NETWORKS, ORGANISATIONS, MOVEMENTS: NARRATIVES AND SHAPES OF THREE WAVES OF ACTIVISM IN CROATIA

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Summary

This paper explores the narratives, shapes, claims and practices of three waves of activism in Croatia at the interface of peace, human rights, gender equality and social justice. The 'first wave' refers to the network of individuals, groups and projects around the "Anti-war Campaign, Croatia", in the context of prior histories of activism in some urban centres of former Yugoslavia in the late 1980s. The 'second wave' addresses the more professionalised and technocratic 'Non-Governmental Organisations' under the influence, to an extent, of external donor funding and preference for particular organisational forms and structures. The 'third wave' relates to inter-linked activist initiatives and movements including the Zagreb Philosophy Faculty student protests and the movement against the building of a shopping centre in Varšavska street in Zagreb, reflecting struggles against commodification, crony capitalism, and the erosion of the right to public space. The paper explores how far these three waves can be viewed in terms of different generations working according to different scripts, local, national, regional, and global. Utilising participant observation, fragmentary interview material and reflexive ethnography, the paper addresses the social and political impacts of diverse activisms in different conjunctures, contributing to the development of an historical sociology of activism in Croatia.

Key words: activism, Croatia, generations, scripts

INTRODUCTION: ACTIVIST SOCIOLOGY AND/OR A SOCIOLOGY OF ACTIVISM?

The encounter between activism and the academy has never been an easy one. Over time, my writings have reflected both the complementarities and tensions inherent in activist and analytical frames. Whilst claiming neither completeness nor consistency, I have been a chronicler of activism in the Croatian and wider post-Yugoslav space, who has strived, from a rather complex insider/outsider vantage point, for a degree of sociological rigour although, never, for supposedly scientific detachment (cf. Stubbs, 1996; 2001; 2007a). Within this general theme, I have focused, in particular, on studying computer-mediated or online activism, mainly concentrating on the ZaMir (*for peace*) network, exploring the impact of technological change on activist scripts, and hinting at the importance of understanding activist shapes through a generational frame (cf. Stubbs, 1998; 2005; 2007b). Recently, my engagement in direct action and activism has declined, although I have continued to offer reflections on emerging protests in Zagreb, most notably the actions to prevent the building of a shopping centre in Varšavska street (Stubbs, 2010).

Here, I examine the narratives, shapes, claims and practices of three waves of activism in Croatia at the interface of peace, human rights, gender equality and social justice. It has been argued that a 'political activist ethnography' (Frampton et al, 2006) must be rooted in movement action and experience and not convert movements or activists into objects of analysis or theory. At the same time, a sociology of activism which is not based, exclusively or primarily, on active participation in any or all of the movements discussed, cannot be automatically dismissed as worthless. Providing a credible and coherent sociological understanding of specific social movements may not be a very revolutionary aim, but it should not be dismissed entirely. In the end, a commitment to 'reflexivity' is perhaps the best a sociologist of activism can offer. Reflexivity involves an acknowledgement that „the knower and the known cannot be separated" (May, 1999; 2.1). It is in anthropology that the 'reflexive turn' has been most influential, involving a recognition that „all researchers are positioned" (Chiseri-Srater, 1996; 115) and that the presentation of research as if 'from above or from nowhere' (Marcus, 1995) is, at best, unhelpful and, in many ways, dishonest. In short, the researcher must „make explicit the process by which he or she gathers data" (Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982; 18) without sliding into a kind of „confessional reflexivity" (Denzin, 2003; 269), or „nihilistic relativism" (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 1998; 35) telling more about the author than about the author-subject relation.

A preference for a kind of „bending and blending" (Lendvai and Stubbs, 2007; 183) of different positions and perspectives, in which multi-sited and multi-level research utilises whatever positions are available, including those of activist participant, policy consultant and even, detached observer, challenges the idea of methodological purity. Whilst „cognitive and intellectual identification between the investigator and his variously situated subjects" (Marcus, 1995) can offer insights, so can a degree of distance or even opposition, providing these are acknowledged explicitly. The

difficulty of maintaining a single vantage point is increased when, as in this case, the phenomena being described, compared and analysed occurred over a long period of time. Remembering and compiling a coherent and plausible story based on uneven participations and scattered observations, using fragmentary interview material and other texts gathered haphazardly and, not at all, originally, for the purpose of research, is fraught with dangers. The attempt to write an ethnography as a „layered and evocative ... presentation of located aspects of the human condition *from the inside*" (Willis and Trondman, 2000; 7 – emphasis in original) is inevitably compromised over time, not least as „the range of things we can know first hand ... is extremely narrow" (Gould, 2004; 283). It may be that all ethnographies of this nature are, inevitably, either disembodied, self-indulgent, or disjointed, sometimes all three, so that a legitimate outcome may be a series of 'plausible provocations' rather than any clear and verifiable conclusions (Aptekar, 1990).

My preference for analysis which brings together, within an heuristic frame which „can be applied to all forms of social engagement" (Moulaert and Jessop, 2006; 10), the study of agency, structures, institutions and discourses(the ASID approach as they term it), is reflected here. Certainly, agency as „any type of meaningful human behaviour, individual or collective, that makes a significant difference" and discourse as „the inter-subjective production of meaning" (ibid, 2-3), are both produced and constrained by relatively immutable structures, including institutions „in the form of a more or less coherent, interconnected set of routines, conventions, rules, sanctioning mechanisms, and practices that govern more or less specific domains of action" (ibid, 2-3).

The framework goes hand in hand with thinking conjuncturally, in terms of examining the different, and sometimes divergent, tendencies at work in a particular location at a particular moment in time (Clarke, 2010). As Clarke has argued: "In such a perspective, the search for the primary cause represents a mistaken analytical route – even if a prime mover was identifiable, it only gains its significance in its articulation with the other tendencies that together make up this specific conjuncture" (Clarke, 2010; 238). Conjunctural thinking forces us into a critical examination of how the current conjuncture came about, what are its 'genealogies', or its "anterior conditions of existence" (Hall, 2007), the better to understand the future as "an open horizon, fundamentally unresolved, and in that sense open to 'the play of contingency'"(Hall, 2007). In addition, whilst spatial thinking is of immense importance, locating spaces within complex systems of interaction, marked by 'geometries of power' in which the local and the global are co-constituted (Massey, 2002: 5), allows for an understanding of social relations and their transformations in ways which reframe supposedly bounded sites as constellations of forces and flows, sometimes coming together as a kind of 'perverse confluence' (Dagnino, 2007) deriving from two or more different, even antagonistic, sources or political projects.

One constant over the period of my activist research has been a critique of approaches to the concept of 'civil society', as a kind of space between household, state and market, which treat it as if it were a free-floating, independent, force, instead

preferring to explore it as a translation device, or a set of nested claims, moving across sites, spaces, scales and levels (cf. Stubbs, 2007a). Bilić's concern with its 'definitional volatility', 'logical incoherence', and 'conceptual elasticity', making it easily available for a kind of de-politicised paradigm (Bilić, 2011) reinforces a rejection of the concept theoretically, in favour of studying the 'mobilisational energy' of groups and their 'transformative capacity' (Bilić, 2012; 212; cf. also Kašić, 2011; Jalušič, 2006), whether via Hirschman's (1984) idea of 'social energy', or Maffesoli's (1996) notion of 'new societal interactivities'. We should not neglect, however, the 'logic in use' of the concept of 'civil society', as an emerging and, perhaps, aspiring, frame in the first wave of activism studied here, as a conventional and taken-for-granted institutional paradigm for the second wave, and as a conservative force to be rejected as largely irrelevant, in the third wave.

Bilić suggests that much research on 'political contention' in the post-Yugoslav space reproduces a kind of 'methodological nationalism'. His view that „the complexity of Yugoslavia's dissolution and the civic organising that accompanied and survived it, can only be understood within a transnational approach" (Bilić, 2012a; 209) seems to me to be a position to aspire to rather than a *sine qua non*. In this context, taking Croatia as the starting point of my analysis is more a factual delimitation of the movements being studied, and the location of the researcher, than a conscious or unconscious example of methodological nationalism. The *Anti-war Campaign, Croatia* used Croatia in its title; the organisations studied as part of the second wave were, more often than not, registered only in Croatia and used the Croatian context as the starting point for their co-operation with others. At the same time, many of the phenomena in the third wave have more of a local meaning, operating within certain cities, and their resonance elsewhere is, certainly, not limited to Croatia. In each case, the variable geometry and discursive claims of space, scale and reach need to be studied without imposing an *a priori* nation-state container limit. My work on ZaMir, for example, explicitly examines how and why a transnational network became a Croatian NGO (Stubbs, 2005).

A NETWORK OF NETWORKS: THE ANTI-WAR CAMPAIGN, CROATIA

The Anti-War Campaign, Croatia (henceforth ARK-H), was formed on 4 July 1991, in Zagreb. Its first communication which added 'Croatia' to its name was on 5 October 1991 and ARK-H held its constitutive assembly on 23 November 1991 (Janković and Mokrović, 2011; 110-111). The original Charter (*Povelja*) of the Anti-War Campaign states that it is „an informal association of organisations and individuals from the whole of Yugoslavia, who want to contribute to the ending of armed conflicts" (ibid, 51). In a meeting called 'Days of Peace' in Kumrovec on 23 and 24 August 1991, ARK was defined as an organisation which affirms and supports „only non-violent methods, participating in the process of conflict resolution, but does not favour any particular solution, respecting all subjects involved in the conflict and maintaining communication with them" (ibid; 109). One of the founders of ARK-H, and its first

Co-ordinator, Vesna Teršelič, pointed out that people from Serbia and Slovenia had been present at the August meeting. In September 1991, although phone lines were not completely cut, telephone communication with Serbia became extremely difficult, „and for us it was very important to be in touch with our friends in peace initiatives in Belgrade, because the military was coming from that side" (Interview May 2004). Bilić captures succinctly the dilemmas of ARK-H activism in his suggestion that activists attempted „to strike the right balancebetween the need to prevent a sweeping militarisation of their society, on the one hand, and to legitimise the use of arms or recourse to a military intervention, on the grounds of self-preservation, on the other" (Bilić, 2012a; 113).

The self-image, persisting until now, of ARK-H as a 'network of networks' is best illustrated by examining a double page illustration in the recently published *'ARK 1991-2011 Neispričana povijest'* (Untold history) (Janković and Mokrović (eds.), 2011; 132-3). The diagram, headed „Networking, Networking, Networking: scheme of the development of the Anti-War Campaign and related organisations", gives the reader no interpretation aids. The 'Original projects ARK '91-'92' rises like a sun occupying the largest space, with ten organisations in plain black type below it, meant to be the precursors, presumably. Seventeen dotted lines lead to what appear to be immediate 'spin off' organisations, smaller suns, with perhaps double that number being 'spin offs of spin offs' clustered into a number of groupings. On the edge of the page are another thirteen organisations, in orange type face, positioned close to different organisations but with no explicit connections made. Virtually all the 'satellites' became registered Croatian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) although one, *Iskon*, a 'spin off' of ZaMir, is a for-profit organisation (cf. Stubbs, 2005). In broad terms, the clusters focus, respectively, on peace, gender equality, human rights, media and communication, culture, and sub-national initiatives.

From quite early on, ARK encouraged 'projects' to transform into registered semi-independent organisations, albeit regularly attending joint decision-making meetings. The challenges for ARK can be seen as the result of tensions between four broad aspects. In the first place, ARK was conceived of and by a series of interlinked friendship networks, amongst relatively young people, with many still undergraduates in their early twenties when the war started. At the same time, it developed a discursive frame keeping alive certain ideas at a time when „talking nonviolence became as incomprehensible as speaking Chinese" (Tomc, 1992; 71). Crucially, it evolved into a set of more or less defensive projects seeking *inter alia* to protect the human rights of oppressed groups and individuals, establish the right to conscientious objection, and deal with emerging victims of war including refugees, displaced persons, and abused women. At the same time, it was being squeezed, more or less willingly, into an emerging shape of the non-governmental organisation qualifying for grants from international donors.

Bilić argues that „Yugoslav antiwar engagement appropriated the already existing activist networks which were created as a result of trans-Yugoslav political co-operation", naming „the 1968 student protests, Yugoslav feminist engagement and environmental activism as the three principal extra-institutional spaces from which

the vast majority of anti-war activists were subsequently recruited" (Bilić, 2012b; 51). Most core ARK-H activists were born after 1968, of course. The tensions between the 1968 protests, centred on Belgrade, and the 1971 Zagreb student protests, as a precursor to the Croatian Spring, which Bilić understands as a clash between leftist and nationalistically oriented visions (ibid; 56), is relevant not least because ARK-H, to my knowledge, explicitly sought to avoid such ideological binaries as left/right in its self-presentation. At the same time, many of the Zagreb 1971 generation, including Ivan Zvonomir Čičak and Žarko Puhovski, albeit involved in 1971 in different ways and, even, on different sides, became active in the explicitly hierarchical Croatian Helsinki Committee (HHO), adopting a kind of intellectual superiority and patronising position towards ARK-H activists.

The feminist linkage is more explicitly, and more clearly and unproblematically, an all-Yugoslav one. The establishment of the 'Women and Society' section of the Croatian Sociological Association in 1978 (Feldman, 1999; 8) is, perhaps, less important for ARK-H than the rise of activism in the late 1980s linked to the establishment of an SOS telephone helpline for women, victims of violence – it is not unimportant, in this context, that one of the first ARK campaigns was for the establishment of an automatic telephone answering service to be known as 'the antiwar telephone' (cf Janković and Mokrović, 1991; 51). The all-Yugoslav focus was disrupted in the war, with some Croatian women's groups, supported by feminists from abroad, making a clear-cut distinction between so-called 'aggressors' and 'victims'. Groups such as *Bedem ljubavi* (Rampart of love), beginning as a spontaneous protest by mothers of Croatian soldiers around the JNA building in Zagreb in August 1991 (Čale Feldman, 1993), came to support, or be enrolled within, nationalist discourses, contributing to a relabeling of Croatian women's groups as either 'nationalist' or 'antinationalist'; 'patriotic' or 'unpatriotic', depending on who was doing the labelling. Less often commented upon, but also important in terms of the profiling of ARK-H, were ideological and interpersonal disputes between Croatian feminists, dating back to earlier times, which then resurfaced during the war and manifested themselves in terms of different priorities and different visions. In the diagram noted above, it is significant that The Centre for Women War Victims is clearly depicted as a key ARK-H spin off, whereas both the Centre for Women's Studies and Women's *Infoteka* occupy outlying, and unconnected, positions.

Bilić is absolutely correct when he asserts that „the majority of (ARK-H) ... members were socialised into civic engagement in a small Zagreb-based activist organisation called *Svarun* ... which was founded in 1986" (Bilić, 2012b; 66) as a group for environmental, pacifist, feminist and spiritual initiatives. Noting both the linkage to global ecological movements in the aftermath of Chernobyl, and to Slovenian social movements, including an embryonic peace movement, Bilić suggests that Svarun „operated within a politically volatile context in which the erosion of the Party's ideological monopoly was increasingly felt" (ibid; 68). At the same time, the emphasis on spontaneity and, even more importantly, spirituality, linked to a number of street and performance art initiatives of the period, also found echoes in a self-definition of many key activists of ARK-H as a kind of underground, urban, 'alternative', even

avant garde, movement, as in the idea of a Zagreb 'scene' (Stubbs, 2005). The close links between ARK-H and the environmentalist NGO *Zelena akcija* (Green Action), formed in 1990, originally as a political list for local elections but transforming later into the Croatian branch of Friends of the Earth, should also be noted.

The social and political significance of ARK-H in the context of a dominant authoritarian nationalism in Croatia is hard to assess. Bilić asserts, rightly in my view, that „ARK activists struggled to prevent a sweeping militarisation of the Croatian society which would have used the act of aggression as a pretext for restricting human rights" (Bilić, 2012a; 114). In part, this was helped by the fact that, even during the war between 1991 and 1995, much of Croatia was not directly affected by military actions, except in terms of the influx of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons, the possibility of military call-up, and generalised, and mainstream media fuelled, nationalism and insecurity. Both discursively and practically in terms of its projects, ARK-H was a kind of defensive act, an attempt to preserve certain values and to resist an overwhelming nationalist homogenisation. Certainly, as I note below, it was not engaged in a major battle for hearts and minds, never attempting to articulate a viable political alternative and rarely involved in domestic alliance and coalition building. This is not to deny the courage of its core activists. It is, however, to assert that 'high-risk activism' (Bilić, 2012a; ch. 4) of this kind is, perhaps, less easily chosen by those who already have a degree of social and material security and in a context where the polarisation of the social structure, and the denial of political and human rights, was not so complete as it was, arguably, in Serbia.

There are also complex, and paradoxical, questions regarding the transnational networking and significance of ARK-H. It can be argued that ARK-H's significance was amplified considerably by its international networking, with a wide range of individuals and organisations offering support, and with many diplomats and others routinely canvassing the opinions of its key activists. On the whole, ARK-H managed to use these contacts without falling into a trap of dependence on external actors' resources or framings. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, Volunteer Project Pakrac, not only was a joint project with the Belgrade-based Centre for Anti-War Action (CAA) but, also, mobilised international volunteers, often through peace networks, to work for a limited period in a town divided by a front-line. The project's *modus operandi* is a remarkably sophisticated example of multiple resonances: with a global 'peace-building agenda', with post-1945 Yugoslav 'work brigades', and with international grassroots peace initiatives, whilst retaining aspects of local leadership and direction.

Secondly, ARK-H was, at best, lukewarm towards one of the earliest, and most dramatic, international anti-war initiatives, the so-called Peace Caravan organised by the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA), a network of intellectuals and NGOs with its roots in the European Nuclear Disarmament movement. The Caravan involved a group of international and Yugoslav peace activists visiting key urban centres in September 1991. Vesna Teršelič criticised the fact that the Caravan was organised without any direct consultation with ARK-H activists, calling the initiative 'patronising' and counter to their own commitment to „long-term projects on the local level".

Her intervention contrasted the 'noise' of the Caravan with ARK-H's focus on a nonviolent approach tailored to local conditions which, indeed, 'differed from village to village' (Teršelič, 1991; 16). Some four months later, the critique, articulated by the Board of ARK-H and the Co-ordination of Peace Initiatives in Ljubljana to „social movements around the world", warned of 'peace tourism' or 'peace safaris', creating a lot of work for local activists and bringing poor results (ARK-H et al, 1992; 27). At the same time, as a cursory reading of ARKzin shows, there was a great deal of co-operation with international activists and peace organisations, notably War Resisters' International and the Quakers, which broke free, at least in part, from the dominance of external actors' understandings. A third issue, little discussed in the literature, is ARK-H's rather radical break with many European pacifist organisations over the issue of the use of external military force in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Of course, the issue of the relationship between external military action, humanitarianism, and a human rights frame in the context of genocide, widened a breach between 'fundamentalist' and 'realist' pacifists throughout Europe. At the same time, it emphasises again ARK-H's determination that an autonomous local interpretation of local events is *a priori* valid and legitimate.

At the same time, such a stance is a rare example of ARK-H moving outside of a broad 'anti-political' discourse or, more accurately, a discursive and practical view of political action which is primarily personalised and conscientised. This is a stance which fuses a particular feminist position of 'the personal as political' with the influences of spirituality and alternative cultural practices, and has echoes in Eastern European dissident movements seeing anti-politics as „the political activity of those who don't want to be politicians and refuse to share in power" (Konrad, 1986; 230). In a sense, one legacy of ARK-H, in terms of its role as an 'incubator' for a multiplicity of NGOs, lies in the perverse confluence between this discursive cluster and an ideological position which sees NGOs as 'non-political'. ARK-H's idea that particular projects should have a degree of autonomy, in fact, therefore, can be seen as playing right into a new wave of rather orthodox, and quite technocratic, NGOs claiming to occupy a space in 'civil society'. The adherence to 'nonviolent conflict resolution', 'mediation', and so on, albeit only one strand of ARK-H's work, focused on the personal and interpersonal with scant regard to the structural and only minimal regard for social and institutional change. How far this was a product of internal values and how far the constraints of operating in a society marked by a degree of nationalist homogenisation is, of course, an open question. Indeed, the defensive nature of ARK-H also tended to mean that differences within were focused on processes and methods rather more than on politics, with those differences able to emerge more after war ended. In their different ways, however, both ARKzin and ZaMir represent very different legacies, not least in terms of creative forms ofalternative media, as a kind of „living experiment, not a recipe" (Lovink, 2002; 268). Of course, insofar as, at the time, Zagreb was „a uniquely nice place to fight against a war" (Gessen, 1995; 2) then running an e-mail network or a 'fanzine' (as ARKzin described itself) fits with this. At the same time, the „full potential of socio-cultural meanings which activist media can have" (Bilić, 2012c; 2), not least in

terms of a creative fusion of aesthetic design and political values, can be connected with discussion about alternative cultural and artistic production in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav space, a task beyond this present text, however.

FROM NETWORKS TO ORGANISATIONS: PROJECTISATION, TECHNOCRACY AND THE NGO SHAPE

The idea that, by fitting, more or less willingly, into an NGO shape and form, all progressive actors, movements and discourses lost their cutting edge in Croatia from the late 1990s to the late 2000s is, of course, an oversimplification. Nevertheless, the ways in which 'NGO-isation' tended to produce particular kinds of organisations concentrating on „issue-specific interventions and pragmatic strategies with a strong employment focus" (Bagić, 2004; 222), building up a kind of pseudo-professional expertise from NGO involvement *per se*, is certainly relevant. As ARK-H and related activists grew older, and were joined by new activists trained in rather narrow ideas of 'civil society', 'capacity building', 'leadership' and 'project planning and management', the idea of a 'third sector' - neither state nor private for profit - as a site of employment, with a particular structure, shape and trajectory, gathered momentum.

Of course, there is a danger of overstating the ways in which external donors shaped both the themes to be addressed and the organisational forms best suited to addressing them. The continuance and, indeed, strengthening of 'advocacy-focused' NGOs addressing gender equality, human rights, peace-building, community development and, to an extent, trauma therapy, can be used as an argument for seeing second wave activism as having a degree of continuity with the first wave. Nevertheless, if we take some examples of these, there are clear trends towards NGO-isation and projectisation which become apparent. Elsewhere, I have indicated how NGO-led 'psycho-social projects' working with those diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome or, more colloquially 'war trauma', were, for a time, some of the most prestigious and well-funded, and, at the same time, over-professionalised and over-medicalised, responses to the consequences of war (cf. also Stubbs and Maglajlić, 2012). It is important to add that much of the impetus for such programmes came from more progressive human rights, peace building and feminist ideas and practices (Stubbs, 2004). The argument that a relatively autonomous 'field' was created in which these progressive impulses tended, although there was never total closure, to be channelled into more established, and conservative, routines, can be said to be a major feature of this conjuncture, apparent across a wide range of themes.

In a number of instances, the emphasis shifted from emergency and rather defensive responses to war-events and towards a more pro-active attempt to establish value-based interventions. This is, perhaps, shown at its most clearest in the efforts of *Centar za ženske studije* (CŽS, Centre for Women's Studies) and *Centar za mirovne studije* (CMS, Centre for Peace Studies) to engage in alternative educa-

tion and learning. CŽS, founded in 1995, has perhaps been the most successful in strengthening the links between, „academic discourse, activist engagement and artistic practice"[1]. It has maintained its leading role as a site of interdisciplinary thought, offering a 'safe space' for feminist theorists already working in academia, as well as succeeding, to an extent, in ensuring that its feminist programmes are influential within the Croatian academic system, whilst maintaining its autonomy. It has strongly avoided becoming 'projectised' and has, instead, become integrated into a global academic-activist-artistic feminist environment.

CMS, with direct lineage from ARK-H and, in particular, the Pakrac project, has run trainings on peace-building since 1995, including an annual Peace Studies pro-gramme in Zagreb. Integration into university curricula, and the participation of academics has, however, been much less developed than within CŽS. My memories of Board meetings in the period from 1996 to 1999 are of endless discussions of the 'ideal' organisational structure, with enormous tensions emerging and solidify-ing regarding the best shape to fit the vision. CMS has diversified its activities over time, becoming rather over-stretched and perhaps 'multi-mandated' (Duffield, 1994), including a focus on youth, on asylum seekers, security policies, and anti-discrimination. In all of this, of course, there remains a clear focus on activism and advocacy. At the same time, the need to fundraise and, in later years, to compete for European Union funding, has surely influenced the organisation's shape.

The establishment, in 2008, of *Kuća ljudskih prava* Zagreb (Human Rights House Zagreb), a member of the Norwegian-based Human Rights Houses Network[2], is, at least, symbolically, the crowning moment of the institutionalisation of the NGO shape in this conjuncture. The Human Rights House hosts six NGOs including CMS, *BaBe*, a leading women's human rights organisation, and *Documenta*, led by former ARK-H co-ordinator Vesna Teršelič, which is involved in issues concerned with dealing with the past, highly attractive to donors, and such a trend that it warrants its own acronym: DwP. *BaBe* and *Documenta* can be classified as emerging *meta-NGOs* (cf. Bach and Stark, 2003, and Stubbs, 2007a; 220-225) whose influence and authority is such that they not only tend to mentor and support other NGOs but position themselves to act as a corrective to government(s), and thereby constitute a „'court of appeal' for disputes arising within and over governance" (Jessop, 1997: 575). Coalitions including these NGOs gained importance in the process of Croatia's accession to the European Union, as demonstrated by the role of Platform 112, a group of some 60 NGOs, drawing attention to 112 major deficiencies in terms of Croatia's performance on themes of justice and human rights, linked to Chapter 23 of the EU *acquis*. The coalition perpetuates a conception of 'human rights' which is based on the liberal idea of rational, autonomous, subjects whilst, in practice, strengthening the power of intermediary bodies such as themselves and, in part at least, reproducing a kind of paternalism which involves the denial of full agency to so-called 'vulnerable subjects' (cf. Gourevitch, 2009).

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[1] URL:http://www.zenstud.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=14&Itemid=228 (accessed 25 September 2012).

[2] URL: http://www.kucaljudskihprava.hr/ (accessed 26 September 2012).

The specific combination of 'anti-politics' and a 'political' commitment to 'regime change' in this conjuncture, particularly around 1999-2000, produced some extremely interesting reconfigurations of activist shapes, claims and narratives. It also led to even more complex relationships with funding bodies both inside and outside Croatia. One reading of the coalition *Glas 99* (Vote '99) would see it as an externally-, primarily US-, driven initiative, designed on the lines of similar movements in Slovakia and Serbia, which, in appealing to particular constituencies, notably young people, to vote in Parliamentary elections, actually contributed to the defeat of parties led by controversial and authoritarian politicians. Within Croatia, it was a rare example of co-ordinated efforts by USAID, the British Embassy and the Soros-funded Open Society Institute to provide timely, flexible and well targeted funding to a coalition of some 145 organisations and groups (Fisher, 2006; ch. 6). At the same time, it created, for the first time, a sense of power and influence amongst an emerging, still quite young, NGO elite, in tune, in part at least, with a much wider mobilisation against a dominant authoritarian nationalist common sense. Notwithstanding the many disagreements and interpersonal battles within the coalition, it presented, for the first time, the idea that being an activist could be a well-paid and comfortable, as well as prestigious, position. In the end, the defeat of HDZ in both the Parliamentary and Presidential elections owed much to the death of Franjo Tuđman. At the same time, there was a new social energy, emerging earlier in reaction to plans to shut down the popular Zagreb-based Radio 101, and now channelled into regime change.

After the election of an SDP-led coalition government in 2000, there was something of a 'normalisation' of relationships between NGOs and government, although the newly empowered activists often complained, publically and privately, of being let down, both by Government policies and by the lack of meaningful involvement of NGOs in policy discussions. In retrospect, a solidification of 'technopolitics' emerged with different organisations occupying positions across a wide spectrum but all, more or less, influenced by the ways in which significant but uneven funding, from both external and internal sources, tended to impact on organisational structures and shapes as well as on salaries andconditions, with a small NGO elite maintaining their material advantage over a significant, and changing, group of low-paid workers or volunteers lacking security. Technopolitics emerged even in the last years of the HDZ-led Government with the creation, under pressure from key supranational organisations, of the Governmental Office for Co-operation with NGOs (*Ured za udruge*) and, later, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. Together with new umbrella or technical organisations such as CERANEO and, of course, considerable training and capacity building funded by international donors, the emergence of a third sector and the general movement towards a more solid NGO shape, as if NGO development was coterminous with 'civil society development' *per se*, emerged. Not coincidentally, around the same time, ZaMir changed its identity, in the words of one activist Vanja Nikolić, one of the co-founders of Pakrac project, from a „peace and human rights portal" to an „NGO portal", coming to be „more like an American NGO structure, it's not at all a civic initiative. And they are hiring

people, firing people, attracting good professionals. It's technocratic" (Interview, August 2004).

The George Soros-funded Open Society Institute, (OSI), active in Croatia from 1992 was, of course, a major target of the ruling regime, accused regularly by mainstream media of 'interference' in democratic political processes, frequently said to be in breach of Croatian financial regulations and, through its regional network-ing, viewed as attempting subversively to re-create Yugoslavia. At the same time, of course, much of its funding, even before the regime change in 2000, went to support humanitarian, educational, cultural and welfare initiatives which were both innovative and, at times, supportive of public policies. What is less often discussed is its creation of a network elite of NGO leaders, often moving in and out of Soros-funded projects and becoming key figures in a range of activities, including HHO.

Within this conjuncture,then,a small group of policy 'flexians' (Wedel, 2009) emerged, gaining power from their brokerage roles in and between different or-ganisations and networks. These flexible networks and organisations constituted 'resource pools' enabling an NGO elite to prescribe, co-ordinate, implement, and promote particular programmes, people, and projects. Unlike the neo-conservative 'flexians' which Wedel is most concerned with, the Croatian NGO flexians are less concerned with direct political goals than their own position as brokers smoothing access to grants and to other tangible resources of influence. The NGO shape, then, can be seen to reflect clientelistic and elitist processes within Croatian society as much, if not more, than democratising ones (cf. Stubbs and Zrinščak, 2011). This kind of flexible technocracy derives directly from the rise of the modern NGO, I would argue, and has only recently begun to be challenged by more overtly politicised movements and activities.

FROM ORGANISATIONS TO MOVEMENTS: 'NEW WAVE' ACTIVISMS AND EXPERIMENTAL POLITICS

The third wave of activisms in Croatia, a loose set of movements and protests from, roughly, 2008 onwards, is differentiated in terms of the themes which are in focus, the more politicised discourses within which they are discussed and, not least, in the forms and processes through which they are expressed. The themes suggest, in many ways, a much closer connection between theory and practice than in the second wave, within a politicised critique of what is seen as 'neo-liberal capitalism', which was rarely, if ever, in focus during the first wave. In a sense, this represents a move away from liberal conceptions of human rights and conflict resolution, focuss-ing, instead, on the deep structural deficiencies of the form of capitalism developed in Croatia. Frequently termed 'crony capitalism', this is seen as underpinned by a process of privatisation based on "legalized robbery through different forms of fictitious or politically dictated transactions" (Baletić, 2003; 287), and dominated by "insider interests, extreme clientelism, non-market based financial sector alloca-

tion" (Bićanić, no date: 1), as well as a close link between political, economic and criminal elites.

Whilst there are clear links between movements and protests in Croatia and wider global movements, roughly from the World Social Forum discourse that 'another world is possible' through to the Occupy movement, the Croatian specificities are important. Nowhere is this more clearly visible than in the protests to protect an historic part of the centre of Zagreb, *Varšavska* street, under threat from the building of a new shopping centre and an underground car park, entry to which would be via a pedestrian street. The actions, beginning in January 2008, were organised by *Pravo na grad* (The Right to the City) and *Zelena akcije* (Green Action). *Pravo na grad* has links to the global Right to the City movement, based on an initial concept by Henri Lefebvre and most clearly expressed by the critical Marxist geographer David Harvey who has suggested "crises repeatedly erupt around urbanization both locally and globally, and ... the metropolis is now the point of massive collision— dare we call it class struggle? - over the accumulation by dispossession visited upon the least well-off and the developmental drive that seeks to colonize space for the affluent" (Harvey, 2008: 39).

In the Zagreb case, a wide coalition including artists, activists and academics, challenged the legality of the construction, focussing on linkages between the (then Social Democratic) mayor of Zagreb and a leading property developer, as well as the lack of oversight by relevant Government Ministries, concerned with both the destruction of public space and the fact that 'public interest' was being used for private gain. In the summer of 2010, a permanent protest was established with a group of dedicated activists joined, frequently, by large numbers of ordinary citizens. In the end, despite the State Attorney's office acknowledging irregularities, construction work begun, with the arrests by riot police of demonstrators in July 2010 drawing wider attention to the issue. The *Varšavska* street protests held both an immediate and a much longer-term resonance, not least as they have been followed by protests elsewhere in Croatia and, indeed, in the wider region, regarding similar attempts to privatise public space. Crucially, the campaign was able to move discursively between the particular and the general, mobilising broad, popular, concerns over corruption, the links between political and economic elites, the failure of Ministerial regulation and control, the structural nature of 'conflicts of interest', and the lack of public participation in urban planning. Indeed, a banner carried by one protester '*Živio Drug Mito*' (Long Live Comrade Bribe), a subversion of the communist slogan '*Živio Drug Tito*' (Long Live Comrade Tito), was, perhaps, the single most coherent critique of Croatian transition, more impressive than hundreds of academic texts on the subject.

Alongside the Varšavska protests, at times interlinked with them, are the demands, originating in the Faculty of Philosophy (sometimes termed Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in English translation) of the University of Zagreb (FFZG), for the right to free higher education. The radicalisation of FFZG students is traced by Mate Kapović, a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics, widely perceived as

one of the leaders of the movement, to involvement in early 2008 in anti-NATO protests (Kapović, 2011) which is, in fact, one of the rare instances of all three waves of activism working on a common cause. Protests in May 2008 which gathered large numbers of students, but which had very vague demands against the reforms of higher education, gave way in November 2008 to a smaller but more radical protest based on one demand: fully free, publicly financed education at all levels, accessible to all. The ways in which what Kapović describes as a new and, at the time, 'outrageous', demand began to become a commonsense discourse, and to galvanise disparate groups working against the 'commodification' and 'marketisation' of public services can be seen, indeed, as one of the major achievements of the movement. Equally important, the student occupation of FFZG, beginning in the spring of 2009, and which spread to many other campuses throughout Croatia, put issues of direct democracy, both within the University but also in the wider political arena, onto the agenda for the first time. It is in the repertoire of innovative democratic processes and structures that the FFZG movement most stands out. Notably, this focused on the *plenum* and its working groups, established as the key organ of student control, open to all interested students and other citizens with everyone having the right to speak and vote and all decisions made by the majority of those present. The workings of direct democracy are set out in *The Occupation Cookbook*[3]. In his Foreward, Boris Buden, a philosopher and publicist closely involved with ARKzin, and a key link between first and third wave activisms, contrasts the idea of a 'cookbook' with a manifesto or proclamation, suggesting that we are invited into a kitchen of experimentation not onto „the stage of world history", and to a „post-hysterical" protest which „worked perfectly for five weeks" (ibid.). The plenum still continues long after the formal occupation has ended. The other crucial aspect of the movement is the deep chronicling of all its activities, and its wider theoretical underpinnings, on the website *Slobodni filozofski* (see above), as well as the explicit attempt to avoid having named leaders, linked to an idea of the plenum as a kind of 'collective intellectual subject' (Oštrić, 2009). The wider impact of the FFZG protests can be seen in the so-called 'Facebook protests' in Croatia in 2011, which sought to combine the broad demands of the Occupy movement with direct democracy and, indeed, in the campaign for a 'no' vote in the referendum as to whether Croatia should join the European Union. Perhaps even more crucially, it has led to a degree of activist support and solidarity, virtually for the first time, for the struggles of workers faced with redundancy in the context of privatisation.

Whilst rather disparate and diffuse, I would argue that the theoretical underpinnings of third wave activism have been far more central than they were in the first two waves. At times, notably through the Subversive Film Festival and its related Forum, there has appeared to be a fetishisation of theory as „stars" of the global left are brought to Zagreb to give keynote lectures to packed cinema halls[4]. Interestingly, in the context of the failure of mainstream higher education to keep pace,

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[3] http://slobodnifilozofski.org/?p=1915/#19 (accessed 2 October 2012)

[4] http://www.subversivefestival.com/ (accessed 3 October 2012)

both in terms of what is taught and, crucially, how it is taught, the shift towards extra-curricular learning, traceable to CŽS, CMS and, importantly NetClub MaMa, a Soros-funded initiative bringing together critical media, net.art and cultural theory, has allowed for left, often Marxist, theory to be visible once more. As noted above, in some ways, the Subversive Film festival has made this 'trendy', with its director, publicist and author Srećko Horvat one of the key critical thinkers within the 'new wave'. In a widely circulated text, Horvat and Igor Štiks, trace the rise of a new, organised, original and critical left in Croatia, influenced by the Arab spring, by anti-austerity movements in Greece, Spain and elsewhere, and opposed to neo-colonial forms of EU disciplinarity in South East Europe (Horvat and Štiks, 2012; cf. also Horvat and Štiks, 2010). Suggesting that the protests invite us to „rethink the categories used to explain the social, political and economic situation in the Balkans" (ibid.) they stress the ways in which core neo-liberalism is reproduced, in particular forms, in the dependent semi-periphery. In short, they argue, the protests are anti-regime, critical of the linkages between political elites, businesses, media corporations, organized crime, predatory (foreign-owned) banks, corrupt judiciary and, most interestingly of all, „corrupt unions" and „NGOs promoting the holy union of electoral democracy and neoliberal economy" (ibid.).This reworking of a rather deterministic Marxism tends, of course, to be rather limiting in its concep-tion of political action and to mitigate against alliances with more reformist, social democratic ideas, pushed by what Žižek terms „left liberal welfare state morons"[5]. The relationship between Marxist and more anarchist positions is an open question here. Certainly, anarchistic movements and theorists have been present even in the first wave, through Zagreb Anarchist Movement (ZAP) and ATTACK!, an initiative in autonomous alternative culture. Some aspects of anarchist theory remain influential for some third wave activists, particularly those involved in radical ecological move-ments (cf. Šimlesa, 2005; 2010) and a number of other loose groupings, sometimes critical of what they see as Marxist posturing in the Subversive Forum, for example. Clearly, the demand for 'drect democracy', as well as a sense of protests as a kind of 'temporary autonomous zone' (cf. Stubbs, 2010), both fit with anarchist theories and represent a kind of counter-narrative to Marxist organisational disciplinarity.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the third wave is that there remains support from international organisations, mainly two German foundations, Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), noted above, the foundation of the German Green Party, and the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung (RLS), associated with the German left party (Die Linke) and describing itself as a „socialist think-tank for political alternatives". The HBS office in Croatia has been a major supporter of *Pravo na Grad* and the Subversive Forum and has organised, in the last three years, a Green Academy for a week on the Island of Vis, Croatia, bringing together theorists and activists from the South East European region and beyond. Together with RLS, HBS has galvanised critical thinking and practice around concepts such as 'the commons', exploring issues such

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[5] As in Žižek's lecture 'Signs from the Future' at the Subversive Film Festival on 14 May 2012, available at URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOTufvP9-6U (accessed 3 October 2012).

as resource use, workplace democracy, digital commons and, crucially, sustainable development. Whilst the tensions, particularly for HBS, between working with social movements which have popular support but do not wish to engage in formal Green politics, and Green political parties and fractions which have virtually no popular support, are real, the creation of a new critical commonsense does appear to be bearing fruit with the Green Academy, in particular, becoming the modern day equivalent of the critical theory summer school organised by members of the *Praxis* Group on the island of Korčula, between 1964 and 1974(cf. Bilić 2012a), and allowing for inter-generational, multi-disciplinary, and radical pluralist dialogue.

The leftist nature of the third wave has, of course, attracted critics, not least Žarko Puhovski, who has dismissed the movements as 'single issue politics' and, of course, derided both the 'anti-democratic' nature of the plenum and the impossibility of the demand for free higher education, whilst himself working with the previous right-wing government on a Commission on the Law on Higher Education[6]. Other academics have also gone on public record dismissing student demands. In a rare, and early, text from within Croatian sociology, Milan Mesić, albeit rather formalistically, 'tests' five theories of social movements against what he perceives as the practices of Croatian students protests for free education concluding, rather unsurprisingly, that the protests are of a 'hybrid' character, adding that they have failed to attract students from outside the social sciences and have only been partially successful in their demands. He fails, completely, to address the impact which the protests, and the new wave of activism, may have on both the process and content of higher education itself (Mesić, 2009).

Analysis of the present conjuncture is, of course, fraught with dangers. What is, perhaps, most interesting in the third wave is the break with the NGO shape, sometimes expressed in a rather simplistic view of NGOs as, inevitably, part of the neo-liberal privatisation of public goods and services. For most of the new wave activists, the NGO shape is, either irrelevant, or, as in the case of *Zelena akcije*, a useful means of attracting project-based funding which can then be used for wider political aims. In many ways, some of the discursive frames of the third wave stand in direct opposition to the first wave, emphasising the structural, systemic and symbolic dimensions of violence, and arguing in terms of collective solutions, as opposed to an inter-personal focus on conflict resolution and on non-violence as starting from the individual. The fact that a critical mass of activists will have completed a University degree, unlike many first wave activists and, in some cases, hold junior faculty positions in Croatian higher education, may, in the long-term, be the lasting legacy of the new wave of activism, continuing to create new forms of experimental, tactical, politics, and ensuring that the new spaces of protest continue to be hotbeds of learning and laboratories for action. In posing the individual-structural as a fundamental either/or choice, the movement risks alienating many potential partners in a wider coalition, however.

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[6] Remarks made at HBS round table 26 June 2010. See also URL: http://slobodnifilozofski.org/?p=1793 (accessed 3 October 2012).

CONCLUSIONS: REVISITING 'GENERATIONAL SCRIPTS'

Trying to understand three waves of activism in Croatia through a lens of 'generational scripts' is valuable, but has limitations. Crucially, each wave encompasses activists of different generations, those involved in one wave may also participate in other waves, and the issue of what happens when activists age needs also to be considered. Nevertheless, the idea of 'generations' or 'cohorts', from Mannheim onwards, as "people within a delineated population who experience the same significant event within a given period of time" (Pilcher, 1994: 483) certainly has a place within conjunctural analysis. Here, it is not the idea that the whole of a generation develops a specific consciousness significantly different from another generation but, rather, that within a rather narrow group, in this case activists, there are significant and consistent differences between different generations. Whilst 'war' can certainly be seen to be the kind of dramatic, even traumatic, event which Mannheim had in mind as marking a rather strong divide between generations, the danger of a kind of psychologistic or socio-biological automatism is all too apparent. Nevertheless, pointing out that most of the new wave of activists were probably no more than five or six years old when the war in Croatia ended is, perhaps, of relevance. There is a need to study more the linkage between biography and structural conditions, conjuncturally, through a kind of life path approach (cf. Pred, 1981) which suggests that scripts that develop during a time of formative social action tend to be relatively resilient, even in the face of changing political, institutional and historical conditions. The complexities of whether these scripts are locally, nationally, regionally or globally formed, and how these (dis)junctions are lived, is also important (Beck and Back-Gernsheim, 2009). I have suggested that the discursive frames, the modes of analysis, and the repertoire of responses within the three waves of activism in Croatia are sufficiently different as to merit more research which utilises biographical, life path and cohort analysis. The challenge remains to build a sociology of activism able to explore, from different angles, the possibilities and problems of combining radicalism and inclusivity, to address the often narrow line between mainstream and counter-hegemonic forms and structures, and, above all, to contribute to a multi-voiced and non-linear understanding of social action and social change. The task for a new politics may be as much to learn from, and engage in dialogue with, earlier generations as to criticise them.

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MREŽE, ORGANIZACIJE, POKRETI: NARATIVI I OBLICI TRI VALA AKTIVIZMA U HRVATSKOJ

Paul Stubbs

Sažetak

Ovaj rad istražuje narative, oblike, ciljeve i prakse tri vala aktivizma posvećena miru, ljudskim pravima, rodnoj ravnopravnosti i socijalnoj pravdi u Hrvatskoj. Prvi valobuhvaća mrežu pojedinaca, grupa i projekata oko Antiratne kampanje Hrvatske u kontekstu aktivizma u urbanim centrima bivše Jugoslavije kasnih 1980-ih. Drugi val se odnosi na profesionalizirane i tehnokratske 'ne-vladine organizacije' na koje su djelomično,utjecalivanjski donatori i izbor određenih organizacijskih oblika i struktura. Treći valuključuje međusobno povezane aktivističke inicijative i pokrete, kao i studentske proteste iznikle na zagrebačkom Filozofskom fakultetu i pokret protiv izgradnje trgovačkog centra u Varšavskoj ulici u Zagrebu, koji reflektiraju otpor komodifikaciji, 'kumovskom' (crony) kapitalizmu i eroziji prava na javni prostor. Rad istražuje do koje je mjere moguće analizirati ova tri valaktivizma uzimajući u obzir različite generacije koje su djelovale na osnovu različitih premisa, lokalnih, nacionalnih, regionalnih i globalnih. Rabeći intervjue, sudjelovanje s promatranjem i refleksivnu etnografiju, autorispituje društvene i političke učinke različitih aktivizama, s namjerom da doprinese razvoju historijske sociologije aktivizma u Hrvatskoj.

Ključne riječi: aktivizam, Hrvatska, generacije, premise