proposed:³⁶

- i. War and peace. Occupation of Iraq, Palestine, militarization of Europe, bases, Kosovo, imperialism in Asia and Latin America, anti-war movement;
- ii. Europe and neoliberal globalization. WTO, international organizations;
- iii. Migrants in Europe;
- iv. Discrimination, racism and the far right;
- v. Social rights recognized as common goods—public services;
- vi. Flexible working, precarious jobs, poverty and exclusion;
- vii. The state of work, productivity, unemployment;
- viii. Environment. climate change, sustainable development;
- ix. Towards which democracy in Europe and which fundamental rights: citizenship, federalism and the place of states, stateless people, European institutions;

³⁶ See Decisions from the Prague Meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

- x. Political economy in Europe: central bank, monetary convergence criteria;
- xi. The right to education, mass media and culture;
- xii. Women's movements;
- xiii. Strategy for moving from Seattle to today;
- xiv. Which way forward for the European Union: for which Europe do we struggle?

The preparatory meeting further reiterated that the thematic areas are “neither solid, nor isolated” and that there has to be a common ground between the various themes. However, to provide a general guideline the committee outlined the following aims:³⁷

- i. to involve as many movements as possible, networks, organizations, individuals which, all over Europe—at the international, regional, national, local level—can join the global movement for a different world;
- ii. to improve the strength of the European Social Movements of working and fighting together for another Europe, refusing war, neoliberalism, racism, sexism and patriarchy, a Europe based on peace and rights;
- iii. to highlight and witness the variety of experiences of social struggles;
- iv. to improve the capability to deepen the dialogue and the debate between different approaches and identities in order to make steps forward in the definition of alternative policies and practices;
- v. to facilitate and improve communication between movements and organizations, the process of networking, the building up of common agendas, campaigns, actions, mobilizations.

³⁷ See Final Statement on Methodology of the Athens meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

The Athens ESF hosted about 35,000 registered participants and the Greek organizers themselves admitted that the number was unexpectedly high. An estimated 80,000 people participated in the demonstration on the last day of the Forum. The seminars and workshops were conducted in a much smaller scale which allowed everyone ample time to speak and network with each other.

Domestically, the Athens ESF was a success. The main organizers, the Greek Social Forum and the Synapsismos party (closely affiliated with Greek social movements) had, prior to the ESF, been on the fringes of Greek politics. But their participation in the organizing committee gave them and their agenda the much needed boost in publicity as well as network connections. In terms of enlarging the ESF, the Athens ESF was also a big success in terms of its inclusion of Eastern European countries. Solidarity funds for Central and Eastern Europeans including Turkey and Middle Eastern participants made possible the participation of over 2000 delegates from these countries and showed that the Forum appeals to the whole continent and not just to Western European countries. It reaffirmed the importance of the Forum for social movements by providing an opportunity for social movements to network and share their expertise.

Fifth European Social Forum—Malmö, September 2008.

Four preparatory meetings were conducted prior to the Malmö ESF—Lisbon (April 2007), Stockholm (September 2007), Berlin (February 2008), Kiev (June 2008). In those meetings

The Axes/Thematic framework of the Forum were:³⁸

³⁸ See the Main Decisions of the Berlin Meeting on www.fse-esf.org.

- i. Working for social inclusion and social rights—welfare, public services and common goods for all;
- ii. Working for a sustainable world, food sovereignty, environmental and climate justice;
- iii. Building a democratic and rights based Europa, against “securitarian” policies. For participation, openness, equality, freedom and minority rights;
- iv. Working for equality and rights, acknowledging diversities, against all forms of discrimination. For feminist alternatives against patriarchy;
- v. Building a Europe for a world of justice, peace and solidarity—against war militarism and occupations;
- vi. Building labor strategies based on people’s needs and rights, for economic and social justice;
- vii. Democratizing knowledge, culture, education, information and mass media;
- viii. Working for a Europe of inclusiveness and equality for refugees and migrants—fighting against all forms of racism and discrimination.

The size of the Malmö ESF was below expectation (around 10,000 registered participants while 20,000 were expected, initially). Compared to the previous Forums, Malmö was the smallest city to ever host the ESF. The venues were scattered throughout the city and it was difficult for an individual to get an overview of the forum. A review of the Malmö ESF stated that, “The vast majority of the seminars were alienating to young people” (Flakin, 2008). An event would last two and a half hours of which two hours were for speeches from the podium and a half hour was for “discussion.” Discussions were normally comprised of reading different communiqués.

Despite the challenges that the Malmö ESF faced, the overarching consensus reached was that there is a need to advance the ‘Europeanization’ of resistance. This meant a two-fold challenge for European social movements. First, there exists a need to build up their structures and support from below. In other words, social movement organizations need to deepen their local roots. Second, social movement organizations needed to create various forms of national and international expression that encourage social resistance in spaces like the forums, networks and campaigns (Vivas, 2008).

4.3. The European Social Forum—An Emerging European Public Sphere?

“It is important build institutions that encourage and protect multiple, discontinuous, sometimes conflicting public spaces and modes of public engagement rather than attempt to nurture or impose some unified European culture”(Calhoun, 2003, pp. 29-70).

A direct effect of the recurrent mobilizations of European movements is the formation of a relatively stable transnational network of organizations. In broad terms, the space for protest and discussion being advanced by the European Social Forums involves certain fundamental aspects of a legitimate public sphere. Firstly, the participation in the Forums is open. The Forums welcome any and all who wish to participate with the exception of right-wing parties (whose very principles contradict the idea of open debates and discussions in the ESF). Further, the various ESF coordinating organizations strive for a more inclusive participation by reaching out to as many movements, organizations and trade unions in Europe through the fundamental recognition of their diversity. Secondly, the topics dealt with in the Forums have increasingly covered a broad spectrum of socio-political, economic and environmental issues thus underscoring the flexibility of the space being advanced by the ESFs.

Although policy makers have a strong tendency to discredit and dismiss the discourses of the Forums, they are often forced to take the subject matter more seriously. Consider, for example, the proposal for an international Tobin Tax regime presented to the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) of the European Council in Liège in September 2001.³⁹ According to its proponents the Tobin tax⁴⁰ would (1) reduce instability of global financial markets by deterring speculations that cause sharp exchange rate fluctuations, and (2) generate substantial sums, which could be used to alleviate problems of poverty, the environment and [human] security. Prior to the ECOFIN Summit, the European Banking Federations (EBF)⁴¹ published a position paper in March 2001 expressing their concern that the Tobin tax is being placed on the political agenda in several countries. According to their report, the Tobin tax is not feasible in practice and would have disruptive and frequently unjustified side effects on the global financial markets that would render it ineffective in achieving its original goals.

Underlying such issues as the Tobin tax regime proposal is the fact that modern states have an inherently transnational character: globalization, peace, sustainable development, migration and host of others, require a transnational approach rather than government responses constrained by national barriers. This lends credence to the fact that these organizations and movements are increasingly bringing up their agenda to the European level rather than to national ones.

³⁹ The Liège ECOFIN Summit took place on September 21 to 23, 2001.

⁴⁰ The Tobin tax proposal entails the levying of a (small) tax on each foreign exchange transaction. The revenue would then be used to alleviate poverty. A UK charity, War on Want, estimates that about 285 billion Euros could be raised globally if a 0.25% tax was levied on each foreign exchange transaction. Among the staunchest proponents of the Tobin tax regime are War on Want (UK) and ATTAC (France).

⁴¹ The EBF represents the national banking associations of the 31 EU and EFTA countries, totaling some 5000 European banks: large and small, wholesale and retail, local and cross-border financial institutions.

5. A [Provisional] Conclusion: From Discursive Power to the Activism-Policy Nexus

The conventional narrative of how the broader civil society agenda was included into European Union affairs could be encapsulated as follows. First, owing to a growing dissatisfaction with the “democratic deficit” of European Union institutions which became apparent in failed referenda, state heads and governments prompted European Union institutions to come closer to its citizens (European Communities, 2001, p. 20). Moreover, the European Commission, concerned with its reputation after the mass resignations of members of the Santer Commission,⁴² further underscored the need for *Europe* to connect with its citizens. With this in mind, the Commission identified the reform of European governance as one of its strategic objectives (European Commission, 2001). In Romano Prodi’s speech at the European Parliament, he mentioned how the Constitutional Convention established “the principle of participatory democracy” as an additional pillar of the “democratic life of the Union,” next to “the principle of representative democracy,” and as such he and his Commission declared that they would “devise a completely new form of governance” (Prodi, 2001) which included the active participation of civil society. These initiatives influenced two paradigms for policy-making in the subsequent years. The first paradigm, as expounded by Guy Peters, concerned the plausibility of a withering away of government and the emergence of a new system of public-private partnerships in the participatory state (Peters, 1996) which would ultimately emerge from transnational decision making. The second paradigm concerned a profound skepticism that elections and party politics are no longer suitable and appropriate mechanisms to legitimate public authorities in the larger backdrop of democratic legitimacy in the multi-level system of European governance (Lebessis & Paterson, 2000). The natural recourse was to turn to civil

⁴² The Santer Commission was the European Commission in office between January 1995 and March 1999. The Commission was led by the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Santer. In the run-up to March 1999, the Commission suffered allegations of corruption and budget controversies which prompted that a *Committee of Independent Experts* be set up to look into the controversies. The report cleared all except Edith Cresson of France. The subsequent decision of Paris not to recall Cresson sparked a mass resignation of the commissioners of the Santer Commission.

society as a legitimating mechanism to remedy the crisis of legitimacy haunting the European Union institutions (and the modern state in general).

5.1. What Has the ESF Got to Show?

The World Social Forum's Charter of Principles states that social forums are meant to be open spaces of discussion which by way of direct extension, also holds for the European Social Forum and other regional counterparts. However, one must note that this space is not given nor is it taken as a given. It is created. This process of creation is not without any challenges especially since the salient feature of this process are often political controversies and conflicts that reveal, test and transform the principles and common values of its participants.

There exists a "spreading dissatisfaction with the institutions and processes of representative democracy" (Cain, Dalton, & Scarrow, 2003, p. 1) and this can clearly be seen in declining electoral participation and party memberships. Representative democracy is no longer held as a compelling proposition. Instead, advanced industrial societies are now experiencing a search for new institutional forms to express their interests. Cain, Dalton and Scarrow (2003) maintain that the model of representative democracy is increasingly complemented by instruments of direct democracy and advocacy democracy. The two later instruments are different from representative democracy in that they pertain to unmediated forms of participation—categories that encompass many if not all of the aspects of the Social Forums.

Recent initiatives at the EU level have indicated that the shift in citizens' participation in conventional representative democratic processes to the unmediated forms of participation have brought the dilemma of the so-called 'democratic deficit' to the consciousness of European policymakers. Rittberger (2005) notes such a phenomenon on at least two critical incidents: (1) The [European] Commission White Paper on European Governance (CWP) which contains

elements that bear strong resemblances to the tenets of the model of advocacy democracy by emphasizing the prominence of non-electoral avenues of participation; and, to fight against peoples' distrust and lack of interest in political institutions, the Commission advocated that democratic institutions at both national and European levels, "can and must try to connect Europe with its citizens" (European Commission, 2001, p. 3). Table 5 below features the three models of participation and links them with the policies already in the legislative books of European Union institutions.

Table 5: A democratic transformation at the European level?

	Representative Democracy	Direct Democracy	Advocacy Democracy
Core Characteristics	Citizen influence mediated by representatives (organized in political parties) who take decisions in behalf of citizens.	Unmediated citizen influence in policy formulation and policy choice.	Unmediated citizen influence in policy formulation and implementation (policy choices rest with political elites).
Decision-making institutions	Electoral institutions (affecting inter- and intra-party competition)	Electoral institutions (e.g. referenda and popular initiatives).	Non-electoral institutions (e.g. transparency enhancing measures; consultation with citizens' groups)
Recent EU level initiatives: CWP⁴³ and TCE⁴⁴	—	—	CWP: better involvement of civil society, more openness and transparency.
TCE	TCE: enhancing the role of NPs through 'subsidiarity' control and informational measures (Protocols 1 & 2); Art. I-46 ('The principle of representative democracy,' inter alia, European political party statute ⁴⁵)	TCE: Art I-47, paragraph 4 (possibility of citizens' initiative).	TCE: Art. I-47 ('The principle of participatory democracy'), Art. I-48 ('The social partners and autonomous social dialogue'), Art. I-49 ('The European Ombudsman' ⁴⁶), Art. I-50 ('Transparency of proceedings of Union Institutions').

Source: Rittberger (2005, p. 203)

In broad strokes, it is the Social Forums which present a model of unmediated participative democracy which appeals to an increasing proportion of the citizens in Europe.

⁴³ CWP: Commission White Paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001).

⁴⁴ TCE: Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe.

⁴⁵ European political parties were first recognized explicitly in the Maastricht Treaty (Art. 191 ECT, ex Art. 138a).

⁴⁶ The position of the European Ombudsman was first created by the Maastricht Treaty (Arts. 21, ex 8d and 195, ex 138e of the ECT).

5.2. Bottomline: Does the ESF Reduce Partiality and Give Rise to Legitimacy?

Many authors agree that the model of unmediated form of participation that the Social Forum represents opens up other avenues for citizens to voice their concerns. Groups that ‘do not’ or ‘can not’ enter into the mainstream political processes have such a platform to bring their concerns up to the consciousness of the public. Moreover, the general consensus in the literature on political contention is that the flaws of the traditional model of representative democracy become apparent when extra-territorial issues are introduced into the state system. For instance, even though the European Union has a long standing problem with migration, more apparent in some countries than others, there still exists no consensus among the member states about how to systematically tackle the issue of illegal immigrants on the EU level.

The Forums in themselves do not reduce partiality. “The channeling of demands directly ‘from below’ appears all the more difficult faced with formally closed institutions” (della Porta & Caiani, 2009, p. 43). Protesters may create alternative discourses and produce disagreements and criticisms of different issues but these concepts and discourses would be difficult to mobilize against unaccountable targets.

However, the Forums offer two distinct platforms on which protest transnationalization occurs. The first platform—the organization of protest events—allows for direct participation and advocacy. Various sectors (represented in the mainstream political processes or otherwise) are able to articulate issues which have not reached the public’s consciousness as well as continually re-articulate the issues already known. The author admits that on this level, another variable needs to be included in the analysis to render more fruitful conclusions—that of the role of media in national and European protest events. Due to constraints on time and resources, the author made a conscious decision to leave this variable out of the thesis.

The second platform—the creation of social and political space—allows for the continual articulation and re-articulation of issues which in turn take on emergent properties in the form of “activist epistemic communities” of experts and specialists that fuel the discourses happening in the Forums. Through the process of continual re-articulation and re-framing of issues, epistemic communities are able to fine-tune social movement claims. This is most evident in the issues of contention that have apparently shed (or reframed) their ‘national’ color and have taken on a markedly ‘European character.’

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Master in Global Studies, 2011

Universität Wien (Vienna, Austria) and Uniwersytet Wrocławski (Wrocław, Poland)

Master of Arts in Economics (thesis on-going, expected April 2012)

University of the Philippines, Diliman, Philippines

Global Studies Summer School, July 2008

Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

London School of Economics Summer School, July 2008

London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, 2002

University of the Philippines, Diliman, Philippines

Grants and Scholarships received

- Erasmus Mundus Scholarship, 2007-2009
- Stipendium für Kurzfristige Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten im Ausland (KWA) an der Universität Wien, 2009

Research and Publications

- “A Value Chain Analysis of the Philippine Milkfish (Chanos Chanos),” with Dr. Jürgen Janssen for GTZ-Philippines, September 2007.
- “Filling the Vacuum: What can We Do with 27 Million Young Filipino Workers?” UNIV 2000 Compendium. Awarded Winning Paper and Award-Winning Presentation at the UNIV 2000 International Congress, Rome, April 2000.

Professional History

- **Consultant for Content Development, May 2010 - Present**
DOOR International Training and Consulting Pte. Ltd., Singapore
- **Research Intern, June 2009 – Oct. 2009**
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
- **Research Associate, Oct. 2006 – Sept. 2007**
JLP Consulting Philippines, Inc.
- **Researcher, Oct. 2004 – Sept. 2006**
Asia-Pacific Demographics Foundation

- **Section Manager for Sales, Aug. 2002 – Sept. 2004**
Procter and Gamble Philippines, Inc.
- **Intern, Aug. – Sept. 2001**
Royal Norwegian Embassy

Consulting Projects Undertaken

- **Nestle Philippines LEADGrow Project, Aug. – Sept. 2008**
AIMS International Philippines
- **Value Chain Analysis of the Philippine Milkfish, April – Sept. 2007**
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit Philippines
- **Case Study of the Urban Assets Restructuring Program, Jan. – July 2006**
Center for Development Management, Asian Institute of Management

Membership in Professional Organizations

- Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP)
- Philippine Society for Training and Development (PSTD)
- National Archery Association of the Philippines (NAAP)

Knowledge of Computer Software

- Proficient in MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Working knowledge of Mathematica, Stata, SPSS
- Proficient in various referencing software: Endnote X3, Reference Manager 12, Zotero