Overcoming 'Other-ness': a comparative analysis of transnational activist collective identity formation among World Social Forum activists and HIV/AIDS healthworkers

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2012
The Dissertation of Kristopher Michael Kohler is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

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2012
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my friend, the late Kofi Buenor Hadjor, a passionate scholar-activist who spent his life challenging, inspiring and loving.

And to my daughter, Gabriella Kamweji Kohler, who brings me hope and is a constant reminder that the world is our home and it still produces incredible beauty.
EPIGRAPH

… That’s not radical. Bringing people together, that’s radical.

Aaron Jones

Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

Karl Marx
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.............................................................................................................iii

Dedication.......................................................................................................................iv

Epigraph.........................................................................................................................v

Table of Contents..........................................................................................................vi

List of Abbreviations.....................................................................................................ix

List of Figures................................................................................................................x

Vita....................................................................................................................................xi

Abstract........................................................................................................................xii

Chapter I: Introduction................................................................................................1
  Globalization as Transnational Encounter.................................................................1
  Bretton Woods: From Stabilization to Instability.........................................................4
  Activist Responses to Global Challenges.................................................................11
  Nation-State Impotency in an era of Globalization....................................................13
  Barriers to transnational social movements in practice.............................................19

Dissertation Summary of Chapters.............................................................................25

Chapter II: Towards a Theory of Transnational Activist Identity Formation..............32
  Transnationalism and Transnational Identity............................................................34
    Rethinking Culture....................................................................................................37
    “To refuse what we are”: The Foucauldian double-bind of identity......................40
    Defining Transnational Identity.............................................................................45
  Activism......................................................................................................................46
    The mass, the crowd and the herd..........................................................................46
    The Rational-Choice Turn.......................................................................................48
    Attempts to Bridge the Divide................................................................................51
    Collective Identity and the Interpersonal Connection.............................................55
    Creation of “we”......................................................................................................58
    The Heartbeat of Movements: Culture, Symbols and Emotions............................60
    Bridging Identities....................................................................................................64
  International Actors: Four “Ideal Types”...............................................................72
    The “Professionals”..............................................................................................73
    The “Localists”........................................................................................................74
    The “Missionaries”...............................................................................................76
The Transnational Activists (TNAs)…………………………………….78
Conclusion…………………………………………………………………79

Chapter III: World Social Forum: A Case Study…………………………………….81
From Zapatismo Seattle………………………………………………………….81
A Note on Trans-National/ Trans-Cultural Collaboration……………………88
The World Social Forum: Intro and Process…………………………………….90
History, Organization and a Counter-Hegemonic Vision…………………..91
Overcoming Divisions …………………………………………………………97
WSF Participants – Ethnography ……………………………………………..100
Biography: Towards Transnational Identity Formation…………………..100
History: Towards Transnational Identity Formation………………………102
Cultural “Binding Practices”: Towards Transnational Identity
Formation………………………………………………………………………105
“A Marcha” ………………………………………………………………107
“Um outro mundo é possivel” ………………………………………………108
Conclusion……………………………………………………………………113

Chapter IV: Transnationalism and Activism in Zambian History…………………..117
A Multi-National State…………………………………………………………117
The Potential for Transnational Activism in the Developing World…………120
Transnational “Encounter”……………………………………………………123
Transnationalism in Zambia…………………………………………………128
A “Nation of Refugees”………………………………………………………130
The Prazo system and the Chikundu……………………………………….132
The British are Coming: Missionaries and the British South African
Company……………………………………………………………………134
Partition, Colonization and Autonomy…………………………………….135
Zambia: the Making of a Multi-national State…………………………….138
Joking for Peace………………………………………………………………146
Zambian Activism……………………………………………………………147
“One Zambia, One Nation”………………………………………………149
Pan-African Leadership……………………………………………………..153
Conclusion……………………………………………………………………156

Chapter V: Transnational Journeys of HIV/AIDS Healthworkers in Zambia……...159
HIV/AIDS Healthworkers: Qualitative Data…………………………………167
Contextualizing HIVAIDS work in Zambia: PEPFAR, NAC, independence
and autonomy………………………………………………………………169
Zambian Transnationalism………………………………………………….177
Foreigners and Transnationalism…………………………………………….188
African Transnationalism…………………………………………………..195
Transnational Identities………………………………………………………197
Conclusion……………………………………………………………………207
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter VI: Activist Journeys of HIV/AIDS Healthworkers in Zambia</th>
<th>211</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to Zambian Activism</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambians and Activism</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Nationals and Activism</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Catalytic experiences”</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter VII: Overcoming ‘Other-ness’: Tracing the Dynamics of Transnational Activist Collective Identities</th>
<th>242</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Public Sociology for HIV/AIDS Work</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Contributions</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Transnationalism</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Activism</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Paths to Transnational Activist Identity Formation</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theorizing Emotion</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultures of Activism</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix: A Note on Methodological Approach</th>
<th>260</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS – Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ANC – African National Congress (South Africa)
HIV – Human immunodeficiency virus
ICC – International Criminal Court
IMF – International Monetary Fund
M&E – Monitoring and evaluation
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NSM – New social movements
SMI – Social movement industry
SMO – Social movement organization
SWAPO – South-West Africa People’s Organization (Namibia)
TB – Tuberculosis
TNA – Transnational activist
UN – United Nations
UNIP – United National Independence Party (Zambia)
WTO – World Trade Organization
ZANU – Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People’s Union
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Four “Ideal Types” of International Actors ........................... 79

Figure 7.1: Two Paths to Transnational Activist Identity Formation.............. 252
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION


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Increasingly global problems, concerning various effects of the global economy and the absence of global democracy, require global solutions. Particular nation-states and international spaces (UN, ICC, WTO, etc.) are ill-equipped to remedy these issues. Consequently, in recent years global social justice movements have emerged to address these challenges.
Social movement scholars have long held that collective identities are crucial to recruiting adherents, sustaining solidarity and social movement cohesion. Therefore, the study of the formation of transnational activist (TNA) collective identities is of enormous importance to understanding the dynamics of emerging global social justice movements. Nonetheless, social movement scholars have generally ignored the specific dynamics of the emotion-laden processes that impel this formation.

This dissertation traces the emergence of TNA identities in two distinct spaces. First, through interviews and participant observation, I trace the emergence of TNA identities amongst activists gathered at the World Social Forum. Secondly, I track how international actors collaborating in emotional HIV/AIDS healthwork in Zambia make sense of their identities and follow the factors that impel actors towards more or less activism and/or more or less transnationalism.

Comparing and contrasting potential activists and potential transnationalists, I find two emotion-laden processes drive further activism and transnationalism. First, transformative, often painfully emotional, “catalytic” experiences often drive potential activists in search of activist organizations and communities. Over time, they begin to immerse themselves in activist circles and increasingly adopt activist identities. Second, early exposure to “the international” often drives potential transnationalists to acquire an interest in diverse peoples and cultures. Over time, they seek out this diversity, continually adding to a repertoire of cultural competencies that allow them to act as cultural “bridges” or “translators”. At the far end of these emotion-laden journeys, transnationalists conceive of themselves as inseparable and indivisible from
the “Other”. Furthermore, they often acquire transnational, relational ties and friendships that push them towards greater activism. Consequently, at the far end of these two continua, activist and transnational identities tend to reinforce each other. Lastly, my research suggests that transnational, transcultural “binding practices” will be essential in sustaining global social justice movements over time.
Chapter I: Introduction

Globalization as Transnational Encounter

The fact of what has been called globalization is as inevitable as it is difficult to define. It seems undeniable that the “compression” of time and space in the modern world brings human beings and their diverse cosmologies into closer proximity with increasing frequency.

Broadly speaking, the growing regularity of transnational “encounters” has produced two dominant trends. For some people, these encounters signal a profound sense of loss. Local cosmologies once understood as “truth”, “right” and “good” seem downgraded to “points of view”, “perspectives” or even cultural “relics”. These encounters produce a reaction against difference. Whether this reaction seeks to retain “tradition”, religious or cultural “truth” or “morality” is immaterial. In this vein, as Olivier Roy has noted, globalization, ironically, may induce cultural stagnation and a “new” opposition to change.

2 I mean “encounter in the sense used by Clifton Crais in The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa, Cambridge, U.K.; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002. Crais main point in this regard, is that even if interactions have stark power differentials as between well-armed colonizers and poorly armed indigenous peoples, their meeting, their encounter still affects each. It remains across cultural exchange for both sides. The strength of the term is to dramatically illustrate that colonial peoples are not merely acted upon by foreigners even in colonial relations. The subjugated still have agency and influence. The term emphasizes that cross cultural exchange emerges even in perniciously exploitive environments.
3 Here, I do not mean to imply that these encounters take place within a vacuum. Certainly cultures and peoples encounter one another within a matrix of power relations that often privileges one party over another. More will be said about this below. Here, I only wish to outline the divergent reactions to international encounter in an increasingly globalized world.
Similarly, over the last four and half centuries, the nation-state system has acquired hegemonic status. Human beings born in every part of the world are socialized, cajoled and brainwashed into conceiving of themselves as strictly national subjects with fundamentally unique, usually “superior”, cultures, histories, languages and ways of life. The tragic consequences of this division of humanity are manifold; religious wars, slavery, racism, genocide, colonialism. In the present, this division of humanity powerfully mediates against global cooperation and compromise in addressing a wide range of global problems.

However, in other encounters, people inculcate a new appreciation of an “Other”. These more “cosmopolitan” encounters produce an appreciation of global diversity and a productive learning environment. At the far end of a continuum, people have begun to reject narrow nationalistic conceptions of self. They have nurtured a sense of self, an identity, which is thoroughly transnational. Many of these transnationalists have become activists for transnational causes as well. Unwilling to see global problems through the constricted lens of national interests, many have embraced new collective identities which challenge narrowly national conceptions of self. They have styled themselves as transnational social movement activists.

But how do such transnational activists/global social justice activists overcome the myriad divisions of humanity (race, class, culture, gender, religion, national origin, etc.)? What circumstances mediate against further divisions and help nurture an international “beloved community”? Such is the task of this dissertation.
Globalization not only allows for increasing interconnection between peoples, it also has spawned the emergence of a number of challenges that cannot be addressed within the “frame” of the nation-state. A rise in greenhouse gases or the destruction of the rainforests in Brazil are problems which affect the lives and livelihoods of people around the globe who have no (or little) direct means of political redress against the primary offenders. Similarly, as people and goods traverse the earth with more speed and frequency, the dangers of global health pandemics increase and nations are becoming increasingly aware that viruses respect neither borders nor customs officials. Global terrorism, while certainly not the result of a “clash of civilizations”\textsuperscript{5}, is also a growing concern. Gradually, we are increasingly aware that suffering and perceived slights in far flung reaches of the world can have powerfully personal consequences closer to home.

Just as the phenomenon of globalization is not demonstrably “new”, its challenges also have historical antecedents. Coming resource wars over oil or water, as some have predicted, seem to awaken the memory of colonial wars of conquest leading to world war.\textsuperscript{6} Similarly, the loss of life due to HIV/AIDS and panics associated with strains of bird or swine influenza remind us of the historical pandemics of smallpox or plague.

Nonetheless, I argue below that a shift in international economic relations occurred in the waning years of World War II leading to a fundamentally new


reorientation of international relations that has only recently provoked significant popular opposition in the international arena. These changes have dramatically amplified the interconnection between peoples in opposite corners of the world. While certain aspects of global interconnection (advances in telecommunications and travel technologies, for instance) probably would have continued uninterrupted regardless of the post-war changes I discuss below, others (the exacerbation of global poverty, the economic refugees it generates and the proliferation of a development industry designed to “solve” it) certainly are connected to these developments.\(^7\) “Globalization” in some form has been proceeding since the expeditions of Zheng He, the conquests of Ghengis Khan or the early Viking voyages into the New World, yet these post-World War II developments represent an increased institutionalization, sophistication and scope of the forces of globalization.

**Bretton Woods: From Stabilization to Instability**

In July of 1944, representatives from 45\(^8\) governments met at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire to begin a discussion of how to create a stable international monetary system in the wake of the Great Depression. At the time of this crucial meeting,


\(^8\) Even though the number of 45 is paltry, this number is probably even more unrepresentative. In 1944, most of the following countries, for example, were essentially Western neo-colonies; Liberia, South Africa, Cuba, Eire, the Philippines, Iran and Iraq.
Europe was in need of post-war reconstruction funds and the United States was in possession of more than 70 percent of the world’s official gold reserves.\textsuperscript{9}

It was in this context that the IMF was created. Hadjor argues that

\ldots the terms of its creation reflected the economic supremacy of the USA. In fact, the strong presence of Latin American countries at the talks was largely as a support for US demands.\textsuperscript{10}

The IMF was formally brought into existence in December of 1945 when 29 governments signed its “articles of agreement”.\textsuperscript{11} The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IRBD), eventually called the World Bank, was founded at the same time.

With the formation of these Bretton Woods institutions in 1944, international economic policy clearly entered a new phase of coordination. The Great Depression underscored the dangers of a narrowly nationalistic approach to global economics. The states represented at Bretton Woods realized that their economies were hopelessly interconnected and sought means to stabilize the global economy in the post-World War era. These institutions would extend loans to countries suffering economic downturns in order to sustain global markets and international obligations.

At the time, the focus of the developing world was upon altering colonial policy and nurturing burgeoning independence movements. The Bretton Woods agreements created institutions designed by the developed countries to protect the economic interests of the developed countries. Originally, the developing world was

\textsuperscript{9} Hadjor, Kofi Buenor, Dictionary of Third World Terms, 1992, p. 144
\textsuperscript{10} Hadjor, Kofi Buenor, Dictionary of Third World Terms, 1992, p.144
\textsuperscript{11} Hadjor, Kofi Buenor, Dictionary of Third World Terms, 1992, p.145
neither the focus nor the aim of the policies constructed at Bretton Woods.

Nonetheless, these institutions and their policies would eventually become incredibly important and influential to newly independent states in the developing world a few decades later.

For activists in the developing world, decolonization had to be first on the agenda. India’s call for independence echoed in Accra, Algiers and Diem Bien Phu. In the post war years, innumerable colonized peoples moved the world consciousness slowly, but inexorably, towards an acceptance of the justice of some form of self-determination for all people. Domination by naked force became increasingly anathema in the international realm.

Nonetheless, decolonization was an eminently “managed” affair. While colonial powers were willing, even eager, to relinquish the costs associated with colonial administration, they were less willing to forego access to colonial resources and they were openly hostile to surrendering the markets for their goods abroad. The underdeveloped and distorted nature of colonial economies meant that the formerly

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12 Certainly national minorities in the USA, the UK, Turkey, Indonesia, China and elsewhere continued to suffer discrimination and oppression, but what one might call “naked” colonialism increasingly found little international support. Exceptions in this respect may even prove the point. An international outcry in conjunction with a domestic liberation movement gradually brought independence to South Africa and the lack of independence for Tibet is an international cause célèbre.

13 I use this term in the specific sense Walter Rodney uses it in How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, 1981. Much of Africa (and India) were self sufficient and thriving societies prior to the arrival of European traders on the coasts of Africa. Through a variety of processes (including a reorientation of internal economies, stimulation of a trade in captives, loss of manpower and a massive extraction of wealth and resources) Africa was actively underdeveloped. This term is preferable to other terms such as “undeveloped” or “less developed” which do not capture the intentionality of these processes. Furthermore, they imply that Africa is and has been on a long march from “backwardness and barbarism” to “civilization and development”. Five hundred years of history can sustain neither claim.
colonized were extremely vulnerable to exploitation by the former colonial master.\footnote{As Kwame Nkrumah (Neo-colonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism, New York, International Publishers, 1965) noted so well, foreign troops often remained on national soil and/or trained the native militaries, foreign controlled banking systems remained intact and foreign purchasing organizations often dictated or determined the international prices of the unprocessed goods of the former colony. Existing infrastructure and knowledge combined with this international pressure to maintain existing trading relationships.}

The age of neo-colonialism had begun.

As international trade grew the exploitative patterns established under colonialism found a new language for the twentieth century. “Free trade”, King Leopold’s official sounding phrase used to justify the mutilation, forced labor and unprecedented genocide\footnote{I find Adam Hochschild’s (King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1998) argument compelling that according to the best statistical evidence available, King Leopold’s brutal occupation of the Congo represents an unacknowledged genocide.} of Congolese in the 19th century, was repackaged and rebranded for the 20th century. In a series of hypocritical talks, agreements and finally formal institutions, a vaguely defined doctrine of economic liberalization emerged.

Arturo Escobar’s trenchant critique of this historical moment is instructive at this juncture. Escobar argues that in the post World War II period, the industrialized North “articulated a false construct (‘underdevelopment’)” and a concurrent production and circulation of discourses to mirror it.\footnote{Escobar, Arturo, “Power and Visibility: Development and the Invention and Management of the Third World”, Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 3, No. 4, (Nov., 1988), p. 429} Mirroring in important ways, Edward Said’s argument in which the West created the Orient as the image it expected\footnote{Said, Edward, Orientalism, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978}, Escobar argues that the concept of the Third World as underdeveloped was created by a particularly Western regime of truth. He argues that the new field of “development” went through a process of professionalization in which a particular politics of truth was created and maintained. The creation of “development
economics” was its most important consequence. Next, he argues that the institutions designed to “manage” the “problem”\(^\text{18}\) of development were charged with developing techniques and a “frame of mind required for the new enterprise”.\(^\text{19}\) It was nothing less than the production of a new regime of truth.

This new truth was mythologized into a “science” of development economics which was thrust on the developing world, altering and damaging existing institutions, national autonomy and cultural practices ostensibly in a drive to create a conception of “development” that has failed thoroughly. Escobar charges that a series of faith-like assumptions about the “truth” of development economics has led to 40 years of hunger and dramatically exacerbated the dependency of Third World nations. The “science” of development economics was institutionalized in a variety of forms. Foremost among them were the IMF, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (finally institutionalized as the World Trade Organization in 1995) and the World Bank.

In the 1970s and 1980s, international banks and investors were awash with “petrodollars”\(^\text{20}\) and searching for investment opportunities. It was at this moment that the IMF and World Bank became hopelessly politicized. Structural Adjustment

\(^{18}\) Escobar’s superb article shows how the logic of development economics led economists to “produce” problems/ social categories (“small farmers”, “illiterate peasants”, etc.) which their programs were expected to solve. They created a battery of labels for economic, political or agricultural health. People were forced into development categories and then policies were enacted to “encourage” their movement. The classic case here is the faith-like belief that “it was necessary to turn the peasantry into a source of cheap labor for capital accumulation to take place.” Escobar, Arturo, “Power and Visibility: Development and the Invention and Management of the Third World”, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (Nov., 1988), p.435


\(^{20}\) Hadjor, Kofi Buenor, Dictionary of Third World Terms, 1992, p. 246
Programmes (SAPs) emerged as the tool for the evisceration of economic sovereignty in the developing world under the rubric of the “Washington Consensus”\(^\text{21}\)

While “conditionality”\(^\text{22}\) had always been a part of IMF loans, struggling nation states looking for economic relief were now required to implement a series of domestic economic reforms before future loans would be extended to them. Essentially, foreign investment was to be encouraged at all costs. Tax holidays were to be extended to foreign investors and profits should be allowed repatriation without taxation. Domestic laws regulating worker safety or the environment, minimum wages or sexual harassment, should be repealed in order to encourage “investment”.

Domestic spending on social services (education, healthcare, etc.) was to be cut. Public sector employment was slashed and public assets were sold off to private, often foreign, interests.\(^\text{23}\) Subsidies to keep staple food prices predictable and to guard against “price-gauging” violated the “free trade” dogma. Subsidized agricultural inputs were likewise denounced as wasteful and unnecessary (foreign firms could provide these goods, after all).

The result was as predictable as it was tragic. Poverty and inequality exploded. Urban poverty in the Ivory Coast doubled in a single year. “Extreme poverty” grew in Nigeria from 28 percent in 1980 to 66 percent in 1996. Urban poverty also grew by 50 percent in Latin America from 1980-1986.\(^\text{24}\) Increased cost of foodstuffs combined with less purchasing power and access to agricultural inputs led directly to rising

\(^{21}\) Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*, 2006, p.153
\(^{22}\) Hadjor, Op. Cit., p.25
\(^{23}\) Thoedore Trefon writes that in Kinshasa, “the population refers to basic public services as ‘memories’.” Cited in Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*, 2006, p. 155
\(^{24}\) Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*, 2006, p.156
malnutrition, increased child mortality and plummeting life expectancies. Deaths increased from preventable diseases and children dropped out of school. Men, women and children flocked to the informal sector as street vendors, petty drug dealers and sex-workers. In Jamaica, for instance, the economic burden these policies induce fall squarely upon the shoulders of women and children in the informal sectors, often selling drugs or their bodies. In Peru, formal employment fell from 60 percent to 11 percent in three years. In Mexico, informal employment doubled between 1980 and 1987.

At the macro-economic level, many developing nations lost a sense of economic sovereignty. Already manipulated by foreign control of crucial exports, they now were forced to privatize many national industries and assets that might have helped improve their economies in the long run. They earned little foreign currency on these one time purchases (or “investments”). In some places, jobs were created, but in conjunction with forced reductions in public sector employment, such gains were often negligible.

Often forced to work long hours under harsh conditions, worker turnover could be high. Wages were low, harassment was frequent. Between 1980 and 1986, average incomes of the working population fell by 40 percent in Venezuela, 30 percent in

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25 Caroline Moser’s study of the Guayaquil, Ecuador found that after eight successive SAPs between 1982 and 1988, fully 80 percent of the barrio’s children suffered some form of malnutrition. Cited in Davis, Mike, Planet of Slums, 2006, p.159

26 It is worthy of note in the context of this dissertation that, as Mike Davis notes, “poverty-induced prostitution” is partly to blame for the AIDS holocaust. Planet of Slums, 2006, p.160


28 Davis, Mike, Planet of Slums, 2006, p.157
Argentina and 21 percent in Brazil and Costa Rica. Often these jobs capitalized on perceived pliability of women, especially young women. Similarly, employers were often able to get governments to ban unions, collective bargaining and/or strikes as well.

Activist Responses to Global Challenges

Alongside these new global challenges, we see the emergence of diverse transnational movements for social change revolving around a variety of issue areas; environmentalism, human rights, the plight of women, movements in support of indigenous rights, cultural rights, movements in opposition to the privatization and commodification of knowledge including patent regimes, movements against the centralization of global media, movements opposed to the privatization of water, movements to forgive the “debt” in the developing world and a profoundly international anti-war movement. These movements generally share an opposition to the extension of a particular approach to globalization (neoliberalism) and a set of economic policies and principles that they see as fundamentally undemocratic.

Certainly, these movements have historical antecedents as well. The international movement to abolish the trade in African captives spanned from Europe to the Caribbean North and South America, not to mention Africa itself. An international women’s suffrage movement spanned from Australia and New Zealand

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29 Davis, Mike. Planet of Slums, 2006, p.156-7
30 “Debt” is in quotation marks here as many of these activists would deny that this debt “exists” in the sense that they believe payments accrued and interest as well as exploitative economic policies have led to a massive transfer of wealth from the developing world to their supposed “debtors”. For many of these activists the debt has not only been paid many times over, reparations are indeed called for.
to Europe and America during the late 19th and early 20th century. Socialist
movements in the 20th century have made more or less successful attempts at
transnational cooperation and collaboration as well. These international social
movements were the precursors to the present transnational social movements.

Over generations, international movements like these, as well as more
localized opposition, protest and rebellion brought immense pressure upon a
community of states to abolish slavery, extend women’s suffrage and end colonialism.
What is noteworthy about these movements is their profoundly international
orientation. Their targets were international. They collaborated with like-minded
activists across cultural barriers of language, race, gender and nation-state. Their goals
were international, as well as their successes.31

Further, the successes of these movements were a result of their international
orientation and collaboration. Moreover, I argue that nation-states and national
institutions are not, and will not, be able to adequately respond to these global
challenges. In a world of increasingly international challenges, the nation-state model
is both a) unable to respond to global challenges as they are presently oriented and
constructed, and b) unable to reform or alter its fundamental structure or modus
operandi. This suggests that alternative institutions or forms of social organization are
required to address contemporary challenges.

31 I would like to note at this juncture that it is for these very reasons that the so-called “world culture”
thorists (for example, Meyer, John W., Boli, John, Thomas, George M. and Ramirez, Francisco O.,
144-181) are so frustrating, empirically. They seem to attribute convergences around styles of
constitutions, flags, national anthems, etc. as the diffusion of a sort of mystical global “culture” rather
than tracing the mechanisms of diffusion and the power dynamics forced or overcome in the historical
processes leading to convergence. Such methodological blindness leads them to ignore crucial historical
encounters fraught with domination and resistance which have shaped global “convergence”.
As with the case of anti-slavery and anti-colonial struggles, internationally oriented, transnational social movements are absolutely critical to any effort to adequately respond to, or solve, this wide variety of modern global challenges.

*Nation-State Impotency in an era of Globalization*

Above, I made the claim that modern states are a) unable to respond to global challenges as they are presently oriented and constructed, and b) unable to reform or alter their fundamental structure or *modus operandi*.

Why are they unable to respond to global challenges? Four reasons suggest why modern states are unable to respond to global challenges. a) Nation-states have a dramatically decreased capacity to affect their domestic economies. b) The principles of national sovereignty do not permit feedback mechanisms that are supra-national.\(^{32}\) Philosophically, these same principles allow no mechanism for ceding sovereignty to a supra-national entity. c) There is no neutral, egalitarian enforcement mechanism for international agreements. d) Theoretically, there is a powerful disincentive for state actors to engage in transnational cooperation due to a “political economy of scale”. To put it plainly, state actors generally choose to be “big fish in a little pond” than “little fish in a big pond”.

Scholars have noted for some time that state actors have less and less control over domestic economies.\(^ {33}\) Globalization, if it means anything, implies an increasing

\(^{32}\) Here I am referring not only to international institutions such as the UN or WTO, but also international agreements, treaties and the like.

\(^{33}\) I have found Saskia Sassen’s discussion (*Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*, New York, New Press, 1998) of this topic particularly clear and cogent. Additionally, she makes the insightful observation that the erosion of state control of domestic
interdependence of markets. Today, one can talk of a singular, global market without being accused of hyperbole. There may have been times when US President Franklin D. Roosevelt could spur a stagnant domestic economy with government spending or times when interest rate changes by the US Federal Reserve would lead to notable shifts in domestic consumption or saving. Even if that were once true, that time has clearly passed. Domestic leaders no longer have the same level of control of what is a thoroughly global and interconnected economic system.

The connection to global challenges seems clear. Influence over domestic job loss, job creation, a living wage, healthcare, family leave and even domestic pollution\(^34\) are problems which are moving from the domestic realm to an international one. With declining control over domestic economies, nation-state leaders increasingly have a reduced ability to influence a range of domestic problems. As such, domestic political arenas are increasingly reduced to spaces for rhetoric and demagoguery. In domestic political arenas, less and less in the way of substantive political change is even possible. Those wishing to address these challenges must increasingly turn to the international sphere.\(^35\)

Second, the principles of national sovereignty do not permit feedback mechanisms that are supra-national. In other words, the very logic of the nation-state economies is increasingly perceived by national subjects. This leads to an inevitable erosion of state legitimacy as national subjects discern, quite rightly, that their leaders can do less and less to improve their economic well-being.

\(^34\) Healthcare and pollution may be less obvious than the other categories, but as any student of the developing world can attest, poor domestic economies and high foreign debt effectively mean the collapse of domestic economic sovereignty. As stated above, early “austerity” measures will inevitably include the reduction of healthcare expenditures as well as policies designed to “encourage investment” (including elimination of environmental regulations).

itself presumes that its leaders are responsible for, and obligated to, and responsive to, *national citizens alone*. State actors have no structural incentive for wading into international issues which are not otherwise in the “national interest”. For example, no matter what world opinion is on the execution of minors or people deemed legally mentally handicapped, the United States allows and protects the practice without regard to international consternation. To take two more examples, no matter what world opinion is on “genital mutilation/ cliterectomy”, African states which allow such practices make such considerations in a national vacuum. Neither do states consider international opinion (or even the threat of military intervention) when they engage in genocidal practices within their borders.

The foundational principles of nationalism demand that they are responsive to, and responsible for, *their* national subjects *alone*. In fact, as Charles Tilly has argued, nation-states in Europe emerged precisely to avoid situations in which subject peoples had ambiguous relationships to their rulers. Boundaries became more rigidly codified as people became subjects of singular rulers. In other words, he argues that states exist, in part, precisely to avoid the problem of international interference. Philosophically, these same principles allow no mechanism for ceding sovereignty to a supra-national entity like the United Nations or the International World Court.

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36 It is *only* through this logic that we can understand the, otherwise contradictory, interventionist actions of the United States in Africa, for example. A “humanitarian crisis” in Somalia (strategically located at the Horn of Africa) required intervention, but other humanitarian crises in apartheid South Africa, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and near genocide in Rwanda and Burundi required none. Only through the lens of “national interest” do these contradictory logics make “sense”.


38 Complicating matters further are ambiguous state systems by which a head of state may sign and international treaty, but the representative or legislative body refuses to do so.
founding ethos of the nation-state is a pre-eminent obligation to their people (above all others).

Thirdly, even if state actors were inclined to enter into international agreements effectively limiting their sovereignty, there is presently no neutral, egalitarian enforcement mechanism for international agreements. When developing nations refuse to comply with an international agreement there are a variety of mechanisms to influence their compliance. Economic sanctions or boycott are one powerful tool. Heads of state who sponsor terrorism, genocide or other war crimes may certainly find themselves in front of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, suffered economic sanctions (including the limitation of medical supplies), international weapons inspectors and a no-fly zone within their borders enforced by a foreign power.

However, it is difficult to imagine the reverse. It seems implausible that former United States President George W. Bush would be asked to appear before the ICC for violating the Geneva Convention’s provisions against inhuman treatment and torture. It is even more impossible to imagine, the United States conceding with such a request. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine the US being compelled to open their weapons facilities to inspection merely as a result of a UN resolution. In fact, despite numerous United Nations votes calling for an end to Cold War era sanctions against the island nation of Cuba, the US steadfastly maintains a 50 year embargo. Put plainly, powerful nations are less subject to international sanction.

The USA, ostensibly the world’s most vociferous proponent of “fair trade” policies, challenged European Union agreements over bananas at the World Trade
Organization because of “non-competitive” arrangements with former colonies that the UK maintained. Yet, the USA effectively disregards “fair trade” every year by subsidizing American agriculture to the tune of around $20 billion dollars annually.39

The point should be clear. In the international arena, enforcement of international agreements is almost a perfect reflection of relative power relations. The powerful can compel international compliance, simultaneously flouting it themselves with no discernable consequences. The powerless, on the other hand, are forced into compliance with “international” laws, policies and resolutions. In addition, there is a powerful free-rider problem. What reason do nations have to pay their United Nations dues when the United States is more than a billion dollars in arrears? What reason do developing nations have to comply with human rights agreements when more powerful nations are allowed to violate them without compunction?

The lack of neutral, equitable enforcement mechanisms renders all attempts at international agreement essentially toothless.40 High minded and noble efforts at reducing global emissions, extending and enumerating the rights of women or indigenous peoples remain merely high minded and noble words without effective enforcement mechanisms.

Nation-states are incapable of improving this situation.41 As has been said above, the very logic of the nation-state system itself requires allegiance to the

39 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/graphic/2006/07/02/GR2006070200024.html, accessed August 11, 2010
40 This is not to ignore the significant role that may be played in shaping international public opinion or discourse. However, at this point, I only wish to illustrate the theoretical point and political reality that international agreements without enforcement mechanisms merely reinforce existing power relations.
41 The nations of the European Union seem to have come to some consensus on regional economic and political integration. Nonetheless, regional integration or agreements are not the same as a global
domestic in deference to all other external entanglements. International agreements require, unless power differentials are stark, the surrender of some amount of national sovereignty. Surrendering sovereignty, however, flies in the face of the foundational logic of the nation-state system itself.

This leads to the fourth critique. Decisions to integrate with the wider world, with a broader political entity, must be made by actual human beings. These people are generally, professional political leaders, grounded in national political systems. Again, it is perhaps too obvious to belabor the fact that they have little to no personal incentive for participation in a new system. In relative terms, they will almost always be better served by remaining a “big fish” in the proverbial “little pond” rather than trading such national status and power for relative obscurity in the “big pond”.\footnote{42}

Thus far, I have first attempted to show that a series of global challenges exist which cannot be addressed, solved or ameliorated through domestic political channels alone. Second, I have shown that modern nation-states are practically and theoretically incapable of rising to this international challenge. Third, I have argued that the global challenges of the past which were ameliorated with some success were the result of the activities of social movements cooperating in thoroughly international social movements.

\footnote{42} The leader who is the exception to the “almost always” characterization is most likely a leader of one of the already powerful nations who might feel they are the natural choice to lead the larger political entity. This obviously replicates complications mentioned above; i.e. the “free-rider problem”, unequal power relations, etc.
Just as in the international social movements of the past, transnational cooperation and collaboration is necessary to meet the myriad global challenges enumerated above. Nonetheless, there are challenges. In the remainder of this section, and the dissertation as a whole, I will detail the most significant barriers to transnational cooperation and collaboration and offer an empirically grounded theory for how the barriers of “otherness” are overcome.

**Barriers to transnational social movements in practice**

The struggle of post-colonial societies for some measure of autonomy and independence has encountered significant obstacles. Early leaders in the developing world saw power differentials in quite clear terms. “Economies of scale” caused clear problems in global macro-economic terms. At the same time, the constant threat of military intervention or political interference in local affairs loomed like the Sword of Damocles over the heads of early independence leaders.

Many post-colonial leaders (Nkrumah, Nyerere and Nehru, for example) saw the problem clearly enough and called for transnationalism under the rubric of Pan-Africanism or the Non-Aligned Movement. Perhaps, it was thought, by unifying politically and economically, the developing world could counter economic power

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43 What I mean here is that small economies, especially post-colonial economies which generally revolve around a single commodity (ex. cocoa in Ghana, copper in Zambia), are extremely vulnerable to fluctuation in international prices. Larger or more diversified economies are able to withstand macro-economic strategies like “dumping” or are able to respond to offenders in kind. These choices are generally not available to developing nations and were certainly unavailable to newly independent African nations, for example. This is a much longer discussion than I have time for at present. The main point is that African leaders were aware of this “problem of scale” and consequently undertook early efforts at regional economic and political integration. Nonetheless, many of these leaders came to learn, in time, that the military threat was just as problematic. Some famous examples include the murder of Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, the coup that ousted Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and the murder under suspicious circumstances of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo.
differentials of scale and even make foreign powers reconsider military or political interference in what would be a much more formidable entity. Nonetheless, despite the valiant efforts of many, unity failed in a process that has been repeated and proliferated throughout the 20th century. Eventually, each nation clung to their nominal independence and sovereignty rather than throw their lot in with a larger confederation.44

Later in the 20th Century, East Timor, Eritrea, the former Soviet Republics and the peoples of Yugoslavia called for self-determination on ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic grounds. Of course, the irony of African independence movements was that they were compelled to invent “nationalistic” movements out of what were almost always arbitrary conglomerations of peoples constructed by European powers. In order to rally diverse colonized peoples to the cause of independence they mimicked the “logic” of colonial administrators, and in many cases, invented a nationalistic community. Consequently, the seventy-three linguistic groups under the yoke of British colonialism in Northern Rhodesia, for example, called for the independence of something called “Zambia”. Additionally, would be “nations” were bisected by nationalist movements which seemed forced to adopt colonial boundaries.45

These independence leaders were undoubtedly quite successful in creating “national” communities out of very diverse peoples. Two of the most striking success stories are Zambia and Tanzania. Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia rallied diverse peoples

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44 This is not to imply that such a path was freely chosen or without foreign intervention. Whether through legal, economic, diplomatic threat or in, often foreign funded or supported, military coups, Pan-Africanists found their dream gradually beaten into the realm of the “idealistic” and “naïve”.

45 Perhaps the classic case here is the incredibly awkward “Caprivi Strip” in German South-West Africa (Namibia) which split the Lozi people of the area into four nations (what would become Namibia, Botswana, Angola and Zambia)
behind the rallying cry of “One Zambia, One Nation”. He integrated his cabinet and boarding schools from the earliest days of independence. Choosing an almost diametrically opposed path, Julius K. Nyerere successfully integrated the diverse peoples of Tanzania through the adoption and amplification of a national language; Kiswahili. His political and economic program of African Socialism also called upon the people of Tanzania to embrace a spirit of familial sharing, known as *Ujamaa*, in their undertakings.

What is most noticeable about these two cases is that despite their ethnic and linguistic diversity, these leaders and their movements created a resilient nationalism that has known a high degree of political stability and little ethnic or linguistic political strife in their history.46 We will return to this point below. For now, I only wish to illustrate the irony that African leaders were able to invent “national” communities out of “multi-national” ones, yet they rarely invented these communities along different lines than the colonial administrative boundaries. African independence movements produced, created and nurtured their “distinctiveness” to give voice to the right of self-determination. Ironically, the successful creation of this distinctiveness serves as a (albeit relatively recent) “cultural” barrier to a more thorough transnationalism. Any Pan-Africanist project is, at present, still unfulfilled.

Thus, the first, and perhaps most salient, barrier to transnational cooperation is nationalism itself. Embracing nationalism implies a barrier between “us” and “them”.

Though many a nationalist would reject the claim, it is an elevation of the national

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46 This is of course, not to ignore the tension between the semi-autonomous, and largely, Muslim island of Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania. However, it’s original exclusion upon independence, its semi-autonomous status, it’s large Muslim population (as opposed to the mainland) and history and lastly, its physical separation as an island render this tension somewhat understandable.
“culture”, language, “traditions”, etc. as superior to rival cultures, traditions and languages. These implied notions of superiority are obviously weighty barriers to transnational/transcultural cooperation and collaboration.

Second, obvious colonial legacies mean that most post-colonial nations have adopted dominant religious or linguistic traditions that may also serve as barriers to a more thorough transnationalism. Emblematic of this are the political disintegration and persistent tension of what was once India, into Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Tensions pulling apart northern Nigeria or subjugating south-western Sudan are further examples of the difficulty of nurturing religious pluralism within a single political entity. Moreover, the implausibility of transnational cooperation is clearly visible even when relatively homogeneous political entities attempt to cooperate across religious borders.

Postcolonial scholars from Frantz Fanon to the present have drawn our attention to the ways in which formerly colonized subjects, in particular, may internalize a complicated relationship with the “Other”.47 Unsurprisingly, formerly colonized peoples may still approach transnational encounters with the “Other” with intrepidation. Though these emotions were usually directed at the colonizing power, a similar dynamic may exist between colonized peoples as well. Citizens of more “developed” or stronger states may retrench from transnationalism out of arrogance or an opposition to “subsidizing” the weaker states or economies. Similarly, citizens or

weaker states may also fear the stronger state or its intentions for transnational cooperation.

What of barriers to activism generally? What barriers limit the scope of political and social activism in Africa today? One avenue to be explored would seem quite intelligible to the Resource Mobilization Theorists.\textsuperscript{48} Quite simply, those with few resources find it difficult to organize for social change. Moreover, the working poor may have little in the way of “biographical availability”. With families to feed and jobs to defend, one may theorize that one major barrier to political action in the developing world is a lack or resources, both material and temporal, for action. However, in Chapter IV I note that resource mobilization theory cannot adequately explain the relative absence of political action in a nation like Zambia. For one, Zambia has a relatively long history of political and social activism despite significant periods of relative deprivation. Moreover, people have been willing to sacrifice time and risk precarious employment to push for social change.

Piven and Cloward’s perspective on the barriers against poor people’s movements seems a more promising approach.\textsuperscript{49} While they passionately argue that activism by poor people is heavily constrained, difficult and, even improbable for a variety of reasons, this makes any activism on their part quite remarkable and noteworthy. Their insights will help focus our gaze upon actions which are often seen as disorganized (riots, for example) or entirely apolitical (work slow downs, for example). With this new optic, we will be able to discern a much richer activist history.

\textsuperscript{48} A classic formulation is Jenkins, J. Craig, “Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements”, \textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 9 (1983)
than is commonly understood. Rather than beginning with the taken-for-granted
tactics, strategies and organizational forms so common in the West, this approach will
allow us to appreciate a rich diversity of social movement activity little understood by
many social movement scholars. Attention to the contextual threats, repressive
apparatus and political culture of the state will also open a new appreciation for risk
involved (and overcome) in engaging in activism in the local context.

Similarly, the insights of Lukes\textsuperscript{50} and Gaventa\textsuperscript{51} will challenge us to discern
varied dimensions of power which constrain social and political action in diverse
ways. They draw our attention to the ways in which power is exercised through the
limitation of choice and/or the production of choice(s) as a socio-cultural process. This
optic will draw our attention to the ways in which the manipulation of the desire for
change is managed to forestall social and political activism.

Nonetheless, social movements have never been fully repressed. Against the
trends of many social movement scholars, this dissertation rejects the basic framework
that potential social movement adherents must be roused (or manipulated) to emotion,
participation or disgust with inequality, oppression or suffering.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} Lukes, Steven, \textit{Power: A Radical View}, 1974
\textsuperscript{51} Gaventa John, \textit{Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley}, 1980
\textsuperscript{52} I have in mind here the copious literature on “framing”. (see Snow, David A., Rochford, E. Burke,
Worden, Steven K. and Benford, Robert D., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and
Movement Participation”, \textit{American Sociological Review} 51 [1986], 464-481 and Benford, Robert D.
and Snow, David A., “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment”,
\textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 26 [2000], 26: 611-39.) The authors who pursue the importance of this
perspective to understanding social movements hold, in my view, a generally Machiavellian perspective
of social movements. Like so many omniscient movement organizers, they hold the key variable in
social movement activity to be the emotional manipulation of ostensibly fixed identities, issues and
perspectives. In this tradition, those who have social movement framing enacted upon them, rarely
learn, evolve or change. This leads to the absurd conclusion that social change in the modern world is
dependent upon manipulation of unchanging factors.
Insights from Lukes and Gaventa\textsuperscript{53} will help us to understand why we do not find as much resistance or social movement participation in places that we would expect to find it. Nonetheless, following Piven and Cloward\textsuperscript{54}, this dissertation will acknowledge any form of political action on behalf of the poor as extraordinary given the profound barriers to political action. In conjunction these two perspectives will help us to see opposition to injustice in spaces where others see inaction and apathy.

**Dissertation Summary of Chapters**

In Chapter II, I will explore the relevant literature on transnationalism, social movements and transnational social movements. Situating my dissertation within this larger literature, I will first argue that much of the very high quality work on transnationalism is mute on the topic of transnational social movements or activism generally. This dissertation will endeavor to fill that theoretical gap.

Next, I will explore the literature on social movements arguing that there are the following enormous gaps in this literature. First, most studies are narrowly focused on European or American social movements and political structures. This leads to a methodological blindness to understanding varied political structures (and hence varied targets), organizational forms, repertoires of collective action and processes of collective identity formation. Secondly, useful social movement insights regarding organizing the “powerless” in the “Global North” have been inconsistently applied to movements in the “Global South”. I intend to make contributions in each of these


\textsuperscript{54} Piven, F., & Cloward, R., *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, 1977
fields. Third, important “new social movement” theory insights into the crucial
importance of collective identity, still often neglect the emotion-laden process of
identity formation.\textsuperscript{55} Similarly, “political process” theorists try to systematize
networks or “beloved communities” rather than exploring the emotion-laden processes
of their creation. Put another way, study of the formation of the collective “we”\textsuperscript{56} and
the networking “moment”\textsuperscript{57} are strikingly rare.

Similarly, I explore the emerging and promising scholarship on transnational
social movements arguing that while they represent improvements on previous social
movement scholarship, they tend to reproduce the above oversights. They still tend to
privilege European or American social movements and political structures, neglect
scholarship on movements of the powerless and omit any discussion of the
“networking moment” or the formation of the collective “we”. Lastly, I posit a field of
transnational activism with continua from very activist to inactive and from very
transnational to very local. Mapping this field onto a two by two table, we can
construct four ideal types to be compared against ethnographic research.

In Chapter III, I will discuss global social justice activists participating in the
World Social Forum and present ethnographic research conducted at forums in Brazil

\textsuperscript{55} Two important exceptions are Deborah Gould’s \textit{Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight
Against AIDS}, 2009 and the edited volume by James Goodwin, James M. Jasper and Francesca Polletta,
\textit{Passionate Politics: Emotion and Social Movements.}, 2001

\textsuperscript{56} Melucci, A., \textit{Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age}, Cambridge [England];

\textsuperscript{57} I am thinking here in particular of Doug McAdam’s excellent work (\textit{Political Process and the
Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970}, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982 and
\textit{Freedom Summer}, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988) on the importance of networks. These
works nonetheless are generally quite silent on the question of what emotion-laden processes are
involved in pulling those in a network into activism. In other words, if “networks” “work” for social
movement’s recruitment or for sustaining social movement activity or cohesion, \textit{why} do they “work”?
How do they “work”? What happens in varied networking “moments” to cement relationships and
catalyze action?
and Kenya. In seeking to explain why these activists participate transnationally, I stress the importance of a) early exposure to international influences b) transformative or “catalytic” personal experiences and c) unifying cultural symbols to the process of transnational activist identity formation. These form the pillars of a working theory of “transnational activist identity formation” which I will compare to ethnographic data of HIV/AIDS healthworkers in Zambia.

In Chapter IV, I give a comprehensive historical description of the successes and failures of transnationalism in the Zambian context. I argue that contrary to popular conceptions, Zambia has a thoroughly transnational history and a surprising degree of transnational cooperation despite colonial and post-colonial manipulation. I take pains to enumerate the emotion-laden processes which influenced this transnationalism and conclude with the assertion that, though constrained, transnationalism is quite likely in the Zambian context. In Chapter IV, I also give a comprehensive historical description of the successes and failures of social movement activism in the Zambian context. I argue that contrary to popular conceptions, Zambia has a long and noteworthy history of resistance to oppression and domination.

Chapters V and VI present my ethnographic findings on international HIV/AIDS workers in Zambia. In Chapter V, I argue that Zambian transnationalism is alive and well. Despite enormous barriers to international encounter in the Zambian context, Zambians maintain a thoroughgoing transnationalism. Similarly, foreign nationals, usually impelled by early exposure to “the international” also often expand
transnational identities\textsuperscript{58} in the Zambian context. Chapter VI focuses on the potential for activism amongst HIV/AIDS healthworkers in Zambia. I argue that despite enormous new barriers to activism, it persists in subtle forms, as is common amongst the poor and “powerless”. I conclude with the assertion that activism, though constrained, is quite possible in the Zambian context. Chapter VII concludes with a formulation of a theory for the formation of transnational activist identities. The theory underscores the importance of deeply emotional processes like identification, community building and “translation” as well as catalytic experiences and cultures of resistance.

The number and complexity of global problems seems likely to increase in the future. There seems to be little that will stop the centralization of global capital. The strength of transnational, global corporations seems secure. Furthermore, the ability of these corporations to expand globally will continue with little structural interference. As I have argued above, nation-states are structurally ill-prepared to meet these challenges and have powerful “free-rider” problems. Furthermore, they would need to fight against their foundational logics, against their very ethos, in order to do so.

\textsuperscript{58} In the context of transnational studies, I find compelling the notion that transnational interactions have are standard and in some sense the task of the social scientist is to explain the division of humanity into evermore parsimonious collectives. The construction of difference is that which needs explanation. While I agree with this general approach, the respondents I interviewed have generally been constructed as “nationalized” subjects from an early age. That process is a fruitful line of inquiry for future research. My project, however, is different. From a transnational studies perspective, my task has been to the process by which these “nationalized” subjects “unlearn” this externally imposed identity. (See, in particular Michel Foucault’s discussion in Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, New York, Pantheon Books, 1980, pg. 216. From a post-colonial perspective, one could say that I am tracing the process by which individuals shed their “crushing objecthood” and create themselves as acting subjects. (See Frantz Fanon, Peau Noire, Masques Blancs [Black Skin, White Masks] ; translated by Charles Lam Markmann, New York, Grove Press, [1967])
Nothing in the history of the nation-state would indicate that we will see increased global cooperation amongst a community of nation-states.

Regional economic or political integration does not in itself offer much hope for remedy in this arena. Whether in the form of the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), these agreements are designed with international competition, not cooperation, in mind. Rather than competition between England and the US, there is now competition between the EU and NAFTA trading regions. Negotiating a reduction on global carbon emissions, for example, may be facilitated by fewer partners. However, it may just as easily result in ever more explosive international conflicts as a result of the unprecedented scale of the global entities involved.

Similarly, “global” institutions like the United Nations do not offer much hope for global cooperation, as presently constructed either. Though they address global questions and concerns, they have no enforcement mechanism to demand compliance\(^59\) and any decisions by the world community are subject to veto by a singular nation.\(^60\)

In the wake of the impotence of the modern nation-state, regional economic associations and the United Nations, how can the world address the myriad global challenges? The thesis advanced here is that only transnational social movements have

\(^{59}\) Militarily speaking, the UN security forces remain heavily dependent upon the United States. The United States refuses to send troops without US commanders at the head of them and most peacekeeping missions are dependent upon US weaponry and funding. Accordingly, though the UN has an enforcement mechanism, in theory, it is subject to virtual veto power by a singular power.

\(^{60}\) I am quite aware of the logic of this structure. Without such a structure, it is likely that “important” nations (usually militarily) would drop out of the process altogether. The logic of the Security Council is to maintain dialogue in an effort to build consensus. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the process is profoundly undemocratic and unrepresentative.
all of the required elements. Despite numerous cultural, political, historical, economic, linguistic and racial barriers, and unlike nation-states, transnational social movements and activists are not foundationally anti-internationalist. Despite a number of complementary explanations for the successes of the international abolition or women’s suffrage movements, these movements would not have been able to succeed without the international activists who championed these causes in various parts of the world. Transnational activists are able to share strategies, tactics, knowledge and resources in efforts to do what national governments will not do of their own volition; cooperate internationally.

This dissertation is an investigation into how transnational activists overcome this division of humanity ("otherness") and what circumstances mediate against further divisions and help nurture an international "beloved community".

One final point is perhaps warranted at this juncture. This project is a normative one in a specific sense. It proceeds from the premise that humanity is divided, that the cultural and socio-political hegemony of the nation-state is destructive to the aim of solving global problems. Consequently, "in the last instance", this dissertation is intended as an act of public scholarship. Understanding divisions and difference is a crucially important project. However, it is my sense that the continuous study of the myriad methods by which humanity is divided and kept divided has left a dearth of

61 The economic arguments for the abolition of the slave trade by the British (see Eric Williams’ *Capitalism and Slavery*, London, A. Deutsch, 1964) are perhaps the clearest example. (For a similar and superb explanation of abolition of US slavery by the Lincoln Republicans in the United States see Eric Foner’s *Free Soil, Free Men, Free Labor: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970).

62 My intention here is not to limit the examples of instance in which transnational collaboration was crucial to victory. For example, strong cases can be made for the importance of transnational collaboration and resources in toppling European colonialism in Africa or ending apartheid in South Africa.
scholarship on the ways in which people are able to resist being defined by externally imposed identities. It is my fervent belief that bringing people together is infinitely more difficult and infinitely more important than uncovering what separates them.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{63} I thank Aaron Jones, PhD student, Education, UC Santa Barbara (personal correspondence) for giving me a vocabulary for these thoughts.
Chapter II: Towards a Theory of Transnational Activist Identity Formation

In this chapter I explore the relevant literature on transnationalism, social movements and their relevance for the study of transnational social movements. Much of this excellent work has enriched our understanding of “national” identity. It emphasizes the rich diversity of conceptions of identity, including multiple, shifting and situational identities. Placing my dissertation within this larger literature, I will first argue that much of the very high quality work on transnationalism is, nonetheless, mute on the topic of transnational social movements and international activism generally. Discussions of transnationalism tend to emphasize immigration, migration, refugee communities or privileged “cosmopolitan” actors. Each of these perspectives tends to omit explicitly political transnationalism. This dissertation will endeavor to fill that theoretical gap.

Similarly, the rich literature on social movements is still heavily entrenched in narrowly nationalistic or localized conceptions of identity and political orientation. This chapter will highlight the following gaps in this literature. First, most studies are narrowly focused on European or American social movements and political structures. This leads to a methodological blindness to understanding varied political structures (and hence varied targets), organizational forms, repertoires of collective action and processes of collective identity formation. Secondly, useful social movement insights regarding organizing the “powerless” in the “Global North” have been inconsistently applied to movements in the “Global South”. I also argue that important “new social movement” theory insights into the crucial importance of collective identity,
 Nonetheless often neglect the emotion-laden process of identity formation. Similarly, “political process theorists” try to systematize networks or “beloved communities” rather than exploring the emotion-laden processes of their creation. Put another way, studies of the formation of the collective “we” and the networking “moment” are strikingly rare.

I also briefly explore some promising scholarship on transnational social movements arguing that while improvements on previous social movement scholarship, they tend to reproduce the above oversights. They still tend to privilege European or American social movements and political structures, neglect scholarship on movements of the powerless and omit discussion of the “networking moment” or the formation of the collective “we”.

Lastly, I posit a framework for the study of transnational activism. My schema details two continua; a) from very activist to inactive and b) from very transnational to very local. Mapping this field onto a two by two table, I construct four “ideal types” to use in my ethnographic investigation of transnational activist identity formation amongst global social justice activists.

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65 I am thinking here in particular of Doug McAdam’s excellent work (*Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1982 and *Freedom Summer*, 1988) on the importance of networks. These works nonetheless are generally quite silent on the question of what emotion-laden processes are involved in pulling those in a network into activism. In other words, if “networks” “work” for social movement’s recruitment or for sustaining social movement activity or cohesion, why do they “work”? How do they “work”? What happens in varied networking “moments” to cement relationships and catalyze action? I will return to this question below.
Transnationalism and Transnational Identity

Conceptions of transnationalism vary. Some scholars see transnationalism as akin to a very surface-level cosmopolitanism. They see transnationalism as a type of internationalism that is the privilege and purview of the wealthy. They collect art, travel widely and may feel relatively comfortable in diverse cultures. In practice, they tend to travel in European cultures and have a distinct class character.

An extreme example of this phenomenon is Leslie Sklair’s conception of the “Transnational Capitalist Class”. Sklair sees this transnational capitalist class as one united through an overarching cultural conception. More and more, he argues, they see themselves as “citizens of the world” with a global rather than a local perspective. Increasingly, they come to share “similar lifestyles, particularly patterns of luxury consumption of goods and services.”

At another extreme is Keck and Sikkink’s understanding of the transnational “boomerang” effect. Their conception of transnationalism is one in which relatively powerless local communities utilize international networks to secure policy gains that would be exceedingly difficult to secure domestically. Unsurprisingly, these political scientists over-estimate the stability and primordial nature of identity. In their conception, communities with stagnant, almost primordial, identities engage in transnational interactions in a narrowly instrumental and strategic fashion. The identities of both groups remain unchanged. Neither local communities nor the

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67 Keck and Sikkink (*Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, 1998) have shown that linkages between domestic and international organizations offer the opportunity for domestic groups to increase their leverage over domestic governments through their international connections (a “boomerang” pattern of indirect influence).
individuals involved in international advocacy networks are seen as having learned or been affected by the interaction. We will return to this point below.

These scholars tend to neglect the ways in which communities that engage in cross-cultural interaction are often changed as a result. Identity is neither fixed nor primordial. Conceptions of self may evolve through cross-cultural experiences, particularly in lengthy or emotionally intense interactions. One’s sense of “we”, though not unconstrained, is often fluid. Generally, scholars of transnationalism have understood this quite well. For example, Gloria Anzaldua’s path breaking work on the borderlands of *Aztlán* highlights the ways in which people in borderlands borrow, combine and create unique hybrid identities. At its base, her work highlights the fact that place or territory does not delimit conceptions of identity. Ulf Hannerz and Arjun Appadurai (both discussed below) also offer similar insights into the possibilities of cultural hybridity in an increasingly globalized world.

Scholars of transnationalist studies generally appreciate a deeper irony regarding transnationalism, as well. They suggest that the hegemonic concept of “nation” itself has confused our analysis of “transnationalism”. These “imagined communities” have dominated global conceptions of identity so thoroughly that academics often fail to interrogate the concept itself. If “national” identities are properly understood as a) social constructs that are sustained only through great effort and b) essentially “cultural”, mapping onto no specific or “natural” territory, our

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understanding of “transnational” interactions, including the development of transnational activist collective identities, is enriched immeasurably.

Properly understood, all such “transnational” processes are more properly “trans-cultural” processes. Actors, regardless of the particular “nation-state” construct into which they are socialized, develop cross-cultural competencies, including translation, diplomacy, etc. in order to manage community life in a variety of socially constructed divisions of humanity. In short, the notion of “national” identity is always a cultural construct. Consequently, “transnationalism” is not a bridging function across “natural” divisions of “nations”. Rather, transnational scholars attempt to explode the hegemonic concept of divisible “national” communities itself.

Properly understood as a learning process in which all socially constructed subjects acquire the cultural competencies and “trans-cultural” skills for life in a thoroughly multi-cultural world, “transnationalism” is much less surprising. In the words of Ulrich Beck, “globalization is considered normal and the perspective of the nation-state gives rise to continual bafflement”. In this context, we now turn our attention to the question of how to study conceptions of self and identity that do not always align with the relatively recent socio-political construction of the “nation-state”.

Rethinking Culture

The question of how to study culture is an extremely elusive one. Culture is more difficult to quantify, analyze, observe and study than virtually any other sociological category. Part of the difficulty for social scientists is that cultural objects, as Wendy Griswold states, “seldom have handles”.71 Social scientists seeking to identify these handles either over generalize, “over-quantify” or fall into the common pitfall of assuming culture to be static over time and space.

Though it may or may not be possible for an analyst to posit the persistence of culture over time, the persistence of cultural forms must be demonstrated and not assumed. It is equally difficult to presume that something as intangible as cultural symbols and meanings, might be bounded by the socio-historical constructions of nation or state. Consequently, studies which presume the existence of cultural forms mapping onto particular nation-states have the daunting task of proving its boundedness within territorial lines which have been arbitrarily (or often, militarily) constructed.72 Still other theorists implicitly or explicitly propose to apply the concept of culture to a racial or linguistic context.

For example, we find that the racial categories which have been constructed in the US are used as analytical typologies often inapplicable outside of the US context. Brazilian and Haitian constructions of race, for instance, are highly variable, rejecting in complex ways the US “rule of hypodescent” (aka the “one drop rule”). Consequently, ethnic conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Rwanda, Burundi,

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72 Ulrich Beck (What is Globalization?, 2000) calls this the “container theory of society”.

Uganda, and Congo) is incomprehensible to Westerners as a “racial” issue, despite the fact that the people of the region, as Walter Rodney pointed over 30 years ago, are quite possibly the most physically diverse on the planet. The fetishization of skin color as the trait which determines “nation”, “culture” or “identity” is just one extremely problematic aspect of externally imposing identity categories.

Though ethnicity and culture may seem better bedfellows, the linkage is not as concrete as some would like to think. Marc Howard Ross, for instance, highlights an element of this variability in his discussion of “situational ethnicity”. He observes an evolution of tribal self-identification over time as local Buluhya tribes in western Kenya increasingly interact with other ethnic groupings in larger population centers.

Cross-culturally, the rigidity of social distinctions is highly variable, and variation in the permeability of boundaries means that functioning categories are both contextual and changing over time… “[S]ituational ethnicity”… shows how distinctions among groups can depend upon what other groups are in a social environment and what the particular political stakes are in a conflict.

Here we see the central weakness of many investigations of culture. They rely on a social construction (race, ethnicity, state boundaries, etc.) to define a sociological object of inquiry. Consistently, Weberian “ideal types” are the object of inquiry and crucial boundary-bridging categories and activities are inevitably omitted, overlooked and ignored. In an increasingly interconnected world in which

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73 “The relative physiques of the three social segments in Rwanda offer an interesting commentary on the development of human beings as a species. The Batutsi are one of the tallest human groups in the world; the Bahutu are short and stocky; and the Batwa are pygmies.” Rodney, Walter, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, 1972, p. 125

74 Ross, Marc Howard, “Culture in Comparative Political Analysis” in Lichbach, Mark and Alan Zuckerman, Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure, 1997, p. 49
transnational and trans-cultural interactions are increasingly the norm, this clinging to such bounded categories is antiquated and unjustified.

Another barrier to the study of culture might be the problem of the diversity of cultures *within the individual*. All cultural actors have multiple faces and are imbued with a myriad of cultural competencies. From an early age, children learn the situational appropriateness of their actions. For example, they may behave in one fashion with playmates, but are forced to substitute a “new face”, a new mode of behavior, when interacting with parents or elders. As we grow older, we are continually adding cultural competencies to our repertoire. These competencies are situational and do not define *any individual* in totality, much less entire nations, races, ethnicities or classes.

Theorists of culture generally propose a method for how to best study the culture in question. However, we are each a combination, a multiplicity, of cultures and we each possess a wealth of cultural competencies. If culture were merely a language of shared symbols indecipherable to outsiders, anyone from a “foreign” culture would be incapable of communicating with any other human being who was not identical to him. This is patently absurd. Yet, at base, this is a dominant framework in much cultural analysis.

*Human beings are social animals precisely because of their ability to learn how to negotiate and renegotiate meaning with their fellow man.* We choose one of

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75 Ann Swidler’s (“Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies”, *American Sociological Review*, Volume 51, April 1986) concept of culture as a “tool kit”, or repertoire, of symbols, stories, rituals and world views which people may use to solve different kinds of problems is probably the most well known approach in this line of inquiry. Like conceptions of “situational identity”, the notion of a repertoire (“tool kit”) of cultural strategies to draw upon complicates simplistic and totalizing notions of culture and identity. See below.
our many faces depending upon the situational circumstances we find ourselves in. Yet, this choice is not necessarily a conscious choice as simple as flipping a light switch. It is precisely this fluidity of cultures within the individual which has proven extremely problematic for the social analyst. Each individual must negotiate each cross-cultural situation given the cultural competencies at their disposal. Many will learn new competencies as a result of the interaction.

While it is certainly true that the objective circumstances (war or peace, apartheid, poverty, etc.) may powerfully affect ones inclination to adopt new cultural competencies, the social actor always has agency in this process. Though at times we are seemingly “forced” to get along with the culturally “un-familiar” because of extenuating circumstances, we ultimately have the choice whether to learn new competencies or discard them as useless, unnecessary or undesirable. Though this conception of culture clearly complicates the social scientist’s task, that task is no less important. In a rapidly globalizing world, intercultural communication is increasingly crucial to every social interaction from a two dollar transaction at the corner store to the reduction of tensions which might prevent a world war.

“To refuse what we are”: The Foucauldian double-bind of identity

A select group of critiques of “identity” by Michel Foucault are central to my understanding of what I call transnational identity formation. In “Subject and Power”, Foucault asserts that the goal of his previous twenty years of work has not been to

76 More will be said of cross cultural “encounter” in Chapter IV. There, I argue that though transnational or trans-cultural encounters must always be studied with an understanding of the particular matrix of power relations, cross cultural learning (and sometimes borrowing or hybridization) is always possible.
analyze the phenomena of power, but rather “to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.” The first two modes of objectification (which transform human beings into subjects) he studied were investigations of inquiries which “give themselves the status of sciences” and the study of “dividing practices” in which human beings are separated; the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the “good boys”. The third object of his study was the way in which a human being turns himself into a subject.77

This third line of inquiry is the most illuminating for the present study. In The History of Sexuality: Volume I, Foucault investigates the genealogy of the ways in which people (in the West) came to understand themselves as subjects of “sexuality”. Over the course of a long history, particular sexual acts came to be seen as representative of a “primordial”, “innate” sexual identity. Similarly, in Discipline and Punish, criminal acts which had previously warranted a punishment commensurate with the act came to be seen as manifestations of the “criminal mind”, character flaws of identity which could not be disentangled from the subject him/herself. Though Foucault does not discuss it explicitly, similar processes were undoubtedly necessary for the construction of the modern nation state as well. The central point for our purposes is that the power of these externally imposed identities lies in their internalization by the subject him/herself.

Indeed, to the degree that Foucault does proscribe a program of resistance to the machinations of an increasingly normalizing and standardizing regime of power, it

77 Foucault, Michel, Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1980, p. 208
is through resistance to the individualizing and totalizing subjugation implied by an externally imposed notion of identity.

Maybe the most certain of all philosophical problems is the problem of the present time, and of what we are, in this very moment. Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political ‘double bind,’ which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures.78

Here, Foucault draws our attention to the ways in which identity has been wielded as a weapon of power. Simultaneously, externally-imposed conceptions of identity (including, I argue, national identity) individualize and totalize. They “individualize” in the sense that they divide human-kind. They sow division amongst varied segments of society. They foment animosity and alienation. At the same time, they are powerfully totalizing, hegemonic concepts. They constrain diversity of self identification. They seek to limit our multifaceted selves. They subordinate the diversity within individuals. Furthermore, totalizing identities, hurled like epithets from history, become internalized by subjects themselves. Their enduring power lies in their hegemonic nature. Identity has operated as a complex expression of domination.

Foucault opines that a space of resistance may very well be our internal rejection of these externally-imposed totalizing identities. Movements of resistance may emerge in which these shackles are broken and simultaneously diversified yet

78 Foucault, Michel, Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1980, p. 216 (emphasis added)
unifying identities are nurtured. Unity of human-kind would be fostered while simultaneously respecting self-expression and multifaceted expressions of identity.

Foucault also proposes a method of sorts for the investigation of these individualizing and totalizing power relations. He proposes studying specific forms of resistance against different forms of power “so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used”. Examples include opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill or of medicine over the population. These antiauthority struggles possess six common elements.

- First, these struggles are “transversal”, not limited to one country.
- Second, their concern is with the effects of power as such. For example, they are concerned not with profit motives, but rather with the power exercised over people’s bodies, health, life and death.
- Third, these struggles are “immediate” both in the sense of temporal immediacy as well as their targets. They struggle against immediate “enemies” with a sense of urgency, rather than opposing the oppression of overarching systems, which could be toppled at some future date. “They are anarchistic struggles.”

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80 Foucault, Michel, *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1980, p. 211
• Fourth, they are struggles which question the status of the individual.

[O]n the one hand, they assert the right to be different and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything which separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way.⁸¹

• Fifth, they are struggles against the effects of power which are linked with knowledge, struggles against the “scientistic” privileges of knowledge. They question the way in which knowledge circulates, its relation to power.

• Lastly, these struggles revolve around the question: Who are we?

They are a refusal of these abstractions, of economic and ideological state violence which ignore who we are individually, and also a refusal of scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is.⁸²

These struggles seek to confront not an institution of power, but rather a technique, a form, of power.

I suggest that these elements are all characteristic of the present global social justice movement exemplified by the World Social Forum (Chapter III) and, as such, lay the groundwork for the emergence of genuinely “new” transnational activist identities.

Defining Transnational Identity

Now we are in a position to be able to define transnationalism for the present study. Following Foucault, transnationalism emerges as the study of a thorough trans-cultural sharing, borrowing and learning between people along a wide swath of potentially divisive social constructions (nation, race, state, language, culture of orientation, etc.). Transnational identity, as an ideal type, is a deep and abiding conception of oneself as a “citizen-of-the-world”. It is not a search for totalizing cultural universals, but is an embrace of global diversity as a cultural universal. Rather than individualizing and totalizing, it is boundary-bridging and unifying.

Transnationalism stands apart from “mere” internationalism. As I suggest below, international or inter-cultural interaction may exist along a continua which ends in a thoroughgoing transnationalism. However, many international and cross-cultural exchanges do not result in the counter-hegemonic rejection of externally imposed identities. Transnationalism, in my conception, is exemplified by the rejection of socially constructed divisions of humanity as “natural”, while simultaneously rejecting any particular culture/identity/self-conception as “natural”.

Transnationalism, in this conception, also rejects the notion that identity can only emerge in contra-distinction to “the other”. The “other” is likewise, a socially constructed, totalizing identity. In rejecting totalizing identities, transnationalists need not define themselves according to the preconceived dictates of myriad power structures. Indeed, transnationalists (at the far end of the continuum) may embrace identities that have no name, that are singular, even unique. Moreover, transnationalism, in this rendering, implies a sense of resistance. Lastly,
transnationalists may appreciate shifting notions of identity in a complex and evolving world. For them, identity is not “fixed” or stagnant in any real sense. A constant search for acquiring new, cultural competencies and experiences for understanding and inter-cultural communication may even be the anchor of their identity. More will be said of this below.

**Activism**

*The mass, the crowd and the herd*

The collective behavior approach to social movements was a perspective steeped in fallacious assumptions about American political culture. Pluralists assume the relative absence of class (or other forms of group) consciousness. Individuals enter the political marketplace with an expectation of equal consideration. Within the pluralist worldview, nontraditional expressions such as political violence or protest are deemed irrational or deviant behavior as all individuals are assumed to have been able to voice their opinion through an established process. Thus for most pluralists and collective behaviorists power differentials and domination were simply not theorized and the perspective was ripe for substantive condemnation.

Nonetheless, this essential weakness has nonetheless led too many social movement scholars to “throw the baby out with the bathwater”. A central insight of the collective behaviorist, specifically attention to the social-psychological power of

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emotion to social movement recruitment, cohesion and solidarity, were lost in the “rational choice” turn.

To be sure, Blumer’s emphases on the irrational nature of crowds that suffer a loss of “self consciousness” and consistent comparisons of humans in the crowd to animals in a herd were offensive to social movement actors. However, this unfortunately led later critics to dismiss entirely the notion that protests and social movements can be powerfully emotional without being irrational. In critiquing the judgmental “tone” of many of the collective behaviorists, social movement scholars over-emphasized the dispassionate, reasoned and calculated nature of protests and social movements generally.

However some collective behaviorists argued that collective action helps to reawaken and revitalize society, encouraging participation and dialogue, community and solidarity. Despite enormous flaws, theorists like Kornhauser rightly studied psychological factors as the motive force of social movement actors.

[M]ass movements appeal to the unemployed on psychological grounds, as ways of overcoming feelings of anxiety and futility, and of finding new solidarity and forms of activity.

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85 I am thinking here in particular of Neil Smelser who argued that social movements are guided by what he disparagingly termed “magical beliefs” unique to collective behavior such as “the existence of extraordinary forces—threats, conspiracies, etc.” and argued that they “create issues, to provoke authorities” and “arrange” reality so as to “justify” the expression of normally forbidden impulses.” Smelser, Neil, Theory of Collective Behavior, 1962, p. 8, 18.


In conjunction with the emerging importance of the increasingly hegemonic discipline of economics, a harsh backlash emerged against any theory that viewed collective actors as any less than rational utility maximizers. These economistic accounts would not be tempered until relatively recently.

The Rational-Choice Turn

For economists like Mancur Olson, the collective behavior approach undermined the fundamental rational actor assumption so central to the economic discipline. For him, individual self-interest is the rule and group action must be explained in terms which validate individual preferences. Olson goes so far as to suggest that large scale organization is impossible without “selective incentives”. While acknowledging that actors do have non-economic, “ideological” motives (ex. patriotism), such motives are insufficient to sustain a large organization.

Accepting the major premises of Olson’s work, resource mobilization theorists argued that movement actions are choices based largely on the relative cost or benefit to individual actors. They argued that grievances arise as a result of institutionalized conflicts of interest within existing power structures and are therefore, ever present. From this perspective, social movements grow as a result of political and economic opportunities, rather than as a result of new or emerging grievances.

In one fell swoop all passion, emotion, dedication and righteous indignation was bled out of the study of social movements. In McCarthy and Zald’s formulation,

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“the amount of activity directed toward goal accomplishment is crudely a function of resources controlled by an organization.”

90 Passion and righteous indignation were reduced to an economistic estimation of fund-raising capabilities.

Crucial to this simplistic formulation was an estimation of people’s “preferences” as fixed, constant and stable. People were not moved to action by anything other than resources or selective incentives. Certain SMOs are seen as better situated to incorporate local, pre-existing “preference structures” and networks. 91 92

An extension of this conception is the vast literature on “framing”. This perspective emphasizes that decisions of SMOs are conscious and rational decisions of social movement actors working towards goal attainment. For example, when cleavages arise in a particular SMI (Social Movement “Industry”), successful social movement entrepreneurs may redefine these long-standing grievances in new terms. 93

This recreation or “framing” is seen as crucial to recruitment and mobilization, as well

91 McCarthy, J., & Zald, M., “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory”, American Journal of Sociology 82 (1977), p. 1227-28. It is important to note that this formulation follows a similar fallacy regarding common conceptions of identity. When people’s identities are assumed to be fixed and stable, their preferences are similarly assumed to be fixed and stable. Much of this dissertation, then, can be seen as a critique of two interrelated fallacies. First, identities and preferences are not stable and secondly, when they shift and/or change, it is quite often the result of powerfully emotional (yet, not irrational) mechanisms.
92 It is noteworthy that political process models which follow, notably that of Doug McAdam (Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970, 1982), do not reject this central fallacy. The assumption generally remains that pre-existing “blocs” of people, with fixed interests or preferences are best recruited through “networks”. Learning, education nor fluid and shifting identities are rare in both models. An important exception to this is McAdam’s excellent study of Freedom Summer volunteers (Freedom Summer, 1980). Nonetheless, McAdam does not seem to appreciate this aspect (learning, education nor fluid and shifting identities) of his own work explicitly. I return to this theme below.
as in repositioning grievances vis-à-vis the elite political actors who determine outcomes.

Nonetheless, “framing” scholars and others investigating the crucial importance of “bloc recruitment” or networks have woefully neglected what I call the “networking moment”. Repeating the mistakes of others, they assume identities are, and remain, fixed. They assume preferences and allegiances are stagnant. Most insidious, they see SMOs as master manipulators of unthinking and unreflective masses. In important ways, they actually reproduce the herd-like assumptions of some collective behaviorists. At base, they neglect the fact (even deny the possibility that) social movement actor “preferences” can change through emotional appeal or transformative experiences. This remains a central weakness of much social movement scholarship to the present day.

They assert that social movement actors participate only when the manner in which they perceive grievances is congruent with the way in which a particular SMO perceives grievances. Their project then, is to trace the ways and means in which the interpretive orientations, “frames” of social movement actors and SMOs are aligned: “frame alignment”. For Snow and colleagues, frame alignment is a “necessary condition” for the development of a social movement. Inexplicably, while recognizing the importance of emotional appeal through his notion of “frame

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resonance”95, Snow and colleagues are more concerned with the “fit”, or alignment, of frames.

Snow and colleagues like so many before them inexplicably assume receptivity to be constant. The trick for SMOs is to frame an issue in the “correct” way to capture groups of potential adherents. Collective identity is viewed as fixed, stagnant and even “natural” in this model. Their focus on the SMO level of framing presupposes an organizational game of capturing hearts and minds through a tactical frame shift rather than understanding the dynamics of those hearts and minds.96

Attempts to Bridge the Divide

The resource mobilization model arose out of studies of the “public interest” movement in the United States and is less appropriate for dealing with less institutionalized forms of collective action or social movements outside of the U.S.97 It emphasizes the structural to the exclusion of any consideration of social-psychological factors. The assumptions that grievances are fixed and that participation in SMO activity is a function of income or wealth, are particularly dubious.

Political process models emerged as an attempt to bridge the ideological divide that separates the “collective insanity” of the collective behavior school and robotic,

96 Sidney Tarrow has noted that framing dynamics are plagued by an internal paradox. “Few individuals possess single, unified identities; most people juggle and combine, categorical and political, embedded and disjoined identities. From such checkered materials, how do movements weave the unity and dynamism they need to construct fully integrated mass movements?” Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 1998, p. 107
stagnant automaton of the resource mobilization school. Effectively, they asserted that within a *bounded* and *constricted* political environment *substantially* controlled by *relatively* united elites, the rational internal dynamics of social movement activists are important. They assert, like the resource mobilization theorists, that relative strain or discontent is consistent, but variation in the effectiveness of elite domination allows select opportunities for successful social movements to emerge.

However, Piven and Cloward’s version of political process highlighted scholarly biases in the attention paid to formal organization. They also reject the notion that movements depend on the caprices of resource rich elites.

…the effect of equating movements with movement organizations… is to divert attention from many forms of political unrest and to consign them by definition to the more shadowy realms of social problems and deviant behavior… Having decided by definitional fiat that nothing political has occurred, nothing remains to be explained…

For Piven and Cloward the systems of domination which are aligned against the poor are comprehensive. Thus, they see any action of the poor as supremely significant. The absence of visible protest does not constitute consent and unorganized forms of resistance (riots and other impromptu demonstrations of grievances or

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98 Like those above, the political process theorists generally assume preferences, grievances and identities to be relatively fixed and stagnant.

99 This central problem is continually repeated in modern scholarly work on global social justice movements. A wide range of scholars from the structurally oriented (UCR Working Group on Transnational Social Movements) to Jackie Smith’s otherwise excellent work (see in particular, Smith, Jackie and Wiest, Dawn R., “The Uneven Geography of Global Civil Society: National and Global Influences on Transnational Association”, *Social Forces* 84 (2): 621-652) have privileged formal organization as the indicator of primary importance in studying transnational social movements. To put not too fine a point on it… these movements are the easiest to study, but are far from an accurate representation of efforts to resist neoliberal globalization. In this respect, Piven and Cloward’s insight into the study of the powerless remains a crucial, though neglected, insight about the study of social movements in the developing world.

resistance) are often the only form of protest available to the poor. In fact, they assert that unorganized, “disruptive”, contentious forms of protest are often the most effective in terms of policy shifts.\textsuperscript{101}

Piven and Cloward redirect our attention to the social-psychological dimension of social movements. “Powerlessness” is not merely the absence of resources. It entails a dimension of social psychological domination, a sort of cultural hegemony.

What some call superstructure, and what others call culture… defines for people what is right and what is wrong and why; what is possible and what is impossible…Because this superstructure of beliefs and rituals is evolved in the context of unequal power, it is inevitable that beliefs and rituals reinforce inequality, by rendering the powerful divine and the challengers evil.\textsuperscript{102}

The internalization of the notion that one’s oppressors are divine and that one’s own ill fortune is a result personal failure is a potent deterrent against movements of the poor.\textsuperscript{103} In order to protest, the poor must first overcome this cultural domination. It is precisely for this reason that the refusal to pay rent, or show up to work, or the action embodied in a riot are deeply political acts.

Piven and Cloward’s insights are particularly instructive for those studying social movements outside of the West. First, they alert us to power differentials and their effect on social movements. The “power-less” must wage a different type of struggle than that of the Western-style professionalized, social movement

\textsuperscript{101} This is particularly well elaborated in Piven, Frances Fox, Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America, 2006.
\textsuperscript{102} Piven, F., & Cloward, R., Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail, 1977, p. 1
\textsuperscript{103} Piven, F., & Cloward, R., Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail, 1977, p.26. Here, we see an important parallel with Foucault’s discussion of the double-bind of identity discussed above. The actual internalization of externally-imposed conceptions of identity is a sophisticated element of the exercise of power/knowledge.
organizations. Second, they alert us to the additional layer of challenges which social movements must engage when combating a state which is neither democratically representative nor responsive to their needs. Third, they centrally situate the importance of “organic”, genuinely felt, grievances which are “emotion-laden”. These are not struggles over “preferences” which require “selective incentives”. These are struggles for better lives. They are both rational and emotional.

However, perhaps it is Doug McAdam whose model is most representative of the political process approach. McAdam attempts to bridge the divide by allowing for the importance of emotion as a motive force, a reward even, of social movement activity (ex. “cognitive liberation”). Explicitly drawing on the insights of Piven and Cloward, McAdam argues that with cognitive liberation a) the “system” loses legitimacy and people recognize their situation as unjust and wrong b) people destroy a sense of powerlessness and fatalism and c) people develop a new sense of their power to change their lot in life.

However, he then limits the breadth of this theoretical insight by portraying it merely as the recognition of shifting political opportunities by “members” (of the elite polity) and challengers.\(^{104}\) Ultimately, McAdam, like many before him, sees the degree of social integration, typically represented by pre-existing networks of “extremely homogenous people” as central components of his political process model.\(^ {105}\)


Collective Identity and the Interpersonal Connection

Social movement theorists generally continue to privilege relatively fixed and stable “blocs” of “preferences”, “interests” or “identities”. Leaving an appreciation of social-psychological behind, they often lean towards economistic renderings of social movement actors as utility maximizers, even when the actors themselves object to such characterizations.

For example, in his study of Mississippi Freedom Summer volunteers, Doug McAdam collects a rich collection of ethnographic evidence illustrating a profound shift in worldview, identities and “interests” on the part of the volunteers. Nonetheless, his theoretical analysis generally ignores these shifts. Throughout his study, we can clearly see that networks provided crucial moral and emotional support in the face of great danger. The volunteers felt encouraged to continue their involvement, not wanting to abandon the struggle. These processes are emotional, personal and even “non-rational”. Something important, profound, lasting and transformative happens in this networking “moment”.

McAdam further illustrates that these processes were so transformative that many of the erstwhile privileged, elite, college students shifted their self-conception to that of lifelong activist. Newly formed networks of volunteers became politicized and radicalized as a result of their participation in the summer project. In other words the experiences in Mississippi spawned further social movement activity.

Networks emerge through hundreds and thousands of networking “moments”. McAdam brilliantly traces uncanny and profound “connections” between activists of
multiple generations, nonetheless, in Freedom Summer he does not theorize these “moments”.

In his work with Dieter Rucht, his attention to the interpersonal nature of social networks is much improved. In tracing the international spread of tactics and ideology amongst student movements, they critique the prevailing wisdom that diffusion is generally “nonrelational” (impersonal, indirect). Their research illustrates that consistent and important direct, interpersonal contacts often led to the diffusion of tactics and ideology amongst student movements. Furthermore, some minimum sense of collective identity or “sameness” must be forged between two groups first. They draw our attention to the identity work necessary in constructing this identification.

For women—or students or consumers—in one country to identify with their counterparts in another, a nontrivial process of social construction must take place in which adopters fashion an account of themselves as sufficiently similar to that of transmitters using them as a model for their own actions.

Similarly, Chabot notes that this process has various stages that may take many years to negotiate. One enormous struggle is in transcending the fears of “hyper-

107 “[a]ll instances of diffusion depend on a minimal identification of adopter with transmitter.” McAdam, Doug and Rucht, Dieter, “The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas”, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 528, Citizens, Protest and Democracy (July 1993), p. 60. In this regard, Todd Gitlin’s (The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left, 1980) work on the making and unmaking of the New Left makes the excellent point that social movement actors lose a significant amount of control over a sense of “sameness” when they increasingly rely on nonrelational channels of diffusion, such as the media.
difference” between the two cultures and situations before diffusion can proceed. Chabot, McAdam and Rucht all show that a sense of identification and trust was eventually built through direct, relational ties.\(^{109}\)

These basic processes call our attention to at least two crucially important dynamics of social movement theory that have been inadequately discussed by the overarching theories discussed above. First, the emergence, creation and maintenance of collective identity is absolutely critical not only to social movement generation, but to social movement expansion. Second, it also lends powerful weight to the argument presented above that the networking “moment” has been severely undertheorized.

Even in the studies of Chabot and McAdam and Rucht remarkably little ethnographic detail is presented. They have shown that networks matter, but how? What is the role of language, culture and symbols in explaining when and why ideas and tactics migrate from one network to another or from one nation to another? What is the role of emotion, friendship and trust in creating a sense of “sameness” between transmitter and adopter? How does one’s sense of group or “network” expand in the course of collective action? How and why do people choose to present themselves in a particular manner?

\(^{109}\) For instance, a group of Indian exiles were instrumental in exporting the Gandhian tactics and ideology to the American Civil Rights Movement but direct, “international travel laid the basis for interpersonal diffusion networks between India and the United States.” Chabot, Sean, “Transnational Diffusion and the African-American Reinvention of the Gandhian Repertoire” in Smith, Jackie and Johnston, Hank, Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements, 2002, p. 103
Creation of “we”

New Social Movement (NSM) theorists have perhaps most forcefully re-introduced the strengths of the social psychological perspectives. They assert the centrality of collective identity and collective identity formation to social movement emergence, maintenance and expansion. The leading spokesperson for this perspective has been Alberto Melucci. Melucci sought to investigate the dynamics of networks in order to better understand the construction of shared beliefs; the “we” or collective identity. His central argument proceeds from his rejection of the analytical assumption that shared beliefs or interests are pre-existing, static and in some way, “natural”. Collective interests are not sufficient to explain collective action.\textsuperscript{110} Their formation must be explained.

The formation of unity within an SMO is a “resultant”, rather than a starting point for the study of social movements. Collective actors construct their identity through “multiple and heterogeneous social processes”, which must be explained.\textsuperscript{111} The identity choices of collective actors may be “nonrational”, or emotional, but they are not irrational.\textsuperscript{112} Melucci claims that without first developing a collective identity, collective action itself is not possible.\textsuperscript{113} Consequently, the \textit{creation and formation} of collective identities are the central business of social movements.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Melucci, A., \textit{Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age}, 1996, p. 20
\item Melucci, A., \textit{Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age}, 1996, p. 66
\item Melucci, A., \textit{Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age}, 1996, p. 56, 64-65
\item This may seem like a slight alteration of the “framing” literature of Snow and colleagues. However, I cannot stress how different they in fact are. Whereas Melucci conceives of social movement participants as agentic subjects, learning and adapting their sense of self in a changing world, Snow and colleagues see identities as pawns with little or no agency and with identities that are fixed.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The construction of the “we” is a result of an individual’s choices with regard to the competing tensions of “ends, means and the environment”. Melucci is essentially concerned with what happens in the networking “moment”. For Melucci, the process through which an individual is able to recognize the effects of his/her actions, to attribute meaning and value to these actions and to be validated in return, is the key to collective identity formation. For Melucci, it is not merely the interaction of individuals in networks which reinforces the decision to act collectively (which might be explained by pre-existing preference structures), but rather, it is the process through which an individual recognizes him/herself. This validation, or recognition, enables a social movement to maintain solidarity over time. The desire to be “named” and recognized within a society is a distinguishing and crucial feature of new social movements.

Building on Melucci, Polletta and Jasper try to show that self-interest should not be viewed as separate from moral action. Collective actors may possess any number of identities at any moment in time. Collective identity is often situational, with collective actors strategically articulating their identity differentially depending upon the audience and movement goals. Therefore, as identity is not static, “identity work is crucial to sustaining solidarity and commitment.”

118 Melucci, A., Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age, 1996, p. 36-37
Polletta and Jasper observe that identities such as race or homosexuality are not “transhistorical ‘natural’ identities”, but neither are they completely free as societally reinforced notions of an individual’s identity may help shape their construction. Ultimately, collective identities are created through emotion-laden processes that reflect a constantly evolving sense of self.

The Heartbeat of Movements: Culture, Symbols and Emotions

In this section, I illustrate the centrality of a series of interconnected analytical tools (culture, symbols and emotions) to the study of social movements. While the collective behavior model was clearly problematic, the complete rejection of social psychology that followed led to discounting the essential importance of emotions. Though the political process models attempted to allow room for emotions through concepts such as “cognitive liberation”, they were clearly insufficient. They neglect the human dynamics of symbolism and meaning, culture and emotions. These concepts must be central, rather than peripheral, when attempting to understand social movements.

Ultimately, though environmental factors and other people centrally impact the cost-benefit analysis of individual choices, identity is “what people choose to be, the incalculable”. To think that these choices are not powerfully influenced by human

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123 Jasper, for instance, has argued that they “have been treated as though they were entirely cognitive, as though their highly charged emotional dimensions hardly mattered”. Jasper, James M., “Recruiting Intimates, Recruiting Strangers: Building the Contemporary Animal Rights Movement” in Freeman, J. & Johnson, V., Waves of Protest, 1999, p. 153
emotion (love, anger, friendship, indignation, loyalty and the like) is a significant omission. The collective power of symbolism in constituting meaning is at least as important (if not, more) to social movement participants as to social actors in any other space or community. Understanding collective identity formation, then, requires an appreciation of how actors construct personal or cultural meaning for themselves through symbolism, moral claims, etc. 125

Jasper stresses the importance of appeals to “morality” as a culturally constituted symbol which can be used to recruit “strangers”. Recruiting “strangers”, who do not seem to exist within any recognizable network, requires attention to “cultural messages”, “ideas and meanings”. 126 He uses the term “moral shock” to articulate a particular process in which information creates such a sense of outrage that previously inactive individuals “often seek out protest groups even if they have no friends or family who already belong to them, with moral shocks serving as the functional equivalent of social networks.” 127

Jasper’s emphasis on “moral shock” also allows for the theoretical importance of relative spontaneity as well as non-rational emotion and “morality”. The insights are simple, but have sadly been neglected in much social movement theory. Importantly, pre-existing identities, “preference structures” and “interests” can shift and evolve. People learn. People begin to care about issues they had not previously.

125 William Gamson, for instance, argues that “collective identity…is manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed” and is “one step in challenging cultural domination”. Gamson, William, “The Social Psychology of Collective Action” in Morris, Aldon D. and Mueller, Carol McClurg (eds.), Frontiers in Social Movement Theory, 1992, p. 60
People can *become* outraged or shocked and, importantly, this can lead them to act upon these emotions.

Eyerman and Jamison’s fascinating study of the connection between social movements and music argues that social movements both affect, and are effected by, the larger political culture.  

Social movements reinvent and reproduce “traditions of protest and rebellion” which live on in the collective memory through cultural forms including music. Music is, in fact, a critical component of collective memory and preserves a “structure of feeling” which can act as a channel of communication and diffusion for activists across time and space.  

In fact, the authors go so far as to assert that “the construction of meaning through music and song is… a central aspect of collective identity formation”. Music is an important symbol of what “we-ness” represents.

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128 This simple observation is particularly destructive of the political process model which, in general, does not theorize the ways in which social movement actors may *alter* political opportunity structures. “Those who would reduce social movements to instrumental actors engaged in power struggles on a battlefield called ‘political opportunity structure’ have made an ontological choice. They have chosen to see the world in terms of structures and processes which exist outside the meanings actors themselves attach to them… not the struggles of real human beings meaningfully engaged in constructing their world in conflict and cooperation with others.” Eyerman, Ron and Jamison, Andrew, “Music and Social Movements”, 1998, excerpt in Goodwin and Jasper (eds.), *The Social Movements Reader*, 2003, p. 368

129 Eyerman and Jamison also show the ways in which culture, music in particular, can act as an “abeyance structure”. The music of social movements can preserve messages, perspectives and an oppositional culture over generations of activists. Eyerman, Ron and Jamison, Andrew, “Music and Social Movements”, 1998, excerpt in Goodwin and Jasper (eds.), *The Social Movements Reader*, 2003, p. 367-78

The music of social movements transcends the boundaries of the self and binds the individual to a collective consciousness. This is what we have identified as the ‘truth-bearing’ message, or the rationality, of movement music, where individual and collective identity fuse and where past and future are reconnected to the present in a meaningful way.\textsuperscript{131}

In the quote above Eyerman and Jamison remind us that the heart of the fear of social movement theorists to acknowledge a place for emotions is the collective behavior presumption of “irrationality”. We have come full circle. Here, Eyerman and Jamison attempt to recast rationality as emotion-laden. It is no contradiction to say that social movement actors feel, and act on those feelings, but do so quite rationally.

Without emotions “there might be no social action at all”, much less something as involved as contentious political action.\textsuperscript{132} “Emotions are as much a part of culture as cognitive understandings and moral visions are, and all social life occurs in and through culture.”\textsuperscript{133} If emotions can be shown to be culturally constituted and variable, they cannot be taken to be “irrational”.\textsuperscript{134} Emotions enter into protest at every stage from why individuals join to generating affective ties among members creating and reinforcing a sense of collective identity and solidarity.

Jasper has noted that every extensive study of social movements is filled with emotional accounts, yet they almost never receive theoretical treatment. A classic example cited above is McAdam’s account of the Mississippi Freedom Summer

\textsuperscript{131}Eyerman, Ron and Jamison, Andrew, “Music and Social Movements”, 1998, excerpt in Goodwin and Jasper (eds.), \textit{The Social Movements Reader}, 2003, p. 369
volunteers. His account is filled with pages of love stories and marriages, fearful scenes, heart-wrenching and life-changing experiences, yet the emotional content receives little theoretical treatment. We are almost led to believe that membership in an organization is more important than the affective ties between individuals. What is the pull of a network if not the affective ties between individuals? What more potent crucible for collective identity formation could there be than that of powerfully emotional, shared experiences?

Bridging Identities

A number of the theorists above have explicitly urged us to adopt a cross-cultural research theme and/or to test these propositions outside of the West. However, social movement theory continues a pattern of neglecting (and dismissing in most cases) insights that might be provided by examples in the developing world. Western social movement theorists seem reluctant to “learn” much from examples in the developing world. A sort of collective myopia seems to have prevented most from seeing patterns within the anti-colonial movements that could be applied to understanding social movements in the Western world.

Refreshingly, Polletta and Jasper admit the failure of social movement scholars to analyze non-Western social movements. Almost as an afterthought, they remark that such a course of study “should help move us beyond simply asserting the constructedness of identities by showing the variety of forms that identities take…”135

In this dissertation, I will explore this precise phenomenon through a discussion of the emerging field of transnational social movements.

In the 21\(^{st}\) Century, when people emigrate or immigrate, they increasingly take their rights with them across national boundaries. To the extent that this is true, nation-states are losing a measure of control over “their” populations. Similarly, in an increasingly globalized economy, nation states are losing a measure of control over domestic economies and, accordingly, the ability to ensure a livelihood to “their” populations.\(^{136}\) The constructionist critique of identity helps us to see that the target of political action is increasingly shifting from the nation state to global institutions and global civil society.

As the peoples of the world collide with each other more frequently and consistently… as more and more people experience places, cultures and people around the globe… as more and more people envision “home” in multiple locations… notions of identity previously uncontested are being interrogated with increasing frequency. If collective action presumes a collective identity, it is important to understand what importance these shifting, variable, complex notions of identity have to the study of social movements.

The emergence of transnational social movements and a global social movement of sorts that in a great many ways is being led by the global South also provides us with the opportunity to test our Western models in non-Western contexts.

\(^{136}\) For a detailed exploration of these phenomena see Sassen, Saskia, Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money, 1998 or Ohmae, Kenichi, The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies, 1995
William Gamson, for example, has objected to the “new-ness” of NSM theory, arguing that collective identity has been important both to social movements in the past as well as to social movements outside of the West.\textsuperscript{137}

Similarly, Keck and Sikkink have pointed out that “transnational advocacy networks” were instrumental in the movement to abolish slavery as well the movement for women’s suffrage.\textsuperscript{138} Though heavily influenced by the rational choice approach of political science, their work is seen as a seminal contribution to the ways in which social movement actors may influence their domestic governments through international networks. These advocacy networks act as communication structures and political spaces for influencing domestic governments and, increasingly, international institutions.\textsuperscript{139} Their observation that much of the work of transnational advocacy networks is done by domestic and international non governmental organizations (NGOs) raises interesting questions for social movement theorists. How dependent are these organizations on the funding they receive from “conscience adherents” or government sources? To what degree are the goals of these organizations influenced by the direction of resource flows? Organizational structures become important as well. To what degree are “international” non-governmental organizations (INGOs) run by Westerners? Social movement analysts must guard against returning to a simplistic


\textsuperscript{138} To these, we might justifiably add the global Pan-Africanist movement, the international anti-apartheid movement and the Non-Aligned movement. More personalized instances of transnational or transcultural activism might number a rich history of heroic acts including white South Africans who fought against apartheid, Germans who harbored Jews during WWII, etc.

\textsuperscript{139} Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn, \textit{Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics}, 1998, p. 3
pluralist understanding of power which has simply been brought to the international scene.

On the other hand, many of these NGOs do seem to be more responsive to the concerns of locals than domestic governments. Keck and Sikkink have shown that the international linkages these organizations provide offer the opportunity for increased leverage over domestic governments through a “boomerang” pattern of indirect influence. The ability of domestic activists to bring international pressure to bear on domestic governments as a result of these networks provides powerful support for a new understanding of the traditional conception of “political opportunity structures”. Specifically, the pressure that is brought to bear often has little or nothing to do with liberal democratic political structures. Rather, an emerging “rights” discourse often concentrates on “shame” campaigns which pressure political elites to conform to international standards.

Additionally, the fact that some activists consider themselves part of an “NGO community” lends credence to notions of an emerging global civil society not narrowly oriented around the nation state.\(^{140}\) This process is slow complex, but should not be conceived of as a one way exchange. In this respect, Rothman and Oliver, in their study of the emergence of a “political ecology” master frame in the anti-dam movement in Brazil, level a particularly instructive critique of the framing literature. Though movement activists intentionally made efforts to reconstruct or re-frame the

\(^{140}\) Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, 1998, p. 10
issue of dam construction from a poverty “frame” to an environmental “frame”, the authors note the difficulty of this process.

[It would be a gross distortion to imagine that shifts in identities and frames were made lightly… The shift between frames required a great deal of intellectual and ideological ‘work’… it was much more like a learning process of bilateral influence than a marketing scheme. Understanding the complexity of this process is necessary to avoid facile interpretations of frame alignment processes.  

This passage underscores two important points. First, the framing literature is an insufficient approach when trying to understand the processes of collective identity formation and reformation. Secondly, social movement constituents are not mere pawns in a game of SMO manipulation.

The work of Rothman and Oliver does, however, offer hope that “when activists from different countries get together, their diverse experiences can translate into new understandings of global phenomena that extend beyond those bounded by national opportunity structures.” Rothman and Oliver have also stressed that “people with dual or complex identities are important ‘network bridges’ between [international and domestic] political communities…” It is the task of this dissertation to further understand the emergence of these “network bridges”.

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Much as new social movement theorists might have predicted, Sikkink argues that in order for students of international political action to understand transnational movements, we need a different model of international politics; one that sees the international system as an international society made up not only of states, but also of non-state actors that may have transnational identities and overlapping loyalties.144

Further, Smith and Johnston have brought attention to the notion that as the world becomes increasingly interconnected processes of globalization have shaped both domestic and transnational political mobilization.145 We do not need to forego an understanding of domestic politics and social action, but as the nation state evolves in a rapidly interconnected world and as the West becomes exposed to the successes and failures of social movements in the developing world, we need to adjust our models to allow for shifts in social movement theory.

In this section, I have tried to highlight the ways in which emotionalism, the role of symbolism, culture and collective identity have been maligned in the study of social movements. Much of what we could have learned from anti-colonial struggles was never studied or explicitly incorporated into the heart of social movement theory. I feel that transnational social movements offer us a second chance at learning from experiences in the developing world. Specifically, we can re-learn the role ordinary,

“resource-poor”, but emotionally-charged, humans actors can play in creating a better world. We would do well to listen and learn from their experiences… for a change.

In recent years we have seen an unprecedented collaboration between social movement actors in the anti-globalization (apparent in the global protests against WTO, IMF, G8 and World Bank policies) and environmental movements. Human rights organizations and international healthwork seem to be expanding as well. One particularly striking transnational activist space is that of the World Social Forum (WSF) discussed at great length in Chapter III.

Hundreds of thousands of global social justice activists from hundreds of countries periodically gather at the WSF to build a movement for greater global democracy, human, indigenous and women’s rights, environmental and economic justice. This gathering of activists is profoundly diverse in terms of its international or transnational character and composition. How can social movement theory explain this unprecedented collaboration of social movement actors across national boundaries? Why have we seen a unique degree of coordination of activities and coalition building across linguistic and cultural borders?

Clearly an increasingly globalized world in which increased communication and interaction have brought people of far flung regions into contact with one another plays a role. However, such interaction itself is insufficient\textsuperscript{146} to explain rapidly

\textsuperscript{146} Below, my discussion of “ideal types” of international workers will make clear that international encounter is insufficient to lead to transnationalism in the sense I have outlined above.
growing transnational social movements. Why do people choose to organize and mobilize around issues which do not readily appear to be in their self-interest?

Analytically, if collective identity is necessary to sustaining such a transnational social movement, what factors might contribute to transnational activist identity formation? In this context, the importance of collective identity outlined by NSM theory operates not as a theory to explain why groups subdivide into increasingly parsimonious collectives, but rather as a theory to explain the development of an international social movement grounded in a collective identity which is not bounded by various external constructions.

It is my contention that the identities of transnational actors who engage in a substantive cross-cultural exchange across national borders are often transformed as a result of that process. The claim here is not only that transnational identity formation develops concurrently with the expansion of transnational social movements, but that an erosion of a strictly national definition of self is a precondition to transnational collective action and the emergence of global civil society.

We will also see in the chapters that follow that Transnational Activists (TNAs) are indeed motivated by emotional-laden processes. Friendship, relationships and transformative, “catalytic” experiences help people to move along continua of transnationalism and/or activism (see below). Though these activists are emotional, they are not irrational.

They are often quite explicitly organized to reinforce a sense of the emotion-laden “beloved community”. Unifying, border-bridging “cultural” practices are utilized to sustain emotion and transnational collective identities. The sense of “their”
community is increasingly humanity as a whole and their central identities are increasingly activist.

**International Actors: Four “Ideal Types”**

Lastly, I would like to posit a framework for the study of transnational activism. My schema details two continua; a) from very activist to inactive and b) from very transnational to very local. Mapping this field onto a two by two table, I construct four “ideal types” to use in my ethnographic investigation of transnational activist identity formation amongst global social justice activists.

Here, I employ Max Weber’s conception of “ideal type” to sort international actors into four theoretical categories; “the professionals”, “the missionaries”, “the localists” and “the transnational social movement activists” (TNAs). The first two are not activists as I conceive of them in this chapter, whereas the latter two are clearly activists. The first and third are not transnational as I have defined it in this chapter, whereas the second and fourth are thoroughly transnational categories. Accordingly, only the participants in the fourth ideal type (TNAs) are clearly activists and transnationalists. This is the unique conjuncture that is the subject of this dissertation.

To be sure, transnationalism and activism both lie on continua. Though I am loosely categorizing “ideal types”, these categories are fluid and individuals may move along the continua in different directions. For instance a college activist (not

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147 Following Weber, it is important to note that these are abstractions and do not, in fact, represent reality. The patterns described below are illustrative and not precise. However, they are not inconsequential. Indeed, the overall thrust of this dissertation is to explain movement along these continua from one loose typology to another. These constructs are presented as typologies for the sole purpose of highlighting patterns along the continua I am investigating.
very transnational, but extremely activist) may eventually seek and find work as an assistant director with a poverty reduction NGO (which might lead her to become at once more transnational and less “activist” oriented).

However, at one end of these continua, I will argue that we find a new type of transnational activist who reflects a fresh approach to social movement activism as well as a thoroughgoing transnationalism on an unprecedented scale. Each of these (transnationalism and activism) reinforce each other at the far end of the scale. For these activists, national, cultural, racial and linguistic boundaries and histories are essential to understanding, but are no longer are sufficient excuses for non-cooperation. As more and more transnational activists (TNAs) dare to bridge these innumerable borders, they become increasingly adept at what Boaventura de Soussa Santos has called “translation”\(^{148}\). They become increasingly aware of a diversity of world views and ironically, their diversity increasingly brings them closer together.

*The “Professionals”*

The first group are not activists. They are professionals of various types who engage in international work for essentially careerist goals. As has been noted previously, these participants may very well be embarking upon a road to greater activism. They may have a range of activist leanings or impulses, but dedication to an activist cause is neither their prominent identity, nor their primary purpose for participation.

\(^{148}\) “Translation is the procedure that allows for mutual intelligibility among the experiences of the world, both available and possible… without jeopardizing their identity and autonomy, without, in other words, reducing them to homogeneous entities.” Santos, Boaventura De Sousa, *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond*, 2006, p. 132. More will be said of this below.
These types are often represented by the directors, assistant directors and functionaries of professional NGOs, development agencies and UN service programs. They are accustomed to participating in large conferences in the interest of better “service delivery”. Though they may have ethical or philosophical misgivings about the work they do, they are unlikely to question their organization’s basic mission, method or motives.

Furthermore, though the “professionals” clearly consider themselves internationalists, they are not transnationalists. Their identity is firmly grounded in a home country. The professional NGO/development types are generally working overseas in a particular nation for a fixed number of years before moving on to another contract. However, they consider themselves nationals of a particular nation and often perceive an “essential” difference between themselves and the people with whom they work.

The “Localists”

Localist identities, similarly, are generally rooted in national, subnational (ex. Dalit, aboriginal peoples) and sometimes regional (ex. Pan-Arabic, Pan-African, Pan-

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149 Another (and growing) subset of this category are academics. They generally choose international work as their research subject. They may even participate in activism from time to time in their community or academic setting, but again, dedication to an activist cause is neither their prominent identity, nor their primary purpose for international engagement.

150 Keck and Sikkink’s (Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics, 1998) description of transnational advocacy networks is essentially a localist/professional collaboration. They see an instrumental relationship between localists and professional NGO workers that is mutually beneficial, temporary and international. However, I would argue that these relationships, as described by Keck and Sikkink, do not meet the standard for transnational interactions/collaborations. See also Rothman, Franklin Daniel and Oliver, Pamela E., “From the Local to the Global: The Anti-Dam Movement in Southern Brazil, 1979-1992” in Smith, Jackie and Johnston, Hank (eds.), Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements, 2002.
Asian, Latino/a) identities. These participants have essentially “local” grievances that they have come to understand either a) have international causes or b) would benefit from international allies.

Localists are often significant minorities within their area of incorporation (nation, reserves, occupied territory, etc.) and have deftly used spaces like the WSF (see Chapter III) to increase international awareness of their local plight and to recruit new adherents. They attempt to build international connections in the hopes of staving off cultural, territorial or physical destruction.

Localists have also made alliances with other localists in an effort to increase their numbers and call attention to similar struggles, in indigenous rights groups for instance. This international interaction often moves localists along the continuum to a more transnational sense of self. However, partially as a result of nature of their grievances, their base usually remains localized and does not meet the standard for a thoroughgoing transnationalism.

In addition, participants with particularized, singular issue concerns may also be considered localists. Their “national” identity may vary, but they are very clearly “rooted” in a particularized issue or struggle. They have a limited interest in or openness to learning about other issues. Like other localists, they use spaces like the WSF for essentially strategic purposes. They seek to spread knowledge of their grievance to larger and larger publics and to recruit adherents to their cause. They are willing to enter into alliances and coalitions, but only so long as their issues remain pre-eminent.
However, as we can see from the foregoing discussion, the localists, as opposed to the professionals, are very clearly activists. While their identity cannot be seen to be transnational in any real sense, their identities are predominately those of activists. Far from motivated by professional “benefit”, they are passionately dedicated to their cause.

The “Missionaries”

Like the professionals, missionaries are not activists. Though they might describe themselves as activists and certainly feel themselves imbued with great emotion, missionaries are most often delivering a “professionalized” agenda. They might be understood to be dogmatic or superior and hesitant to learn anything from others in their field. Like the professional, it is rare for the missionary to question their organization’s basic mission, method or motives. Similarly, few of these experts can discern the cultural “harm” that their agenda may do to communities.\(^{151}\)

Though a bit of a misnomer, the term missionary does correspond to a variety of historical and contemporary religious peoples. However, it may just as easily correspond to proponents of other unidirectional faith-like, professionalized doctrines. A range of development experts from family planning advocates to microfinance

\(^{151}\) For example, when capitalist logics and inequalities are offered as a panacea for poverty alleviation (as in numerous “income-generating” programs or micro-credit development schemes), community animosity and jealousy can boil over. It is outside of the scope of this investigation, but many “witch-finders” often settle on people in the community seen to be unjustly hoarding (i.e. not sharing with the community) resources. In such a context, programs for (economic) development set back culturally-based community survival techniques, generations.
schemers, essentially follow a similar pattern of behavior. The “activism” they sometimes see in themselves is relatively unidirectional. They generally “give” more information than they “receive”.

But is this not true of a wide range of professionals as well? What, then, distinguishes professionals from those I call missionaries? The difference is that the missionary category serves to acknowledge historical and contemporary examples of people who, though they are not activists in any meaningful sense, are profoundly transnational.

“Going native” is an imprecise (and perhaps insulting) phrase used to describe some of the interactions this category tries to encapsulate. As opposed to the professional, true missionaries immerse themselves in cultures in which they find themselves. They adopt the food, mannerisms, language and incorporate much of the culture and sensibilities of the “other”. True missionaries may refuse to leave their new community, for example. They may marry into the culture or otherwise be incorporated into the local community. As we have noted above, their sense of “we”, their sense of “home”, their very identity has changed.

152 The Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC) as described by Leslie Sklair (“Sociology of the Global System” in Lechner, Frank J. and Boli, John, The Globalization Reader, 2004) above would also fall into the “missionary” category rather than the professional category to the extent that they embrace thoroughly transnational identities.

153 As opposed to actual religious missionaries who may fall into any of the four categories. For instance, historically, the religious missionary could be a clear “professional”, suffering the indignities of living amongst “savages” in order to “save” them from “barbarism”, “hell” or to deliver to them “civilization”. Little concession, in such cases, is made to the “other” in this interaction. Conversion, in this context, is the task of the profession. Living amongst them is the chore, the sacrifice that must be made for “success” but little identification is made with the other. They remain “rooted” in an identity distinct from those they try to convert. This may be an international/ intercultural interaction, but it is clearly not a transnational/ transcultural interaction. Such are not “missionaries” in the sense of this category.
In the contemporary period, missionaries are found amongst some percentage of erstwhile NGO and development workers, permanent travelers and migrants. A percentage of this wide swath of humanity identifies, and builds upon, a sense of “we” which transcends narrow nationalism or provincialism. They are not merely international. They have incorporated “otherness” into their sense of self. Their identity has become thoroughly transnational. But, as noted above, they are not activists.

**The Transnational Activists (TNAs)**

Transnational activists combine a thoroughgoing transnationalism similar to the missionary type, but are also self consciously activists in the localist sense. They are extremely passionate about injustice, but do not limit their passion to self-interested causes. They embrace a notion of “we” that spans various national, linguistic, cultural and racial borders.

It is undoubtedly the case that few individuals, even in the TNA type, embrace a notion of “we” so broad as to include all of humanity. However, this category, like the others is an ideal type and rather than rigid categories, these types are meant to mark the journey of individual activists along two converging continua; degrees of activism and degrees of transnationalism. Below, we will turn to a more detailed discussion of activists who are on this journey.

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154 At this juncture, I do not intend to dissect the question of whether or not these activists are truly “altruistic”. For purposes of this typology, those that are skeptical of notions of altruism can understand this category in terms of a broadened, transnational notion of self-interest. If TNAs are self-interested, “their” community is much wider than most.
Not Transnational | Transnational
---|---
Not Activist | “The Professionals” | “Missionaries”
Activist | “Localists” | Transnational Activists

Figure 2.1: Four “Ideal Types” of International Actors

**Conclusion**

New Social movement theory has contributed greatly to our understanding of a new form of social movement in which “identity” is seen as the goal of social movement actors. However, such identity movements may be less concerned with concrete gains in policy change or resource mobilization than they are with the social-psychological benefits of a collective identity. Consequently, new social movement theory has often been used to understand particularistic and somewhat factionalized social movements. It helps to explain why various social movements do not collaborate with each other. Groups, whose goal is the reification and preservation of their collective identity, are not necessarily coalition seeking.

However, in recent years we have seen an unprecedented collaboration between social movement actors in the anti-globalization (apparent in the global protests against WTO, IMF, G8 and World Bank policies) and environmental movements. Human rights organizations and international healthwork seems to be expanding as well. If identity does indeed form an increasingly important aspect of the motivation of social movement actors how do we explain the unprecedented collaboration across national, linguistic and cultural borders? Why have we seen an
unprecedented degree of coordination of activities and coalitions within these movements?

In the next chapter, I argue that through intensive cross-cultural interactions, transnational social movement actors, at certain times and places, increasingly reject the imposition of strictly national, ethnic or religious identities and acquire a “global” or “transnational identity”. These growing transnational movements might be said to increasingly emulate the form of the “anarchistic struggles” Foucault dedicated his life to understanding. They represent the emergence of a new transnational activist collective identity with the potential for generating, building and sustaining a “new” transnational social movement.

In this context, “identity” and new social movement theory operate not as a theory to explain why groups subdivide into increasingly parsimonious collectives, but rather as a theory to explain the development of an international social movement grounded in a self conception which is not bounded by the socially constructed divisions of nation, ethnicity, race or religion.
Chapter III: World Social Forum: A Case Study

In this chapter, I will first detail the contours of the emergence of a growing transnational global social justice movement culminating in the World Social Forum (hereafter WSF). Before discussing the participants themselves, I will describe the organization and process of the WSF itself. The majority of this chapter will be dedicated to an empirical discussion of Transnational Activists (TNAs) at the World Social Forum.

Eventually, the conceptual “ideal types” I outline in Chapter II will become blurred as I trace the real life continua that these activists traverse in their lifetimes. Lastly, I will highlight a) specific biographical characteristics b) significant, “catalytic events” in one’s life (historical) and c) a series of emotion-laden cultural “binding practices” that cultivate a sense of transnational activist identity in the space of the WSF. These details will constitute an effort to sketch a theory of TNA identity formation to be compared to the experiences of HIV/AIDS healthworkers in Chapters V and VI.

From Zapatismo to Seattle

The global South has been plagued by a continuous series of interventions by the global North into the internal dynamics of their economies at least since the day before decolonization. “Neocolonial” controls over newly independent nations have a long history. Latin American countries have struggled to wrest political and economic autonomy from former colonial rulers and their successors for nearly two centuries.
Africa, South Asia and the Middle East have a comparatively recent experience with this struggle as their independence from colonial powers has a much more recent history.\footnote{\(155\)}

The Great Depression and World War II gave rise to the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) which would eventually give life to the World Bank. On the face of it, these institutions embraced apolitical goals. These institutions would ensure global economic stability through the extension of lines of credit to economically unstable nations, preventing the recurrence of global financial crises. These institutions eventually became a force for the “underdevelopment”\footnote{\(156\)} and diminished (economic and political) sovereignty of much of the “developing” world.\footnote{\(157\)}

By the 1980s, a growing number of countries came to be dependent upon foreign aid and were compelled, as a result of newly codified Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and attendant “austerity measures”, to reduce social spending and privatize state enterprises. In a return to colonial era patterns, social inequality, disease, poverty and periodic famine grew anew. In many countries, state spending on

\footnote{\(155\) As discussed in Chapter I, de-colonizing forces took great pains to maintain economic and in some cases, military and/or political control over former colonies through a variety of mechanisms.}

\footnote{\(156\) Again (as in Chapter I), I use this term in the specific sense employed by Walter Rodney in \textit{How Europe Underdeveloped Africa}, Washington, D.C., Howard University Press, 1981}

\footnote{\(157\) Perhaps this was inevitable as these financial institutions have never operated according to democratic mechanisms. For example, the Fund’s voting regulations are weighted such that wealthy nations with significant financial “quotas” have dramatically disproportionate power in voting. For example, Mexico’s voting power translates to one vote per 4,020 people and that of India translates to one vote per 25,460 people. By contrast, the United States has one vote per 788 people. In other words, in the debate over global trade policy and the discussions over “correct” economic policy, the vote of every United States citizen is over five times as powerful as their Mexican counterpart and over than 32 times more powerful than that of their Indian counterpart. (The following calculations were made using population estimates from the CIA World Factbook website, \url{www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/} and voting statistics from the IMF website, \url{www.imf.org/}).
healthcare was deemed “inefficient” and preventable diseases predictably exploded in the name of economic efficiency.

Concomitantly, a trickle and then a wave of protests against these Structural Adjustment Programmes began to emerge around the world. Largely led by women, these often spontaneous, grassroots protests established a drumbeat of opposition to the new “common sense” policies. Mothers, sisters and their allies took to the streets in indignation against their governments, but gradually began to discern that their state held little sway over the emerging international financial order. These were the seeds of the modern global social justice movement.158

On January 1, 1994, the first day of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico was shaken by a military rebellion against its army in the rural mountains of the state of Chiapas. The Zapatista movement was not entirely without precedent. Peasant movements for social justice have a long, if often unsuccessful, history. However, the Zapatistas articulated a comprehensive critique of the local situation within the larger context of neoliberal globalization. They placed the plight of the indigenous poor of Chiapas, Mexico in the context of national, regional and global issues.

The Zapatistas’ main spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, poetically tapped into a reservoir of discontent and connected the struggle of indigenous Mexicans to that of other dispossessed peoples throughout the world. A common theme in Marcos’

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writings was the notion that economic globalization (neoliberalism) does not allow other forms of economic or social organization. In effect, it consistently asserts itself as a hegemonic program of “inevitability”. Diverse alternatives of prioritization or social organization are cast aside as “inefficient”, “unproductive” or “backwards”. The Zapatistas, through Marcos, articulated a vision of globalization that celebrated diversity and valued local autonomy and participation in economic decisions. This vision resonated globally.

Using the internet and cellular technology in unprecedented ways for the time, the Zapatistas allied themselves to other struggles against neoliberalism, spurring a globally connected network in opposition to neoliberalism. Lastly, the Zapatistas borrowing from transnational feminist organizers in Latin America, popularized “encuentros”, meetings organized around a collectivity of interests without hierarchy. Later expanded upon by World Social Forum organizers, the encuentro model allowed for inter-group dialogue, learning, sharing of experiences, strategies and tactics without initiating a struggle over leadership or course of action to be decided upon. The struggles of peasants in the mountains of Mexico became “ground zero” for an international movement against neoliberal policies.

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160 While I elaborate on the concept below, it is perhaps important to note here that the encuentro model minimizes the potential for schism, division and in-fighting. Appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences and perspectives replaces a battle for the “correct”, “right” or “true” perspective or course of action. Accordingly, opponents of neoliberalism learn and share in an unthreatening environment. The potential for building towards consensus is high in such a space.
In the five years following the Zapatista uprising, a diffuse movement of “anti-globalization” forces around the world began building connections with each other in an increasingly coordinated attempt to confront the growing consolidation of a hegemonic vision of globalization based on neoliberal principles. Radical environmentalists who had been coordinating their protests internationally for some time, began to draw connections between the global “race to the bottom” and environmental degradation. Socialist and communist party members and sympathizers were drawn to a new arena of struggle in the wake of uncertainty following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the previous decade. Anarchists sought to confront a mounting challenge of corporate power in a new global arena. Indigenous rights movements reacted to the degradation of culture and traditional beliefs in a world increasing homogenized and dominated by economic efficiency and profit. Anti-debt activists began to organize and articulate an agenda to abolish the insurmountable debt burden in the developing world that was debilitating state efforts to provide education and health care to their people as well as national sovereignty in economic affairs. Global democracy advocates objected to the centralization of control of global life chances of billions in the hands of an unelected and unaccountable few.

In 1999, organizations representing each of these constituencies descended upon the gathering of the World Trade Organization in Seattle. The level of police violence at the Seattle protests had not been seen in the United States since the 1960s. Through widespread press coverage and sensationalism, the “anti-globalization”

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movement was implanted in the international consciousness. However, the notion that these protesters and activists were “anti-globalization” has always been imprecise at best.

In her work on the WTO protests in Seattle, Jackie Smith argues that the rapid expansion of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) during the past fifty years provided many activists with substantive knowledge of the political views of groups from different parts of the world, opportunities to gain skills and experience in international organizing work, expertise in international law, and familiarity with multilateral negotiations. TSMO growth promoted transnational dialogue and helped organizers to coordinate interests and propose policies that accounted for the needs of people in both the global North and South. By facilitating flows of information across national boundaries, organizations with transnational ties helped cultivate movement identities, transcend nationally defined interests and build solidary identities with a global emphasis.\(^{163}\)

In addition, despite the great difficulty of resources, or potentially because of their transnational connections, 30-40 percent of the panelists at the largest protest rallies were activists from the global South.\(^{164}\)


\(^{164}\) Smith, Jackie, “Globalizing Resistance: The Battle of Seattle and the Future of Social Movements”, *Mobilization: An International Journal*, 2001, 6 (1): 1-19. A growing number of scholars are fascinated with this collaboration. Kim Reimann, in her discussion of Tokyo NGOs shows that transnational processes have created the political opportunities for NGO growth in Japan despite a domestic political climate which is hostile to NGO formation. NGOs or communities which may have difficulty impacting policies within their home government may now appeal to international governmental organizations for assistance in publicizing their plight and bringing pressure to bear on their home government via the international arena. Others may make appeals to international actors who may assist them with funding, thereby circumventing domestic obstacles as well. She also points to the role of international conferences as well as increased communication, generally in proliferating transnational diffusion of strategies, tactics and campaign issues throughout the world. (“Building Networks From the Outside In: International Movements, Japanese NGOs, and the Kyoto Climate Change Conference”, *Mobilization: An International Journal*, 2001, 6 (1): 69-82. For similar processes in a different context, see Rothman, Franklin Daniel and Oliver, Pamela E., “From the Local to the Global: The Anti-Dam Movement in Southern Brazil, 1979-1992” in Smith, Jackie and Johnston, Hank (eds.), *Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements*, 2002). William Fisher notes that this has even led
A body so diverse should never have been boxed into the narrow frame of “anti-globalization”. To be sure, some activists have strong anti-growth tendencies and are challenged by the pressures of an increasingly globalized world. However, the overwhelming majority of activists gathered at Seattle objected not to an increasingly connected world per se, but to a particular form of globalization; Neoliberalism.

Environmentalists could easily imagine a more interconnected world, but if the policies and proscriptions of that world reduced unsustainable levels of growth and consumption, they would in no way be “anti-globalization”. Socialists, communists and radical labor have a long history of trying to connect the struggles of the working class internationally. Their objection is not to an increasingly globalized world, but one which disenfranchises the mass of people on a global scale and expands and privileges the role of corporate capital in this new, more interconnected, world. Even indigenous rights movements portrayed as wanting to preserve a dying past are essentially calling for a sphere of autonomy and the extension of minority or cultural rights and protections. Their complaints are not necessarily remedied by calling for an end to an increasingly interconnected world. Indeed, many of these movements are already connected in alliances with indigenous peoples throughout the world experiencing similar struggles.

A Note on Trans-National/ Trans-Cultural Collaboration

The media label “anti-globalization” missed the mark at Seattle, but the coverage did discern something new. These diverse activists with individual, regional and issue-based concerns did come together. People from the global North and the global South shared perspectives and contact information and vowed to communicate in the future. Organizations and struggles that had never coordinated or allied with each other began building linkages. Labor unions, calling for universal employment and environmentalists calling for zero growth, for example, began to see common cause where there was once a great deal of antagonism. The press labels had stumbled into a truism; from an ethnically, geographically, racially, culturally diverse collection of protesters, a movement had begun.

Many scholars\textsuperscript{165} have commented on the divisions amongst these activists predicting splinter groups, fissures, splits, internecine struggle and polarization -- all too common in the history of the Left. This type of scholarship has its place. It informs activists and academics alike of potential fault lines and potentially unequal power dynamics within ostensibly egalitarian social movement organizations. Social movements which have not made efforts to address power differentials and potential fault lines invariably splinter, factionalize or succumb to autocratic and authoritarian dynamics. However, that is not the approach undertaken here.

In the remainder of this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, my approach is to take division and difference as standard, and, essentially unsurprising. Gendered,

racial, geographic, cultural and philosophical divisions have plagued all social movements. Division and barriers to the coordination of collective action are unsurprising in any social movement. Furthermore, the larger and more diverse the social movement, it would seem the greater the potential for division, dissension and dissolution. In my description below of the activists of the World Social Forum, I argue the Forum does not merely reproduce differences as many other social movements have, but rather offers an opportunity for boundary bridging, solidarity and, in the last instance, the emergence of new conceptions of identity which are transnational, transcultural, etc. This is precisely what makes these transnational social movement activists so unique. The high degree of cooperation with little dissension, dissolution and foundational division is a new dynamic worthy of increased scholarly attention.

In Chapter II, I argued for the usefulness of exploring conceptual ideal types along continua of transnationalism and activism. I loosely categorized people (activists or not) as “professionals”, “localists”, “missionaries” or transnational activists”. Yet, these categories are fluid and individuals may move along the continua in either direction. Nonetheless, I argue that at the far end of the continua transnationalism reinforces activism and activism reinforces transnationalism. In other words, at one end of these continua, we find a new type of transnational activist who reflects a fresh approach to social movement activism as a well as a thoroughgoing transnationalism on an unprecedented scale. These are the new transnational activists (TNAs).
The World Social Forum: Intro and Process

The World Social Forum (WSF), also referred to as the “Movement of Movements,” is the world’s most significant gathering of anti-neoliberal globalization forces, arrayed since 2001 under the banner “Another World is Possible”. The World Social Forum and its regional, national and sub-national counterparts has provided participants with an unprecedented space for networking, discussion and learning, sharing of strategies and tactics in order to develop proactive solutions to the myriad threats of neoliberal globalization.

The hundreds of thousands of attendees at the World Social Forum represent a wide swath of organizations and individuals willing to embrace the WSF goals as enunciated in the WSF Charter of Principles, namely, non-violence and opposition to neoliberalism and the “domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism”. The WSF attendees include trade unionists, left leaning scholars, indigenous and human rights activists, progressive environmentalists and a diverse array of global social justice activists and non-governmental organizations from around the world. In many ways, the WSF represents the most consequential representation of what might be called “global civil society”.

166 World Social Forum website, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br
The first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre in 2001 in direct opposition to the undemocratic gatherings of the World Economic Forum (WEF), held annually in Davos, Switzerland. Brazilian and French organizers increasingly frustrated with the unifocal emphasis on “anti-globalization” protest agreed to hold the more proactive World Social Forum in the global South on the same dates as the WEF.

Teivo Teivainen remarks that the World Social Forum marked a major shift in the “anti-globalization” struggles. The persistent street protests against the G8, World Trade Organization (WTO) or World Economic Forum (WEF) from Seattle to Genoa had been important in calling attention to the negative social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the neoliberal approach to globalization. However, they had not generated much in the way of a “credible alternative, or any alternative at all”. With the World Social Forum, activists began to shift from an “anti-globalization” frame to an “outra globalização” (another globalization) frame. The WSF organizers endeavored to offer a space for transnational, intercultural exchange of ideas and experiences for anti-neoliberal globalization activists. Organizations and activists would gather to create “another world”, as opposed to merely protesting against neoliberal institutions and their policies.

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The first was held in Porto Alegre in 2001 with approximately 5000 participants from 117 countries. The second Forum drew over 12,000 official delegates from 123 countries with tens of thousands of participants in total. By 2003, participation at the Forum mushroomed with over 100,000 participants and more than 20,000 official delegates. The fourth Forum marked another major transition by moving from Porto Alegre, Brazil to Mumbai, India, with well over 75,000 participants. January 2005 marked the fifth iteration of the World Social Forum and its return to Porto Alegre. It drew over 200,000 participants and 155,000 registered participants. “Polycentric” regional forums were held in Caracas (Venezuela), Bamako (Mali) and Karachi (Pakistan) in 2006. In 2007, Nairobi, Kenya became the sight for the first WSF held on African soil. The 2008 “gathering” of the WSF was held in thousands of locales around the world in the form of a “Global Call for Action”. In 2009, the WSF returned to Brazil, but this time in the city of Belem in the Amazon. In 2010, the WSF process was again decentralized and in 2011 the WSF retuned to Africa (Dakar, Senegal).

The WSF lasts roughly one week, during which activists and organizations gather in thousands of lectures, workshops, panel discussions and strategy sessions to share and learn about the consequences of an increasingly hegemonic approach to globalization. Surrounding performance, theater, art and protest underscore the themes of the Forum and are central in reinforcing solidarity amongst the participants.

171 World Social Forum website, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br
172 World Social Forum, India, website http://www.wsfindia.org/
173 World Social Forum website, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br
The participants who regularly attend the World Social Forum include trade unionists, scholars, indigenous and human rights activists, progressive environmentalists and a diverse array of global social justice activists and non-governmental organizations. Each of these seeks alternatives to the current trajectory of globalization. This assorted assemblage represents the clearest manifestation yet of what some scholars have referred to as “global civil society”.

The participants are loosely united by the WSF Charter of Principles which articulates its vision without binding people or organizations to a particular strategy or totalizing ideology. It is quite consciously a forum, a space, a gathering or a process, as opposed to a meeting, a council or other decision-making event.

The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism, but engaged in building a planetary society centered on the human person, come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, to formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action. The WSF proposed to debate alternative means to building a globalization in solidarity, which respects universal human rights and those of all men and women of all nations and the environment, and is grounded in democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.  

Though they hold varied ideologies, goals and strategic visions, they do generally subscribe to some principled objections. They object to the undemocratic structure and policies of neoliberal institutions (including the WTO, the WEF, G20, IMF and World Bank) and the ways in which the global economic policies they set

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174 World Social Forum website, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br
affect billions of lives around the world. The world’s most economically and militarily powerful nations are seen to have a disproportionate influence in setting the global policies of these institutions which affect the lives of billions of others around the world. Even within these most powerful nations, ordinary citizens have no real input into electing their representatives or otherwise holding their leaders accountable for practices and policies created in their name.

They oppose the privatization and standardization of resources seen as the “commons of humanity”, (potable drinking water, rainforests, crop and plant seeds as well as other human knowledges ranging from cultures to identities\textsuperscript{175}), as well as wars in the name of imperialism or capitalist expansion. They urge the cancellation of debilitating foreign debts that they charge exacerbate poverty and paralyze national health and education efforts. They call for a radical reform of the privatization, centralization and standardization of cultural and news media as well.

They see the neoliberal “consensus” as having prioritized economic efficiency above long term environmental impacts and social or cultural consequences. As global economic forces gradually supplant local control of national economies or intensify neocolonial control of economies, WSF participants call world attention to the need for global protections from unfettered capital expansion.

In short, the WSF activists object to the way in which neoliberal institutions project a particular vision of globalization that prioritizes profits above the needs of people (including culture, health and nutrition, safety from war and violence) and the

environment. In other words, they object to a particular and hegemonic vision of globalization.

The WSF also represents a unique departure from previous party-style social movement structures. The horizontal organization of the “Movement of Movements” is a potentially new and inventive form of social movement that departs from older vertically oriented unions and parties. Borrowing principles from the Zapatista movement and transnational feminism, the WSF is conceived as a space for dialogue, learning, democratic debate and exchange of experiences. The organizers have self consciously eschewed the notion of the WSF as a deliberative body or a “locus of power”.\(^{176}\) No one speaks for the Forum as a whole and it is not meant to represent “world civil society”. No decisive votes are taken in which one organization or group’s views “lose” and another’s “win”.

Consequently, the Forum has thus far avoided the sectarianism and division that has beset the political Left and diverse social movements for generations. Like-minded forces therefore remain in dialogue, if not in coalition. Organizations are freely able to ally with colleagues around one set of issues while abstaining from alliance in subsequent contexts.\(^{177}\)


\(^{177}\) The lack of decisive votes or “decisions” in the name of the Forum has led to the charge by activists and academics alike that the Forum has stagnated and is powerless to respond to the real world challenges of neoliberal globalization. They call for it to take a more activist role in global politics. On the other hand, the structure of the Forum does not preclude any action by participants unless they claim to speak for all.
Furthermore, as the WSF is grounded in the Global South, WSF participants have all too often witnessed firsthand the impact of colonial and neocolonial “development”. Generally the former colonial powers dismiss as unrealistic, unworkable or naïve a variety of alternative models of development and economics widely discussed at the Forum and practiced in pockets around the world. Thus, the WSF participants embrace more than a slogan when they proclaim “Another World is Possible”. It is a direct challenge to the growing hegemony around the notion of neoliberal globalization’s “inevitability”.

Consequently, scholars hail the WSF as a unique space for the production of alternative knowledges; a counter-hegemonic vision of the world that the WSF Charter of Principles calls a “permanent process of seeking and building alternatives”. For these scholars, the Forum is a space for the proliferation, production and preservation of alternative and marginalized knowledges of a wide variety of subjects including culture, economics, agriculture and health. The WSF represents for these scholars a


challenge to the hegemony of neoliberal globalization’s “inevitability”\textsuperscript{181} The Forum is also unique in the scale of its inclusiveness.\textsuperscript{182} Ideologically, geographically, culturally and thematically, the WSF welcomes an unprecedented array of activists.

Overcoming Divisions\textsuperscript{183}

The geographical, political, ethnic and cultural diversity of the WSF participants presents a landscape fraught with the potential for dissent and cleavage. Indeed, the history of the Left in nearly any part of the world is testament to the difficulty of making those with minority opinions feel that their concerns are taken seriously and that they have a voice in the larger movement. The WSF is challenged by similar divisions. However, one of the strengths noted above is the ways in which the WSF’s organizational structure manages these divisions.

One major division is between those pursuing a reformist agenda and those who see the need for more radical or revolutionary change. The reformists, for instance look to restructure the IMF or the WTO in order to introduce democratic mechanisms and more humanistic goals. The radicals, on the other hand, see these


\textsuperscript{182} This has certainly been challenged by the work of Alvarez et al., “The Contours of Color at the World Social Forum: Reflections on Racialized Politics, Representation, and the Global Justice Movement”,\textit{ Critical Sociology}, 34, no. 3 (2008): 389-407. However, I would argue that the WSF has been extremely responsive to criticism. The annual geographical rotation of the Forum is one effort to lessen the time and resource barriers that impede widespread participation. In addition, the profile of women and gender issues has grown and the WSF has established “solidarity funds” to increase participation of underrepresented groups.

Moreover, as I elaborate throughout this dissertation it is unsurprising that the geographical, political, ethnic and cultural diversity of the WSF participants presents a landscape fraught with potential fracture and cleavage. The ways in which these divisions are overcome is a much more fascinating and interesting theoretical challenge. That is the challenge I have set for myself in this dissertation. How do activists enter into dialogue, alliance and coalition despite longstanding, diverse barriers and divisions to their cooperation?

\textsuperscript{183} Much of this section is based on the work of Fisher and Ponniah unless otherwise cited.
financial institutions as fundamentally flawed and in need of abolition. From the later perspective, reformist change will simply allow a managed exploitation while preserving an overall system which ensures that profit and efficiency are pre-eminent and human, cultural, social and ecological needs remain superfluous. The radicals tend to see the reformists as naïve. The reformists tend to see the radicals as unrealistic.

Another significant division is a disagreement upon the appropriate level of political action. Is the state the enemy or a potential ally? Some WSF participants call for radical localism. For these advocates, the large scale plans of states and statesmen, international institutions and their “planners” have decimated local peoples, cultures and ecologies. They call for radical local autonomy which they see as crucial to a comprehensive democratic ideal. These are often particularly marginalized (ethnic, indigenous, religious, cultural) communities who have experienced colonialism, imperialism or cultural chauvinism. Localists tend to see local organizing, actions and improvements as the most effective and important. At the other end of the spectrum are those who call for “international democracy”. They don’t fear states as such, as long as they are inclusive, democratic and just. These internationalists are keenly aware of connections amongst struggles in different areas of the world. They see failure to organize and unify progressive forces internationally as a death knell to anti-neoliberal globalization movements. If the opposition is global, the resistance should be global. The bitterness of the division between these two camps (and others at regional, national or sub-national levels) is often reinforced by historical divisions of race, class, gender, as well as global North-South cleavages.
A closely related division colored by historical relationships between the global North and the South is the issue of human rights.\textsuperscript{184} For some in the global South, there is no coincidence that this “universal” ideal just happened to emerge from Western political philosophy. Calls for universal standards of behavior can provoke painful historical memory of atrocities committed in the name of a “civilizing mission”. Are these values truly “universal”? Should they be? Is the alternative merely cultural relativism? Issues such as female circumcision and homosexuality loom as potential divisions in this vein. A fourth potential fissure amongst the WSF participants is a tension between radical environmentalists who urge reduced growth and the economic demands of workers, unions and the poor. Other scholars debate the relative importance of “racial,”\textsuperscript{185} class or gendered divisions within the Forum.

However, as I have already hinted at, what is most remarkable and unique about the WSF is not the presence of division and dissension, but the ways in which the participants and organizers of the WSF overcome these longstanding divisions. That radical inclusiveness is at the center of the present endeavor.


\textsuperscript{185} One of the most profound critiques of this type of analysis is the use of Western (largely American) racial categories in the analysis of societies that are stratified by ethnic, racial or class divisions that do not correspond to the Western (largely American) context. See for instance Alvarez, Rebecca, Gutierrez, Erika, Kim, Linda, Petit, Christine and Reese, Ellen “The Contours of Color at the World Social Forum: Reflections on Racialized Politics, Representation, and the Global Justice Movement”, \textit{Critical Sociology}, 34, no. 3 (2008): 389-407
WSF Participants – Ethnography

In January 2005 in Porto Alegre and January 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya I conducted a series of informal and in-depth interviews with participants while also participating in the discussions, workshops, panel discussions and other activities of the Forum. My focus of the interviews was on participants’ descriptions of their life history in order to discern pre-existing and subsequent career trajectories, background and aspirations. In particular, I concentrated on what motivated each of them to attend the Forum.186

Below, I will first discuss similarities in the backgrounds of WSF participants. Then, I will move to a discussion of an under theorized aspect of the Forum, emotion-laden cultural “binding practices”, which I see as critical to sustaining and nurturing a transnational activist collective identity. These insights will form the outline of a theory of transnational activist identity formation that I will test in Chapters V and VI.

Biography: Towards Transnational Identity Formation

Participants at the World Social Forum consisted of every imaginable nationality, language, age and complexion. Nonetheless, out of this diverse gathering of activists from every corner of the world, there were two patterns that emerged from the early life histories of the participants. First, many respondents were exposed at a

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186 In important respects, this approach is modeled after Doug McAdam’s study of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Volunteers (Freedom Summer, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988). McAdam attempted to trace the “intersection of history and biography” of the volunteers as well as the experiences that led relatively privileged youth to volunteer for arduous, strenuous and dangerous work in the cause of civil rights. Importantly, McAdam studied both the factors that would encourage one to want to engage in arduous work with those far from home, as well as the ways in which individuals’ sense of self are shaped by their experiences.
very early age to diverse cultures and experiences. Several of my respondents had parents from different racial backgrounds. From early ages they were exposed to a diversity of cultures, quickly grasping a palpable understanding of the “other”.

Mary\textsuperscript{187} recalls how her Malaysian mother was constantly discriminated against while she was growing up in Australia. The contrast was vivid having moved from Malaysia at 6 years old. Similarly, Aman (French born to Moroccan parents) moved from France to Morocco at 5 years old during a time when tensions between French and North Africans were high as a result of fighting in Algeria. Yvette, a black American activist was born in St. Kitts and much of her family still remains there. She feels some guilt about the separation, yet this structural arrangement allows her to maintain a constant transnational identity. Even when early exposure is not international, a dramatic cross-cultural shift can have an important impact as well. Such is the case of Mary Jane, a black American activist, who was born in the “Deep South” but has lived most of her life in Rhode Island. Such early and dramatic exposure to the “world outside one’s front door” has profoundly impacted many WSF participants.

Second, consistent with other studies of social movement activists\textsuperscript{188} respondents did stress the importance of their parents’ political engagement. Jane, a Canadian student, feels she was socialized by her parents to such a degree that she “had no choice” but to do activist work. John, a German student studying in America,

\textsuperscript{187} The names of all of the respondents are pseudonyms.
also pointed to the role his parents, European student movement veterans, played in his political development.  

History: Towards Transnational Identity Formation

More central however was the influence of an emotion-laden transformative or radicalizing moment in one’s life; what I call a “catalytic” experience. James, a white South African by birth had the opportunity to learn the brutal reality of the apartheid regime under which he lived only after traveling to New Zealand. There, he was outraged when he saw accounts of the Soweto uprising of 1976 that were banned in South Africa itself. This catalytic moment fueled his subsequent anti-apartheid activities and ultimately led to his exile to Australia. Mary Jane became an “activist” fairly late in life after her son was brutalized by American police officers. Her genuine rage at her son’s treatment thrust her onto the national stage and ultimately brought her into contact with the activist community of which she is now firmly a part.

For many, this catalytic moment propelled them towards activism and over time they began to embrace activist identities. As this transformation begins to take hold, transnational activists begin to consciously immerse themselves in environments which nurture this emerging identity. When combined with early exposure to the “world outside ones door” this activism can easily become thoroughly transnational.

For example, Mary has worked in a variety of organizations which seek to reduce gender-based violence in India and East Timor. She has also worked with

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189 However, it is important to temper this observation as these responses tended to be articulated by students living and working in the West. Perhaps this factor is more influential for individuals with a certain level of “biographical availability”. Certainly, the majority of my respondents did not list parental influence as crucial to their political development.
refugee populations in different nations around the world. James is now a lawyer defending the rights of Middle Eastern refugees in Australia. Mumba, a South African activist, now works in Zambia with Angolan refugee populations. After being offered an initial opportunity to work in strengthening “civil society” in Mozambique, Jorge, a Spaniard, has lived and worked in Mozambique for five years now.

Therefore, even if the initial impetus for transnational activism is less than a conscious choice (emotion-laden “catalytic” experiences), the subsequent choices of where to work, or what type of work in which to engage, are much more conscious decisions. The choice to place oneself strategically in transnational spaces not only nurtures “fulfillment” in terms of doing “good work”, but also is a clear sign of a shifting sense of identity from the national to the transnational, from the local to citizen-of-the-world, from a more narrow politics of identity to a more global politics of inclusion. In addition, we see the mutual reinforcement of transnationalism and activism at the far end of the spectrum.

As this catalytic transformation takes hold, the importance of this political evolution may begin to trigger reformulations in other aspects of the activists’ political or personal lives. James says he now sees connections between the spread of capitalism, racism, neo-liberalism and gender oppression the world over. Joao, a Brazilian student, studies the connections between culture, politics and music through the unifying themes of Brazilian rap music. Mary Jane, a black American activist has been criticized by co-activists because of her long relationship with a white man. Nonetheless, her resistance to this peer pressure is centered in her assertion that he is a “true progressive” and has helped her through her many journeys. In fact, many of
those who made the journey to Porto Alegre traveled with a significant other. This underscores that political affinity is often very important in the relationships these activists choose.\textsuperscript{190}

The respondents involved often went to great lengths to be in Porto Alegre, yet they also have made efforts to expand their learning beyond the transnational opportunity provided by Brazil and the Forum. A young Irish couple used their entire savings to embark on a six month trip which would bookend the Forum, taking the opportunity to learn from other countries in Latin America. An older American couple who traveled with their son had plans to move onto Uruguay to learn from activists there.

While many activists traveled to Porto Alegre with the aid of grants or sponsoring organizations many, like Aman, spent their own money to arrive in Porto Alegre. At the conclusion of the week’s activities, Aman had plans to travel onto Argentina to add Spanish to a linguistic repertoire that already includes French, Arabic, English and Portuguese. These attitudes are typical of the transnational activist who is willing to employ his/her own resources to learn from other countries and cultures. A surprising number of the activists I interviewed are fluent in more than three languages and most of them lamented their failure to learn more. Amongst the

\textsuperscript{190} While this mirrors McAdam’s studies of “networks”, (particularly \textit{Freedom Summer}, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988, but also implied in \textit{Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970}, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982) my intent is to suggest that relationships are not “merely” another network. Emotion-laden ties matter in networks and consequently, the emotion-laden ties in relationships are that much more effective because of the emotions involved. In fact, a fruitful area of research might indeed be the extent to which the dissolution of “activist relationships” leads to declining levels of (or complete withdrawal from) activism. The research conducted here would hypothesize that this would indeed be a powerful disincentive to participation.
participants, there is a genuine appreciation of the importance of diversity. Moreover, the inability to talk intelligently to other activists is seen as an opportunity lost.

Lastly, consistent with the observations of McAdam in *Freedom Summer*, the importance of formal and informal networks is clearly a driving force behind participation. Some activists were sponsored by their parent organizations.

Nonetheless, quite possibly the most striking importance of the World Social Forum is the diverse and complex ways in which the WSF creates a space for the *expansion* of such networks. Only the most insular of participants could depart Porto Alegre with the same network with which they arrived. How is this accomplished? Simultaneous translation and equipment, workshops, panel discussions and speeches clearly play a role. However, I wish to turn to an under theorized aspect of the power of the World Social Forum; the role of cultural “binding practices”.

*Cultural “Binding Practices”*: *Towards Transnational Identity Formation*

The organizers of the World Social Forum have created an extremely conducive context for debate, discussion, education, the sharing of strategies, tactics and best practices. The organizers have intentionally eschewed attempts to produce any final document of the Forum or to transform the Forum into an actor itself. Rather, as noted above, the emphasis has been on “creating a space” where organizations may build coalitions and networks that may aid their struggle and by extension the larger struggle against neo-liberal globalization.

This decision is powerful in at least three ways. First, it is a concrete manifestation in *practice* of the ideological principle of decentralization. “Localist”
activists, in particular, object to large scale attempts by outsiders, who have no connection to local contexts, to implement grand schemes for their “development”. In rejecting the temptation of centralization, the Forum has maintained ideological consistency with a sort of “anarchistic” form of organization. Similarly, the organizers of the Forum have not established themselves as a “world parliament in exile”. In essence, they believe that any attempt to speak for the entire gathering of activists would be to reproduce the undemocratic processes of the WTO, WEF, IMF and the World Bank.

As stated above, this has enabled organizers to avoid the pitfall of factionalism. Because no Forum–wide votes are taken, each organization maintains its authority and is never on the losing end of a defining vote. Rather, the Forum offers the possibility of unifying previously splintered groups (see below) and the opportunity for the gradual emergence of a consensus (rather than often schism-producing “up or down” votes). 192

Teivainen 193 has suggested that there is a potential pitfall within the structure of the Forum. The organizers of the Forum usually do not structure open debate amongst perspectives. Consequently, it is possible for participants to only attend the workshops of their organization or that of organizations with which they already sympathize. Indeed, while walking the Forum grounds, this tendency can be observed

192 In this vein, the varied studies which identify the divisions within the World Social Forum are both unsurprising and un-interesting. Divisions between the global North and South, reformers and revolutionaries, as well as racial, linguistic and gendered divisions all predate the Forum itself. The distinctiveness of the Forum lies in bringing people together across these divisions.
as cues of similarly dressed participants form outside of single workshops. If such a practice is widespread, one might charge that the Forum does not, in fact, foster networking and the sharing of knowledge, but rather that it merely reproduces pre-existing allegiances. I argue this is not the case for a very precise reason; the emotion-laden culture “binding practices” described below.

The Forum is much more than the array of workshops, panel discussions and lectures. In the section, I argue that most unifying elements of the Forum take place outside of these formal arrangements and that a “Forum culture” serves a crucial unifying function.

“A Marcha”

The most striking symbol of the World Social Forum (particularly in Brazil) is the carnaval-like demonstration that initiates the Forum. The scene of 200,000 colorfully dressed demonstrators with provocative slogans is the sight most frequently associated with the Forum and probably the most reported aspect of the week’s activities. However, this march through the streets is more than a demonstration or photo opportunity. The march is the symbolic representation of the power of the movement. In this march, thousands of participants realize that they are not alone. Melucci’s recognition processes (described in Chapter II) are powerfully at work in this space. Though they may be a numerical minority or hold minority opinions in their own land, the sight of thousands of likeminded individuals gathered in one place reinforces the “righteousness” of one’s cause. For hours before the march begins, participants circulate amongst each other observing how participants of various causes
have chosen to portray their message. In this manner, the participants become familiar with the various issues and causes that will be discussed more formally throughout the week.\footnote{Through most of the organizations are unsurprising, environmental groups, socialists, labor unions, poverty reduction campaigns, etc., one is occasionally surprised to see a network of commercial sex-workers and a sociologists syndicate marching in the demonstration.}

Though many organizations take the opportunity to convey messages directly to their home countries with slogans in local languages, many choose to convey messages to the global North by using the language (English) of the industrial and military superpower of the world.\footnote{It is often clear that this in not the primary language of the activists. Signs or banners are often misspelled or grammatically incorrect. At other times, the poetry of colorful Portuguese or Spanish phrases is lost in the English translation. In such cases, it is clear that the target of the signs is consciously, a Western, English-speaking audience, rather than their own Portuguese or Spanish-speaking compatriots or governments.} Activists frequently make an attempt to convey their messages visually. In addition to the infamous papier-mâché political puppets, organizations conveyed their messages with rows of coffins representing aspects of the world that are “dying” as a result of neo-liberal globalization, or by carrying a giant globe throughout the march.\footnote{The Porto Alegre gathering was a week before the eruption of carnaval activities in Brazil. Perhaps this is the reason music, vivid costumes and dancing were more central to the festivities in Porto Alegre than those in Kenya.}

“Um outro mundo é possível”

The central slogan of the Forum is that another world is possible. Consistent with this theme, participants made every effort during the week’s activities to couple their ideological vision with a concomitant lived experience. The central example of this phenomenon is the international youth camp of the Porto Alegre Forum.

Physically situated in the center of the entire Forum, the youth camp was the cultural
heartbeat of the 2005 Forum. Local respondents estimated that 40,000 people from all over the world were camping in a space that stretched for kilometers. Within this space, the organizers arranged tents for cooperative childcare, massages, alternative media, internet communications, alternative health and hip hop. The showers were open air and communal as if to protest borders even when showering. One of the spaces in the camp was constructed entirely of recycled products, primarily plastic bottles. The Ché space (which was oriented around the Cuban revolutionary’s health activities) took great care to post public health messages throughout the camp to practice safe sex. Everywhere artisans sold their wares without pressuring passersby. Vendors sold t-shirts with the images of Bob Marley, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemborg, Ché Guevara, Leon Trotsky and Antonio Gramsci. Vegetarian fare, so difficult to find in Porto Alegre, was plentiful within the youth camp. Volunteer “security” members rendered local police officials superfluous and obtuse.

Music and dancing were a central theme everywhere in the camp. People of all cultures and backgrounds danced together, clapped to the beat of novel rhythms while joining impromptu drum circles. The hip-hop space broadcast politically minded hip-hop from the four corners of the world in every language imaginable throughout the length of the Forum.

Respondents informed me that the sentiments of the youth camp in previous years were instrumental in moving the Forum from its original location at a local university to its location on the banks of the Guaiba River. The organizers of the youth camp seemed to have created a truly open space for cross cultural and international
interaction. People who might otherwise never interact came in contact with each other constantly. It was the political enactment, the lived reality of “um outro mundo”.

Another political expression of the lived ideal was the occupation of a building in Porto Alegre by O Movimento Nacional de Lucha por la Moradia (MNLM) for the length of the Forum. A sign that hung from the window of the occupied building read in Portuguese, “You don’t beg for the right to life, you conquer it”.

Printed materials were distributed in multiple languages, notably French, English, Portuguese and Spanish. However, some of the most powerfully communicated messages were non-verbal. Photography exhibits, murals and paintings were plentiful. The Vietnamese delegation displayed photos of the horrifying effects of Agent Orange. No words were necessary to explain the cause or effect. One of the more striking exhibits used a combination of black and white and color photography. The photos were generally of the poor and homeless. The homeless were captured in black and white. However, in every photo, there was a splash of color; there was the Coca-Cola bottle a man was using as a pillow, a bus stop advertisement glistening in color over a man sleeping at the feet of unaware bus-riders, a family on one side of a wall playing in their pool of brilliant blue, while a homeless man slept on the street not ten feet from the pool, separated by a wall. Again, no words were needed to convey the message. Here, participants and activists from divergent cultures, languages and daily realities are drawn together in critique of neoliberalism that binds them together without need for formal translation. An anti-neoliberal globalization “language” of sorts is produced, reinvented and proliferated in the cultural space of the WSF.
The symbolism of the wall was also employed by the “Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign”. The campaign organizers constructed a life-size wall within the confines of the Forum. Upon this wall they displayed photographs of a wall being constructed to separate Palestinians from Israelis. Even the use of the word “Apartheid” seemed to be a clear attempt to broaden international awareness beyond those who are already concerned with the plight of the Palestinians. The symbolism of a wall to separate different “types” of people struck the observer as offensive within the space of the Forum. Triumphanty, passersby late in the week could see the rubble of the wall that once was. The destruction of the wall seemed to restore equilibrium. No words were necessary to understand the offensiveness of the wall and no words were necessary to understand the symbolism of its destruction. Again, powerful, political messages were conveyed to participants without need of translation.

Music, so central to the life of the youth camp, was also a constant theme throughout the Forum grounds. Musicians from all over the world performed on six different stages throughout the Forum. At one of the large performances initiating the Forum, a singer performed Bob Marley songs in English and Portuguese. The music of this international icon seemed to unify the crowd. Similarly, during the closing ceremonies a Brazilian drum band from São Paulo was joined by another from Mozambique and still another from Bahia in Northern Brazil. The Mozambican group entered the central open air amphitheater to thunderous applause as the participants formed a human map of Africa, site of the next Forum.

Even graffiti in the city of Porto Alegre reflected themes of the Forum. New messages appeared daily on the walls of the city proclaiming solidarity with the
struggle of Iraqis, Palestinians and Afghans. One piece of graffiti even urged the residents to treat the visitors of the Forum well. Though translation was still necessary here, there was a clear dedication to breaking down, rather than erecting, barriers between populations.

Arguably the most powerful messages were conveyed by a Brazilian performance art group, who were the center of the closing ceremonies. Approximately 100 performance artists of all ages and hues conveyed without words, yet with clarity, the themes of the Forum. For about five hours, they enacted potent pieces on racism, the privatization of water, hunger, HIV/AIDS, violence against women, war, homophobia, sexual exploitation, love and tolerance. The group engaged the audience members directly, forcefully and intimately, shaming them for allowing rape and lovingly caressing them at other times. Observers even broke into tears.

In one, protesters threw rocks while fleeing until one of their number fell dead. In another, the audience was taken on journey in which little girls playing with dolls were increasingly degraded as sexualized objects over time until each performer ultimately portrayed emotionless sex-workers. In still another, groups of men harassed solitary women while a circle of observers looked on. The verbal assaults escalated into physical harassment and finally rape. As the escalation continued the onlookers one by one turned their backs on the scene. In others, the actors would riot over the shortage of water or lament the loss of grain or seed. No words were necessary. Importantly, and consistent with the theme of the Forum, the audience was not allowed to be passive. They were brought into the world of the performance artist. They were challenged to do something with every performance.
Beyond the particular workshops that one chose to attend, these were the spaces in which participants learned from one another, developed common understandings and laid the groundwork for expanding networks. It is in these spaces, I argue, Forum participants lay the groundwork for a counter-hegemonic vision.

Conclusion

The barriers to international collaboration are well documented. The linguistic, cultural, racial, national, ethnic, gendered and national divisions of the world are pervasive. However, the many participants of the World Social Forum have glimpsed the possibility of a different world. For one week, they share a common vision across each of these borders.

I have shown that levels of WSF participant activism may be explained, to some degree, by transformative personal experiences (emotion-laden catalytic experiences) and levels of parental political engagement. I have also shown that levels of transnationalism may be explained, to some degree, by early exposure to “the international” or the “world outside one’s door”. However, how does a “localist” move along the transnational continua to Transnational Activist (TNA)? How does a “missionary” move along the activist continua to become a Transnational Activist (TNA)? Elaborating this process will be the task of the remainder of this dissertation.

Certainly there are a myriad of pathways to TNA developement, but here, I have attempted to argue that the unique organizing structure and “space” of the World Social Forum minimizes potential for factionalism, sectarianism and division. In this unique space, “localist” activists, for example, are able to “try on” more transnational
identities through the exploration of how their issue concerns are reflected in different contexts. In this way, the WSF allows for the expansion of transnationalist identities. Similarly, in this space, more transnational “missionary” types, with compassion for their fellow “citizens-of-the-world”, are able to “try on” more activist identities or at least learn about the efficacy of activist challenges to injustice in diverse contexts. They are able to learn of patterns of injustice. These patterns are disturbing to transnationalists who might otherwise rationalize oppression as isolated events. In fact, the WSF itself may act as an emotion-laden catalytic event for many. In this way, the WSF allows for the expansion of activist identities.

I also argue that, in the space of the WSF, transnationalism and activism reinforce each other at the far end of the continua. Those who are very transnational, but moderately active are likely to be moved to greater activism. Those who are lifelong activists, but moderately transnational, are likely to be moved to greater collaborative, transnational action.

But how can social movement scholars explain this? I posit that a “transnational activist culture” is nurtured and reinforced in remarkable spaces like the WSF. Through non-verbal cultural symbolism, performance art, dance, music, spectacle and translation, a “Forum-culture” of sorts is created that effectively reinforces both transnationalism and activism.

If we return to our discussion of the central importance of collective identity to social movement solidarity and cohesion including global social justice movements (Chapter II), we begin to see how such a “Forum-culture” might be so central to nurturing the collective identities that are requisite for such movements. If we return to
our discussion of the central importance of emotion (not irrationality) to social
movement recruitment, solidarity, cohesion and sustained participation (Chapter II),
we begin to see why the emotion-laden cultural “binding practices” I discussed above
may become so central to transnational social movements. Unifying cultural practices
help to shape transnational identity formation across diverse cultures. Additionally, the
space created by the Forum for the lived experience of “Um outro mundo é possível”,
serves as a further unifying experience that serves to crystallize movement
identification and increase participation.

Lastly, as I have alluded to in Chapter II, transnational identity formation may
form the central basis of a larger counter hegemonic project.197 This counter
hegemonic project challenges not merely the structural effects of global capitalism, a
process studied by many theorists, but it also challenges the very notion of externally
imposed identity itself. Indeed, transnational identity may itself represent a form of
resistance and self-determination. As Foucault, Fanon and others have suggested, in
order to overcome the multiple constructions of “otherness” (race, gender, nationality,
etc.), transnational social movement activists must begin to explode singular notions
of identity.198

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197 I use the singular here not to connote or emphasize a unitary vision or “regime of truth”. On the
contrary, the WSF principles and most of the people and organizations represented within it could stand
no such suggestion. This “counter-hegemonic” project is certainly composed of many counter-
hegemonic projects. However, I use the singular to emphasize what I see as a common goal of the
various movements; shattering the growing hegemony of the neoliberal project. Once the dominant
regime of truth is shattered, a variety of goals, “truths” and “projects” would inevitably leap into the
void. However, that day has not yet arrived and so, in my view, this larger “counter-hegemonic” project
remains the goal… and singular.

198 Singular notions of identity, as I discuss in Chapter II are hegemonic and totalizing conceptions of
identity. They stand in stark contrast to conceptions of identity that are a) fluid and evolving or b)
multiple and selectively emphasized or de-emphasized depending upon context. My conception
overlaps well with that of Michel Foucault. His conception of totalizing identity is one in which
In the remainder of the dissertation, I turn my attention to a case study of the development of transnational activist identity in the field of transnational HIV/AIDS healthwork in Zambia. In Chapter IV, I outline the history and context of transnationalism and activism in the Zambian context. What are the structural barriers or benefits to transnationalism in the Zambian context? What are the structural barriers or benefits to activism in the Zambian context? In each of the remaining chapters, I will also explore what role and emotion-laden “networking” moments play in the presence or absence of Transnational Activist (TNA) identity as well as what role “cultural practices” (conceived here as “binding” practices that nurture a new collective identity and sense of community and belonging) play.

subjects are fixed or rooted by external forces as “criminal”, “insane” or “sexually deviant”. This again constrains a) ones ability to embrace multiple identities according to ones choosing of time and place and b) ones freedom to engage in a criminal act, to have a mental health episode or engage in sexually deviant behavior without being circumscribed by external forces with a totalizing identity. (See Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, New York, Pantheon Books [1965], Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, New York, Pantheon Books, 1977 and The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978 among other works).
Chapter IV: Transnationalism and Activism in Zambian History

In the previous chapters I have generated some theses regarding transnational social movement participation. In the remainder of the dissertation, I will test these general observations about transnational social movement activists in a specific context; that of international interactions between Zambian and foreigner HIV/AIDS workers. In the chapters that follow, I will detail ethnographic findings of more than two years living and working in the country of Zambia. Chapters V and VI will outline findings regarding biographical factors and the transformative moments and experiential circumstances that shape the relative transnationalism and/or activism of HIV/AIDS healthworkers in modern Zambia.

In this chapter, I argue that Zambia is a surprisingly strong location for studying the phenomenon of transnational activist identity. Zambian history is replete with a vibrant history of activism and a storied engagement with the world outside its doors. Similarly, Zambians reflect a profoundly transnational history and culture that bodes well for the transnational activist potential of this corner of the world.

A Multi-National State

I will argue that despite Western biases, Zambian history is a thoroughly transnational set of experiences. Zambia itself is actually a multi-national state replete with experiences of trans-“national” borrowing, negotiation and boundary work necessary to generate a cogent transnational collective identity. This identity, or constellation of identities, has proven difficult to dislodge over time. Accordingly, I
argue that, in the absence of robust mechanisms for the reproduction of boundary-making nationalist sentiment, trans-nationalism easily emerges. Furthermore, I argue that transnational identities, once established, are difficult to re-inscribe as localist and parochial. This will lay the groundwork for my assertion that countries like Zambia, though marginalized and excluded, nonetheless, have a high potential for transnational activism.

Similarly, Zambia has a rich history of activist rebellion, protest and resistance to injustice. Its proud history includes resistance to imperialism, colonialism, apartheid and democratic decline. Nonetheless, Zambian activism, at the time of my research\footnote{However, recent developments in Zambia may be shifting this perception. In 2011, Zambians ousted the incumbent MMD political party in a hotly contested election. Moreover, relatively independent and indigenous civil society organizations and activists have begun networking in a Zambian Social Forum. This Forum explicitly follows many of the principles of the World Social Forum described earlier.}, seemed to have declined. Accordingly, I argue that, unlike transnationalism, an activist culture does not emerge easily and is sustained only with much effort and difficulty. Rather, cultures of activism follow a path closer to that of nationalism. They must be constantly reproduced through robust mechanisms or they will decline. Accordingly, I assert that despite a high potential for transnational activism in places like Zambia, activism is anything but assured. Simply put, activism is highly variable and its emergence and persistence cannot be presumed.

Zambian respondents perceive that their long-standing culture of activism has evolved, transformed and eroded in recent years. Nonetheless, in Chapter VI, I will argue that the potential for transnational activism amongst Zambians remains high. Through an exploration of the historical record in this chapter, we will observe surprisingly high levels of transnationalism and activism (and transnational activism)
in Zambia. Though Zambians, as a rule, no longer appear to mobilize and protest so frequently or vociferously as in the past, I will argue in Chapter V that when seen in the proper light, Zambian activism is alive and well. Together, both chapters endeavor to underscore the powerfully emotional underpinnings of transnationalism and activism in the Zambian context.

Zambia itself represents a critique of a Westernized bias in scholarly analyses of transnationalism that tends to see transnationalism in “state-centric” forms. This emphasis on a state-to-state definition of transnationalism limits our understanding of the process. It privileges a political science approach to a phenomenon that is primarily sociological.

Nations are imagined communities that feel a common culture, history and kinship. States are all too often rough approximations of nations. Very often powerful states subordinate less powerful nations and impose a “national” identity upon others. Numerous nations around the world (the Basque in Spain, the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, etc.) are active, vigorous national communities that do not take the form of nation-state. This definitional bias blinds many Western scholars to the enormous historical and contemporary achievement of a thick trans-“national” tradition within nations like Zambia. When seen in its proper context, the creation of a “Zambia” out of seventy-three varied linguistic “nations” represents a surprising transnational success story.
The Potential for Transnational Activism in the Developing World

Scholarly assertions regarding transnationalism and/or activism in the developing world seem grounded in facts “on the ground”. Characterizations of transnationalism, usually called “cosmopolitanism”, generally argue that it is a privileged space occupied by those with access to cultural representations of the West and heavily stratified according to class. In short, theorists have noted that transnationalism (or, more often “cosmopolitanism”) is a privilege. An appreciation of other cultures, languages and worldviews is assumed to be likely only after one has overcome the obstacles of survival in the local context. Experiencing foreign cultures often entails travel funds, leisure time and/or a particular professional profile (transnational capitalist, regional manager of an international corporation, etc.) that is not freely available to many people in the developing world.

Additionally, transnational cosmopolitanism may require a “freedom of mind” to be concerned with occurrences and people in far-flung corners of the world. All too often people of the developing world (as well as the poor in the industrialized world) are too concerned with more proximate concerns (water, food, jobs, poor health) to be concerned with environmentalism, privatization, cultural degradation and/or genocide.

200 Ulf Hannerz’s distinction between “beento” and “bush” is one well known example. Amongst the Nigerians Hannerz studied, those Nigerians with access to the cosmopolitan capitals of the West and acquired a cultural sophistication there seem to be viewed differently than those who remaining (less well-connected) Nigerians who are stigmatized with the “bush” label. This schema, incidentally, does seem to match well a similar schema in Zambia where those who have been “exposed” to Western countries or ways of life see themselves as more sophisticated than other Zambians. However, Hannerz importantly notes that the “beento” are also often the subject of ridicule and derision in Nigerian popular culture. Hannerz, Ulf, “The Global Ecumene” in Lechner, Frank J. and Boli, John, The Globalization Reader, 2004, p.112-117. This suggests a complexity to these dichotomies that will be pursued below. Those that have been “exposed” or “beento” the West may overstate their cultural competencies, but it seems clear that these terms certainly hide a rich elaboration of indigenous translocal cultural competencies.
on the other side of the planet. Accordingly, this line of thought suggests that cosmopolitan transnationalism has remained the purview of relatively wealthy and privileged people generally living in the industrialized West.

Arguments about activism take a similar form. Bolstered by the arguments of the resource mobilization theorists\(^{201}\), many have come to see the relative absence of organized protest in sub-Saharan Africa as unremarkable. They argue that movements are best sustained by organization and training as well as material and human resources. These resources are found in the industrialized world in far greater sums and, consequently, it is unsurprising that social movement activity in the developing world is less than in resource rich Western nations.\(^{202}\)

Political process models emphasize a related point about resources. They would highlight political opportunity structures\(^{203}\) available in the West that are often closed to activists of the global South. Greater access to education is also a common hallmark of nations in the global North, giving activists there an advantage compared to their fellow activists in the Global South. Activists in the West would have more frequently acquired the organizing and networking skills necessary to sustain movement activity (regardless of material resources).\(^{204}\) They may be more often

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\(^{202}\) This explanation may hold for the persistence of activism in resource rich Nigeria and South Africa. However, an important critique of this perspective is the vibrancy of protest in numerous South American countries, India and Sri Lanka. These nations also have widespread poverty, yet they maintain particularly vibrant activist cultures. Clearly, the presence or absence of activism is a significantly more complicated calculation than “resources”. More will be said in the coming chapters.


\(^{204}\) This is also related to resource mobilization theory in the sense that activists in the West would be more likely to acquire organizing skills in formal employment (unions, public interest organizations,
experienced at research or more familiar with computers, the internet and other technological tools.

Piven and Cloward, in their classic *Poor People’s Movements*, agree with the general premise offered by the resource mobilization school that power differentials embedded in poverty are enormous obstacles to mobilizing poor people. However, their insight is that power, rather than resources *per se*, is the key analytical factor. Resources, of course, directly influence power differentials, but they do not offer a comprehensive understanding. I find this a more compelling perspective. Whether we employ the insights of Foucault regarding the linkage of power and knowledge or the insights of post-colonial and Neo-Gramscian scholars calling attention to the role cultural and psychological factors play in domination of the powerless, it is clear that resources alone do not give a comprehensive picture. More will be said about this in the following chapters.

Taken as a whole, these are powerful arguments against the presence of transnational activism in the developing world. From this perspective, we would predict 1) very little activism in the developing world and 2) very little opportunity to engage across borders of race, nation, culture, linguistic group, etc. However, as I argue in the present chapter, the historical record does not support such hypotheses in the case of Zambia. My purpose in challenging these conceptions is not to dismiss etc.) that those in the developing world. Resources, in the form of employment and training, then, could explain differences in activism in the global North and global South.

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205 Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1980

206 I would also argue that Zambia is not unique in this respect in Southern Africa. I would argue that most of the nations of southern Africa have histories that are thoroughly activist and, though less so, transnational. However, such an investigation is outside of the scope of the present project.
their explanatory power entirely. Rather, I wish to emphasize the ways in which they have been so overstated and taken for granted that important sociological phenomena have gone relatively unexplored.

Transnational “Encounter”

One central pitfall of the “cultural imperialist” perspective on transnationalism is an under-estimation of human agency. It will not be denied that centuries of imperial domination and colonialism have had a debilitating effect on colonial peoples throughout the world. Generations of war, murder, and trickery were combined with the material theft of resources, labor and human captives over generations. These undoubtedly were destructive forces that have persistent and profound consequences to the present day.

Nonetheless, in emphasizing the economic, political and cultural subjugation of colonial peoples, investigation of the spaces in which colonial peoples have carved out an important space for human agency, have been neglected. Though resistance has always taken place within a web of differential power relations, human agency has been present and persistent. The space may have been small and constrained. Nonetheless, this is precisely why this particular space is so important sociologically. Human agency in the absence of profound institutional or structural restraint is relatively unremarkable. Scholars who emphasize the pre-eminence of structural explanations are quick to highlight the sweeping power of structures of domination.

Indeed, I argue in the following chapters that conceptions of power and powerlessness are decisive in generating, synthesizing and sustaining social movement activity in a variety of fora.
What is of enormous import is the ways in which actors are able to carve out a space for human agency despite enormous institutional and structural barriers. In particular reference to the developing world, Clifton Crais, Ulf Hannerz and Arjun Appadurai have made similar explorations. Each of them emphasize that despite overwhelming structural forces and clear differentials in power, the peoples in the developing world are able to carve out spaces for human agency. In exploring these spaces of agency, we will see why the skeptics over-simplify the absence of transnationalism and activism.

Clifton Crais’ approach is to resituate our understanding of colonialism as a cross cultural “encounter”. Cross cultural “encounters” emerge within fields or matrices of power relations in which European power clearly predominated. Nonetheless, Africans played historical roles as active subjects in creating the “post-encounter” world that would emerge.

A brief example may help clarify the central point. Few would disagree that playing one ethnic group against another was a crucial strategy and tactic of

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208 Erving Goffman’s analysis of asylums (Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates, 1961) is perhaps the most outstanding example of precisely this analysis. Goffman showed convincingly that the institutional and structural walls of asylums, armies, monasteries or prisons are insufficient to crush human agency.

209 This insight mirrors those of scholars of European missionary influence who have highlighted the agency of Africans in resisting imperialistic religions. Specifically, they point to the persistence of hybridized African religious forms in erstwhile European, “colonial” churches. Striking examples of this phenomenon are to be found in the Caribbean where diverse African slaves cobbled together hybridized religions combining officially sanctioned Christianity with African deities. Obeah and Voodun are two well-known examples. Supposedly “passive” or colonized Africans actively, intentionally and strategically subverted the intentions of foreign missionaries. They did this by incorporating, where the power structure allowed, traditional gods as “saints”, traditional ceremonies as “festivals” etc. The relevant point for our purposes is, again, that despite divergent power relations, the incorporation of Christianity was negotiated and contested through transnational encounter and not merely implanted upon passive subjects. Human agency is present even in the midst of powerfully homogenizing forces.
imperialism in Africa\textsuperscript{210}, yet some African leaders successfully did the same to the Europeans. They played the Portuguese against the British against the French against the Belgians in endless combinations. Some made great efforts to stockpile European weaponry, negotiate treaties or otherwise forestall the impending doom of European advance. The important point here is, though we should emphasize the overarching nature of transnational relations (whether of domination, partnership or other), we cannot discount African agency in this process. Though certainly domination was the central theme of these transnational encounters, there was also cultural, political and cosmological learning and borrowing on both sides, however stunted.

In the \textit{Politics of Evil}, Crais argues that the cultural worldview of Africans (at least in the Western Cape of what would become South Africa) led them to interpret state actions within a language of magic, witchcraft and evil. Interpreting a series of policies which decreased the quality of life, land and livelihood as magic and evil, “the colonized represented the modern state as evil, its officials as purveyors of magic that destroyed”.\textsuperscript{211} Africans came to see the purveyors of such acts as the cultural equivalent of witches. Crais notes that, culturally, witchcraft “requires” an intimate knowledge of the bewitched, just as European colonialism “required” regimes of surveillance and standardization of Africans. Resistance to the machinations of state actors therefore took on the form of resistance to evil.

\textsuperscript{210} In the case of British colonies, “Divide and Rule” was official policy as colonial administrators generally chose to train, hire and educate men from a specific entho-linguistic group for colonial administration.

Crais takes the unique approach of analyzing colonial rule in terms of a cross-cultural exchange. He argues that it was a clash of competing worldviews which directed the course of colonial action rather than a singular extension of uncontested European might. Accordingly, he attributes the persistence of violence and opposition to state rule in South Africa to the hegemonic imposition of foreign cultural practices. These practices had the paradoxical effect, because of their cultural incongruity, of producing the very resistance their purveyors sought to stamp out. African agency in cultural frames persisted despite generations of political subjugation.

Accordingly, Crais draws our attention to two central themes. First, scholars must address the specific dynamics of cross-cultural exchange as they are quite likely to continue to have contemporary consequences. Second, latent forms of human agency in the form of cultural resistance can persist in the midst of vigorously homogenizing forces. These latent cultural repertoires of resistance might even be called upon in later times.

In the contemporary period, Ulf Hannerz offers a similar analysis. Despite the homogenizing forces of global media and cultural production based in the global North, Hannerz argues that the consumption, or reception, of these cultural products by Africans is neither uniform nor necessarily homogenizing. Rather, Hannerz argues that a “global ecumene” offers a space where narrowly territorialized “cultures” give way to numerous, complex and differentiated, hybridized “sub-cultures”.

Hannerz objects to the notion that there has ever been a “pure” culture. In a sense, culture has never been stagnant and has always been the result of a hybridization process. Hannerz objects to “cultural imperialism” theorists who adhere
to the curious logic “that according to the economics of culture, to receive may be to lose”.\textsuperscript{212} He acknowledges the role historical configurations may play in constructing constrained spheres of action, but asserts that this does not squash African autonomy in the cultural field.

Cultural diffusion and reception are not one-way flows. Hannerz notes that Nigerians combine European and African musical forms to make new, rich and diverse hybridized forms. Furthermore, though Nigerians do indeed consume standard narratives of Westernized upper middle-class values, they do not do so passively. Indeed, the Western, upper middle-class (“beento”) Nigerian is often the object of ridicule or tragedy in Nigerian popular culture.\textsuperscript{213} Therefore, Western or bourgeois values and sensibilities are not necessarily laudable in any particular cultural context.

Accordingly, Hannerz, like Crais, highlights the space for agency, transnational borrowing and creative identity construction despite differential power relations. Indeed the people of the developing world are not just “talked at”, sometimes, they “talk back”. Rather than a unitary Western cultural homogenization of the world, Hannerz sees the expansion of intermixed, fluid, creolized cultural products that are never stagnant.

Arjun Appadurai’s power analysis echoes the thoughts of Crais and Hannerz in its central features. Appadurai’s argument is much more complex and comprehensive, but the overriding message is the same. Technological, financial and media structures operate to limit and constrain autonomy, but never completely, and not according to

\textsuperscript{212} Hannerz, Ulf, “The Global Ecumene” in Lechner, Frank J. and Boli, John, \textit{The Globalization Reader}, 2004, p. 117

simplistic nation-state arrangements. Rather, actors navigate complex “–scapes” that are constantly shifting.\textsuperscript{214}

In summation, these authors each direct our attention to the ways in which cross-cultural “encounter” offers an opportunity for transnationalism in ways not expected by theorists who emphasize a totalizing cultural imperialism or cultural homogenization. In the next section, I highlight a few select examples of a thoroughgoing transnationalism in the Zambian context.

\textbf{Transnationalism in Zambia}

Despite the theoretical explorations and common conceptions discussed above, I find that Zambia has a long and rich history of transnationalism. In fact, this history of transnationalism in varied contexts is so pervasive that I argue that a) it has become a widely internalized cultural conception, even a Zambian “identity” and b) Zambia is amongst the most thoroughly transnational countries on earth.

As noted above, Zambia itself is a multi-national state. No matter how anthropologists might group the 73 linguistic communities that live within the borders of the nation-state, none would argue that Zambia (nor Northern Rhodesia before independence) comprised a singular ethno-linguistic “nation”. The dynamics of Zambia’s transnationalism are even more sweeping than most Western scholars imagine. Western connotations attached to the terms “tribe” and “tribalism” in Africa

imply that these nations are political entities of minor importance. Such conceptions also minimize the cultural consistency of many of these units. At the very least, the term implies that African “tribes” lack a degree of distinction and difference that is found amongst European “nations”. Such a perspective distorts analysis. “Tribalistic” behavior of Europeans is rewritten as understandable wars of fiercely proud “nations” while conflict amongst erstwhile African nations is re-written as “irrational” and even “primitive” squabbles amongst “tribes” (i.e. not “real” nations).

The analysis here attempts, rather, to emphasize the “nationhood” of African peoples. The “encounters” of independent peoples in Central Africa are thus properly framed as cross-national struggles and negotiations amongst autonomous and varied African nations. These encounters were not merely “movements”, migrations and conquests. They were diplomatic, political and cultural challenges. The stakes were complex, potentially violent, and in some cases, genocidal. This resituated frame will help us to see the unfolding of Zambian history not as a mishmash of “tribal” migrations and conquests, but as a richly transnational, cross-cultural, hybridized and multicultural state.

A few additional introductory points will be emphasized here. First, many of the movements, conquests and ethno-linguistic incorporations that characterize the Zambian landscape are relatively recent. Many of these nations were aware of, or had been allies (or enemies) of Europeans and Arabs before meeting their African (would-be Zambian) cousins for the first time. This simple fact highlights the complexity and seminal achievement of creating a multi-cultural state out of varied African nations.
Second, these relatively recent interactions were by no means dominated by violence and resentment. Rather, these interactions fostered an explosion of transnationalism in which intermarriage, as well as linguistic and cultural sharing, were prevalent features. Through a number of historical and cultural mechanisms discussed below, Zambia has largely been able to sidestep the modern repercussions of past “divide and rule” colonial policies.

Lastly, the interactions that are detailed below highlight the themes articulated by Crais, Hannerz and Appadurai above. African nations through creative, often strategic, transnational work and effort incorporated or hybridized a wide range of languages, cultures, identities and peoples into something new. These historical practices seem to have a hold on Zambian identity up to the present day. More will be said of this in the next chapter.

A “Nation of Refugees”

Zambian textbooks nurture a not altogether mythological picture of Zambia as a “nation of refugees”. Informants will detail, with some factual basis, that nearly all the peoples of Zambia originated elsewhere on the continent. Whether fleeing Shaka Zulu in the south or West African empires in the north, the elevated plateau that is a prominent feature of much of Zambia is perceived as a historical refuge for weary nations of refugees. As with many myths, there is a kernel of truth here.

The comparatively warlike Ngoni did not reach areas in Zambia until at least after 1840. Their original homeland was in what is now Zululand in South Africa. Having fled from Shaka Zulu around 1820, they joined the peoples of Zambia as
prototypical refugees in search of a homeland.\textsuperscript{215} By 1740 the Lunda of the Luapula Valley who had migrated from the north had already dropped their tribal language and adopted that of the vanquished (Shila) ethnic group of the region.\textsuperscript{216} There seems to have been a significant level of “transnational” or “transcultural” incorporation in the creation of the Luapula Lunda.

Another offshoot of would-be Zambian peoples was the Luba who incredibly, may have migrated all the way from West Africa. From Luba peoples who settled in the Eastern Congo, the Luyi, forerunners of the Lozi who still populate much of the Western Province of Zambia, migrated to Zambia.\textsuperscript{217} The Lozi people, have a particularly transnational/ transcultural history to tell.

The Luyi settled into the Upper Zambezi Valley. By 1800, Luyi influence extended to perhaps 25 ethno-linguistic “tribes” in the region.\textsuperscript{218} However, by 1833, the Kololo, a diverse group of Sotho people (within modern South Africa and Lesotho), invaded the Luyi Kingdom and by 1838 had effectively conquered the region. The conquered nations of the Kololo leader, Sebitwane, were treated well. So well, in fact, that the Lozi (the moniker given them by the Kololo) rapidly adopted much of the Sotho culture and language. After Sebitwane’s death animosity arose and, in 1865, the Kololo men were slaughtered to a man. However, the women and children remained were incorporated into the Lozi nation and helped to cement a close

\textsuperscript{215} Roberts, Andrew, \textit{A History of Zambia}, 1976, p.118
\textsuperscript{216} Wills, A.J., \textit{An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe}, 1985, p. 55
\textsuperscript{218} Wills, A.J., \textit{An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe}, 1985, p. 57
relationship with their Sotho cousins now more than 1000 miles away. \(^{219}\) Accordingly, the Luyi/Lozi represent a rich tapestry of African transnational history, culture and ethnic intermixing that stretched from West Africa to the very Southern tip of South Africa.

*The Prazo system and the Chikundu*

Another peculiar legacy of transnational encounter in the Central African region is that of the quasi-Portuguese *Prazo* system. To the extent that the Portuguese attempted to colonize central Africa, the main mechanism was the institution of the *Prazo* in the Zambezi Valley. Intended in part to preserve Portuguese white supremacy, in practice, the *prazos* became the domain of male tyrants who were variably mixed-race Indian, Arab, Portuguese and African populations.

They enslaved the populations of the Zambezi Valley into indigenous military forces who were re-created as a new “ethnic” group. Through the fusion of African identities and acculturation in the *prazo* system, these military slaves embraced a new ethnic identity as Chikunda (“conquerors” or “vanquishers”). They became skilled, feared and respected elephant hunters and slavers in the region. However, with the disintegration of the *prazo* system in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Chikunda were newly free and powerful. Many fled into the interior under mestizo rulers dominating local populations in and around the areas of the Lower Zambezi and

\(^{219}\) Wills, A.J., *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe*, 1985, p. 62-63. There is a powerful irony to be found in the fact that the adoption of the Sotho language by the Lozi probably facilitated the extension of European hegemony into the kingdom and Zambia as a whole. Missionary François Colliard (see below) was easily accepted amongst the Lozi (in part) because of his fluency in Sotho and became an influential advisor who probably helped secure the Lochner concession (see below and Roberts, Andrew, *A History of Zambia*, 1976, p. 160)
extending their influence into the Luangwa Valley and north of the Kafue River (into central and eastern Zambia). One Portuguese speaking Chikunda José do Rosario Andrade, better known as Kanyemba, was said to command a force of 10,000. His son in law, José d’Aranjo Lobo, better known as Matakenya was said to raid slaves throughout modern Zambia with a force of 12,000 armed slaves armed with firearms by the 1890’s. “Only in the far west was there an African ruler with forces on anything like this scale.”

The Chikunda are interesting for our purposes in multiple ways. First, their very identity is a powerful, transnational/ transcultural construction. Numerous independent peoples were fused into a singular Chikunda identity. Moreover, this fusion of African identities was a direct result of the activities of other transnational/ transcultural actors; the mixed-race prazo senhors. In the end, however, Chikunda power waned.

The Isaacman study of Chikunda people explores “how captives, from diverse ethnic and cultural groups who had been forcibly torn from their home societies, created and reproduced new social and cultural institutions.” On the other hand, Matthews makes the argument that the Chikunda, at least in southern Zambia, were by and large reincorporated into the communities they once dominated. In any case it is

221 Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 125-126
clear that the Chikunda were (and are) a people dominated from beginning to end by a web of transnational/transcultural interactions and negotiations.

The British are Coming: Missionaries and the British South African Company

By and large, the missionary impulse in Central Africa was abandoned by the Portuguese who originally explored there. However, the British, beginning with the larger than life David Livingstone, did become a missionary force in the region. Though Livingstone was an excellent diplomat, geographer and explorer, his missionary activities were frustrated continually.

In the 1870s, after his death, two Scottish missions began work in Nyasaland (present-day Malawi). In Zambia, missionary François Colliard made his way to the Lozi Kingdom where he became permanently established in 1884. Catholic Père F. Dupont established himself among the Bemba and, in 1893 Methodist missionaries successfully established themselves along a tributary of the Kafue River. 224 South of Lake Tanganyika, missionaries settled among stateless people and established a sort of “mission theocracy”, disciplining and administering the village life of local refugees. 225 The White Fathers, a Roman Catholic order, extended their influence into northern Zambia in the 1890s attempting to minister first to the Mambwe, then

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225 Gann, Lewis H., Central Africa: The Former British States, 1971, p. 78. Roberts (A History of Zambia, 1976 p. 154) remarks that they were regarded more as chiefs than men of religion.
extending into Bemba and Lunda lands. The Dutch Reformed Church even
conducted missionary work among the Cewa in 1898.

Roberts notes that many of the early missions in Zambia settled among
common targets of the slave trade who were probably searching for physical sanctuary
more than spiritual sanctuary. Gann also makes the observation that the growing
presence of more or less permanent mission stations was less a result of a growing
acceptance of Christianity than a desire for learning and cross-cultural exchange. The
Lozi princes, for instance, were interested in philosophical discussions and learning
more about medicine. The “high born” among the Lozi sought to learn technical skills
like canal building in addition to reading, writing and speaking English. This effort
to acquire transnational or “translocal” cultural competencies is a constant feature of
the Zambian historical experience.

Partition, Colonization and Autonomy

The construction and partition of Zambia exposed numerous African nations to
the realities of colonial power. The European colonial boundaries did not serve
African interests. As such, they were not designed to bind different linguistic groups,
but rather were exploited to divide and rule communities.

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228 Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 154. This point is echoed by Collins and Burns (A History of Sub-Saharan Africa, 2007, p. 322) who note that many early missionary schools administered to the marginalized; slaves, women, orphans and undesirables who were outcasts of larger social groupings.
The borders of what would become Zambia went through many permutations. At one time, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe were administered as a unit. At another time, even present day Zambia was divided between North-east Rhodesia and North-west Rhodesia. The Angola/Barotseland border that came to be Zambia’s western edge was finally negotiated by arbitration in 1905.\footnote{Wills, A.J., *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe*, 1985., p. 210} The Lozi nation which should have been managed as a single unit according to the Lochner concession\footnote{The Lochner concession was a controversial treaty agreed to by the Lozi King Lewanika in 1890 that granted the British South African Company wide-ranging mineral exploration rights in exchange for significant protection and autonomy.}, ultimately had significant portions administered variably by Rhodesian, British, German, Portuguese, Angolan, Zimbabwean, Zambian and South African administrations. The Lunda, like the Lozi, still find their peoples divided as a result of European fiat amongst the nations of Angola, Congo and Zambia. Various would-be nations became doubly, triply or quadruply colonized.

The point here is that these erstwhile national entities were forced to try to sustain “national” cultures and communities across (European created) state boundaries. The Lunda were obliged to sustain Lunda culture by negotiating the varied landscape of Belgian, British and Portuguese colonial machinations. They learned different colonial languages, different colonial histories and were subjected to various forms of colonialism.\footnote{I neither want to overstate nor understate the effectiveness of these efforts. They vary according to a wide variety of factors including desirability of land to the European powers involved, skill of local leaders and political economic factors drawing people away from traditional lands to other locales. It is clear both that African nations were adversely affected by partition and division leading some to barely recognize their linguistic cousin across said border. However, it is also very clear that some of these} Zambians of varied nations further perfected their transnational cultural competencies in these challenging circumstances.
Other aspects of Zambian colonialism offered more space for the emergence of transnationalism than might be expected. Specifically, the adoption of the policy of indirect rule in 1924 (coinciding with the decision to make Northern Rhodesia a crown colony) meant that in many parts of rural Zambia a great deal of autonomy over local affairs was permitted. Linguistically and culturally, the peoples of Zambia constituted a constellation of nations that had significant levels of autonomy until direct European expansion into their territories. In the earliest colonial times, these nations still maintained a great deal of cultural homogeneity.\(^{233}\)

After a timeframe of brutal “pacification”, Northern Rhodesia, like other imperial ventures, was expected to be self-sufficient. British (or French or Belgian) taxpayers had little interest in subsidizing administration in Africa. This had at least three concrete consequences. First, colonial regimes attempted to extract a variety of taxes from the local populations. Second, administration of the territory was conducted by a skeleton staff\(^{234}\) that left large areas of the territory relatively untouched. Third, in the words of Collins and Burns,

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\item nations have maintained active linkages with their linguistic cousins. The extended conflict involving Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania may have as much to do with Hutu rights and ethnic-political stability in varied political contexts as it does with the resource riches of the region. The connection between sustaining collective identity across borders and transnational struggles over resources seems to be an extremely fruitful field for future research.
\item Though I am arguing that Zambia has a high degree of transnationalism, it is perhaps interesting to note that in the less populated rural regions of Zambia, traditional power structures (chiefs and headmen/ headwomen) are respected above state government officials. Moreover, these areas remain surprisingly homogeneous despite high level of transnationalism elsewhere in the country. However, I also do not wish to over-state this point. For example, “homogeneous” groups like the Lozi are actually themselves a cultural and “racial” amalgam of other peoples in the region as well as transnational forces like the Kololo (Sotho peoples from South Africa).
\item Wills (An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe, 1985, p. 210) estimates that there were no more than a hundred whites in Northern Rhodesia in 1898.
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the thin khaki line of colonial administrators that arrived in Africa was expected to extract as much desperately needed revenue as possible with very little concern for the most egregious and visible human abuse.\textsuperscript{235}

In Northern Rhodesia, copper mining was the means for securing revenue.

\textit{Zambia: the Making of a Multi-national State}

Early mining adventures in Southern Rhodesia (and Katanga in Congo)\textsuperscript{236} fueled a demand for African labor that could not be met locally. Prior to the period of indirect rule, the British South African Company (BSAC) undertook taxation efforts with a dual purpose in mind. First, they needed to generate revenue to pay for the costs of administration. Second, they wanted to induce Northern Rhodesians to migrate to BSAC mines in Southern Rhodesia. This was largely successful. Authorities doubled hut taxes within Northern Rhodesia to induce migrant laborers and provided “rest houses” with supplies of food for economic refugees seeking work in Rhodesian mines. Official estimates from the winter of 1903-04 suggest 7,000 Africans crossed the Zambezi looking for work.\textsuperscript{237}

Even when Zambians were induced to labor in the mines or on commercial white farms, they still retained the ability to choose their employers and moved “too much” for European interests. This eventually led Europeans to refine the “long term

\textsuperscript{235} Collins, Robert O. and Burns, James M., \textit{A History of Sub-Saharan Africa}, 2007, p. 299
\textsuperscript{236} This was despite high death rates in both areas. In Katanga from 1913-1917, the annual death rate varied from 1 in every 14 workers to 1 in every 7 workers. Southern Rhodesia was not much better as the annual death rate was never less than 1 in 50 workers and in 1912-13 it was 1 in 20 workers. Roberts, Andrew, \textit{A History of Zambia}, 1976, p. 178
\textsuperscript{237} Wills, A.J., \textit{An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe}, 1985, p. 214
contract” binding workers to a particular area for a fixed period of time. This was the first step in the attempt to institute a cyclical migrant labor system as was found in South Africa under apartheid.

However, colonial attempts to create a South African style migrant labor system failed because the effort at sustaining a migrant labor system was only half-hearted. The philosophical design of such a system was to prevent a permanent African presence in “white” town areas. Pass laws were enacted, ostensibly to prevent the desertion of contracts or to limit the presence of unemployed Africans in the town areas. Yet “the Government had neither the men nor the money to enforce its own regulations”. Similarly, though mines did not provide married quarters and marriages between Africans were not contracted in town, the evidence suggests that more than a quarter of the Africans in the earliest labor camps not only were married, but came to the labor camps with their dependents.

Northern Rhodesian mining authorities were so concerned with the labor shortage that they allowed miners to bring their families and even encouraged the construction of a permanent black town (for so-called “detribalized Africans”) adjacent to the mine at Mkubwa as early as 1926. Mining authorities in Northern Rhodesia recognized from the earliest days, that they needed to make concessions to local African laborers to keep them from migrating to mines at Katanga (in present-
day Congo) in the north or Southern Rhodesia and South Africa to the south.

Compound managers themselves claim it would have been “practically impossible” to obtain labor without allowing wives and families.241

As we have seen, for years prior to the construction of the first mines in Zambia (beginning in 1922, but exploding in 1930), thousands of would-be Zambians also worked in mines outside the territory.242 Thus, when massive layoffs took hold of the Zambian mines in 1931-1932, many thousands of miners did not simply “go home” to rural villages, but rather stayed in the mining towns.243 They had already acquired a new sense of self; “transnational”, “transcultural”, “cosmopolitan” competencies and identities (colonial authorities referred to these as “detribalized” Africans). Consequently, from the 1940s onward they settled, more or less permanently, in towns regardless of official policy.

Government authorities initially fought mining authorities and resisted the notion of “detribalized” Africans settling in towns partially out of a fear of rebellion. However, by 1948 government joined the mines by taking the first steps towards accommodating some family space for mineworkers.244 This probably represented the last philosophical straw in justifying a South African style “reserves” system.245 It also

241 Ferguson, James, Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1999, p. 49-50
242 Ferguson, James, Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1999, p.51. By 1936, 50,000 men from Northern Rhodesia were at work in Southern Rhodesia. Several thousands were working in South Africa as well. Thus, by that year, Roberts estimates that “more than half the able-bodied male population of Northern Rhodesia was working away from home.” Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 191
243 Ferguson, James, Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1999, p.51
244 Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 189
245 This is not an inconsequential philosophical concession. With it follows the destruction of a number of European fallacies. If families are settling permanently in towns, there is no “homeland” to which
opened a space for the emergence of the richly transnational space that came to be known as “The Copperbelt”.

As James Ferguson has thoroughly documented, the mining towns of the Copperbelt region were a transformative experience for Zambians and Zambia alike. Though I have argued that Zambia has in some respects always been a transnational region, the Copperbelt was the space in which a multi-national Zambian identity was forged. Here, workers from far flung regions and diverse cultures came to live and work together. They made a life of building bridges with fellow trans-national workers. They might share living quarters with men from areas they had never seen, or have wives or girlfriends from non-traditional ethnic groups. They intermarried. They learned languages and cultural practices that might be unknown in their parents’ homeland.

Here, in many respects, lay the invention of Zambia. Over time, these miners’ self-conception, their collective identity, expanded beyond that of a narrow (national) conception to a “we” that embraced fellow miners or Copperbelt residents. Miners gradually thought of themselves less as migrants in a strange place far from home, but often as residents of the Copperbelt towns of Luanshya, Kitwe or Ndola. These self-conceptions were dramatically reinforced in the crucible of collective action as

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African workers can be expected to return. Consequently, there is a philosophical shift in which colonial authorities become theoretically responsible for African education, health and welfare in towns. This was an entanglement colonial authorities long sought to avoid. Indeed, the country’s first junior secondary school for African boys, Munali, near Lusaka, did not open until 1939. 1940 was the first year in which the Government spent as much on African education as on European. Yet, in that year, the government still spent thirty times as much per white child on education as compared per African child. This fact was still true ten years later. Roberts, Andrew, *A History of Zambia*, 1976, p.194
mineworkers and welfare associations evolved into political forces for an independent Zambia (see below).

What is perhaps most fascinating, however, is that while they adopted new transcultural, cosmopolitan identities, they maintained active linkages with their “home” villages. Miners would often make return trips to “home” villages or send money and most imagined returning to these villages upon retirement. The significant point for our purposes is that these mineworkers did not replace one cultural competency with another. Rather they maintained (at least) two collective identities. On the one hand, they were cosmopolitan mineworkers who had friends, acquaintances and sometimes wives from different linguistic/cultural groups. One the other hand, they imagined themselves as Bemba, Bisa or Lala peoples who would one day retire to a traditional “home” village in a place, amongst a people, many had not seen in a generation.

Outside of the Copperbelt, however, Zambian nations maintained a high degree of autonomy. As brutal as the colonial period was, it must be said that African areas like Zambia (removed from the coastline, protected by unnavigable rapids or the malaria parasite) endured, for all intents and purposes, two generations of British rule only. Compared to the long relationships with the coastal peoples of Africa or the European presence in India, the transnational encounter between Zambians and Europeans was brief and developed relatively late. Indeed, it may be argued that Zambians have never endured an interminable centuries-long domination from any

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246 It is perhaps interesting to note that the “home” village remains a powerful symbol for most “cosmopolitan”, transcultural Zambians today. Most Zambians when asked where they come from will name the village or province that their father came from whether or not they have ever been.
one power whether African or European. As such, the history of Zambia is one of constant, fluid, transnational encounters filled with particularly rich experiences of trans-cultural translation and negotiation. Roberts’s excellent summation of early Zambian history echoes this theme.

[W]e must bear in mind the political and cultural diversity of Zambia in the late nineteenth century… Ideas and skills, as well as goods, circulated widely… The lines of division between Zambian peoples were less marked than ever before; their political and cultural identities were increasingly merged in wider groupings. Yet there was no single focus for such imitation and assimilation; instead there were a number of different spheres of influence, which were linked to the outside world by routes which led in all directions. The Lozi kingdom was a meeting point for influences coming both from Angola and the Atlantic, and from South Africa and Britain. The Chikunda empires drew central Africa into the orbit of the Portuguese in Mozambique while the Bemba, through their association with the Arab and Swahili traders, linked the north-east to East Africa.247

Put another way, the history of Central Africa, even before Zambia formally came into existence, was a rich tapestry of transnational encounter. This served the new multi-national state of Zambia well.

The movement for Independence, as I have inferred above, was a double task. On the one hand, African leaders were attempting to establish majority rule and their independence from British control. On the other hand, they were attempting to fuse a diverse, multi-national region into a single state.

Just as in much of the rest of Africa and India, the experience of colonized peoples serving in World War I and especially World War II was a launching point for

247 Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 146-147
the explosion of anti-colonial (and in the case of the United States, “civil rights”) sentiment and activism in Zambia. The Atlantic Charter signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in August of 1941 heightened the sentiment as it proclaimed that World War II was being fought to liberate subject peoples.\textsuperscript{248} Zambians served in WWII in the Northern Rhodesia Regiment as far as Ethiopia and Burma.\textsuperscript{249} Through various means, Africans also came to learn that African-Americans received equal pay with white soldiers, unlike themselves.\textsuperscript{250} Soldiers fighting against the racism and imperialism of Hitler were ill inclined to tolerate colonialism and racism at home. After WWII, African organizations began to emerge calling for rights and ultimately, independence.

The United National Independence Party (UNIP)\textsuperscript{251} eventually emerged as the leading movement for Independence in Northern Rhodesia. Its leaders, Kenneth Kaunda and Simon Kapwepwe, were both drew upon significant transnational cultural competencies. Simon Kapwepwe had studied at Bombay University in India for five years on a scholarship and returned to Zambia with ideas of racial equality and passive resistance techniques.\textsuperscript{252} Kenneth Kaunda’s parents came from what would ultimately come to be known as Malawi. He acquired trans-national cultural competencies in the Copperbelt and ultimately led this assortment of Central African nations to independence as the state of Zambia in 1964. Kaunda was also one of Africa’s most

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{248}] Collins, Robert O. and Burns, James M., \textit{A History of Sub-Saharan Africa}, 2007, p.337
\item[\textsuperscript{249}] Gann, Lewis H., \textit{Central Africa: The Former British States}, 1971, p. 135
\item[\textsuperscript{250}] Collins, Robert O. and Burns, James M., \textit{A History of Sub-Saharan Africa}, 2007, p.338
\item[\textsuperscript{251}] UNIP was initially the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC). It would not become known as UNIP until 1960 when Kenneth Kaunda became its president. Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 31
\item[\textsuperscript{252}] Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 30
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passionate transnationalists. At various times, he was President of the Pan African Freedom Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa, Chairman of the Nonaligned Movement, Chairman of the Frontline States as well as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.  

As President of Zambia, Kaunda took a different path than his friend, President Julius K. Nyerere, in neighboring Tanzania. Departing from the successful model of Nyerere, Kaunda built a nation not through a unifying language (Swahili in the case of Tanzania), but through embracing the diversity of Zambia’s seventy-three ethno-linguistic groups. Kaunda balanced his cabinet appointments amongst different ethnic groups, diversified workforces and established integrated boarding schools to stave off potential conflict.

Kaunda rallied diverse Zambians around the motto, “One Zambia, One Nation” and the development of his philosophy of “Humanism”. Kaunda identified Humanism as a sort of “African democratic socialism” which nonetheless condoned private property and sought to avoid class conflict. Kaunda believed conflict could be prevented if everyone worked for a “Man-centered society”. Roberts goes so far as to assert that Zambian unity was held together in the specific person of Kenneth Kaunda.

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253 Burdette, Marcia M., Zambia: Between Two Worlds, 1988, p. 31, 109
254 http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/one-zambia-one-nation
255 Roberts, Andrew, A History of Zambia, 1976, p. 246
Zambia’s cornerstone is not Humanism, but its author, Kenneth Kaunda. He alone among Zambian politicians is seen as a truly national figure… Kaunda is Zambian, yet belongs to no Zambian ‘tribe’: he was born and raised in Bemba country, but his parents came from Nyasaland [Malawi]. This fact has given Kaunda a unique authority. It is reinforced by his obvious dedication, his passionate hatred of racialism and his [endurance].

While Roberts praise is perhaps hyperbolic, the historical infrequency of ethno-linguistic conflict in Zambia speaks volumes as to Kaunda’s success on this specific point. In a sense, Humanism was a more or less overt attempt at creating national unity and a national “culture”.

Joking for Peace

One final remarkable feature of Zambian transnationalism is the phenomenon of joking “cousin” relationships. Most Zambian ethno-linguistic groups have a “joking cousin” group. Custom and convention have established that joking cousins are allowed to insult or mock their cousin without any social repercussions. At least one of these cousin relationships, according to my observations and informant speculations, seems to have been established amongst groups with actual historical conflict. This phenomenon, which is found elsewhere in Africa, “culturally” allows for verbal

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257 I am referring here to the joking relationship between Bemba and Ngoni peoples (Nyanja, Chewa, etc.). The Bemba are given credit for repelling historical Ngoni invasions from South Africa. A relative peace eventually emerged and they have now established themselves as joking cousins.
abuses but within a framework of overall unity amongst groups. Tensions may be released, but animosity does not result or is severely muted.

**Zambian Activism**

Zambia has a no less illustrious history of activism. Early imperialists found (would be) Zambians willing to fight for their sovereignty and independence. The Ngoni peoples under King Mpezeni resisted Maxim guns and Martini rifles of British forces during the “Matabele Rebellion” of 1896. Again, in 1898, the Ngoni amassed a force of 5,000 to repel British invasion, but succumbed largely due to a lack of firearms amongst them. A third of the tribal cattle were summarily confiscated. Roberts surmises that the Ngoni might have defeated the British in 1898 had they mounted night attacks. The Lunda under King Kazembe resisted as well, but were ultimately overwhelmed by the tools of industrialized slaughter as well. The Gwembe Tonga in 1909, the southern Lunda in 1912 and the Luvale in 1923 resisted draconian tax regimes and forced labor techniques. They resisted despite staggering numbers of arrests, flogging, being tied together in “chain gangs” and having huts and villages burned to the ground.

Perhaps, the most remarkable story of resistance in Central Africa is that of John Chilembwe and his 1915 uprising. Chilembwe himself was a transnational figure

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as the son of a Yao mother and a Chewa father who followed radical Baptist
missionary to America. After returning to Central Africa, outrage at colonial abuse
(beatings, conscription of Africans, and denial of wages) and famine spurred
Chilembwe to organize 200 supporters in a deadly revolt of sweeping importance. His
revolt was noteworthy for its large scale organization (he and his hundreds of his
followers had attempted to contact neighboring communities in a coordinated raid)
and ironically, its discipline (for example, Chilembwe successfully convinced his
followers not to kill women or children). In addition, Chilembwe’s revolt was not
organized along local, ethnic or dynastic lines. It was organized across ethnic lines,
along larger lines of religion and a larger “nation” of Nyasaland or Africa. It was also
undertaken with the explicit aim of establishing an African state.

However, an exhaustive history of the legacy of activism in Zambia is beyond
the scope of this investigation. Here, I will trace three of the most recent and
significant periods of Zambian activism; the emergence of an African labor movement
in the crucial mining sector, the grassroots and militant “cha-cha-cha” movement that
pushed British forces towards Zambian independence and Zambia’s central role as a
dedicated, transnational supporter of liberation movements throughout Africa. These
three movement periods not only highlight a historical “culture of activism” in
Zambia, they also highlight, I argue, a thorough, transnational culture of activism.

263 Gann, Lewis H., Central Africa: The Former British States, 1971, p. 117
264 See Shepperson, George and Price, Thomas, Independent African: John Chilembwe and the origins, setting, and significance of the Nyasaland native rising of 1915, 1958 and Linden, Jane and Ian, “John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem”, The Journal of African History, Vol. 12, No. 4 (1971), pp. 629-651. Chilembwe’s uprising is also noteworthy in connection with the previous section of this chapter. He worked for a particularly egalitarian Scottsman who brought him to America where he was exposed to the works of John Brown and other abolitionists.
265 Collins, Robert O. and Burns, James M., A History of Sub-Saharan Africa, 2007, p. 331
Accordingly, I conclude that nothing in the history of Zambia should serve as a barrier to the emergence of transnational activism. However, we will see in the following chapters that although Zambian transnationalism has remained a constant, explaining the inconsistency of Zambian activism in the present is a more complex task.

“One Zambia, One Nation”

The copper mines of Zambia are, and have been the economic lifeblood of Zambia since their discovery by Europeans and the development of quinine.\(^{266}\) As I have detailed above, Zambian mineworkers successfully gained an advantage as a result of their strategic location between the mines of Katanga in the north and those of Southern Rhodesia to the south. Mining officials effectively abandoned as impractical the notion of a widespread migrant labor system.\(^{267}\)

In turn, this led to the construction of permanent black mining towns in contrast to the all-male mining barrack arrangements throughout much of Africa. Schools, clinics and family housing arrangements followed as the colonial powers tacitly conceded that this was the “home” of their African workforce. Also noted above was the fantastic space this offered for trans-national, trans-cultural learning and the development of diverse cultural competencies for cross-national cooperation.

\(^{266}\) European exploration of the interior of Africa was very precarious largely as a result of the threat posed by malaria. Scottish doctor W.B. Baikie was responsible for the discovery that quinine, an extract taken from the bark of a tree native to Brazil, was an effective prophylactic against malaria. It was in wide use by the 1860s and 1870s amongst missionaries, merchants and soldiers. Collins, Robert O. and Burns, James M., *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2007, p. 269-270

\(^{267}\) It should be clear that though colonial mining authorities and government effectively abandoned the notion of a migrant labor system in practice, they did nonetheless continue to justify it philosophically. James Ferguson, for instance, details the hardship of retired mineworkers who (forced by pension arrangements and housing regulations) were expected to move “back” to “home” villages many had not seen in a generation or more.
It was also a perfect space for detailing and sharing workplace grievances. In short, it was a great space for labor organizing.

In 1935, African miners first rioted and struck in Copperbelt towns. Five years later, more serious disturbances and a larger strike shook the Copperbelt again, establishing a political voice for organized African laborers in Zambia. Macpherson tells us that it was generally understood that the causes of the riots were connected to sudden increases in the “native tax”, overcrowding and ill-treatment by Europeans.268 From this point onward, the labor movement, became slowly connected to other movements for an end to discrimination and calls for greater respect. Ultimately, these movements would merge in a call for Zambian independence.

The Copperbelt was also the crucible for the emergence of a variety of civil service organizations dedicated to African well-being. Over time, these coalesced into larger and larger alliances that gradually began to assert some political power on behalf of Zambians. The clearest insult to African dignity and an early target of these early movements was racial discrimination. Africans were barred from walking on sidewalks269 and physically entering the stores they patronized. Rather, they were served through side “hatches”. The indignity was palpable.

[W]hereas the educational colour bar, like the racial barrier in industry, simply kept doors closed, the daily scramble of Africans at the hatches of the country’s shops, while white people used the main doors and shopped at leisure and in comfort, provided a visible scandal and had provoked bitter resentment.270

269 Macpherson notes (*Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man*, 1974, p. 16-17) that 43 people were arrested in one month alone for walking on the pavements of Livingstone in 1930.
Particularly galling were butcher shops which often served Africans, pre-wrapped, often spoiled meat through the “hatches”.\(^{271}\) Butcher shops were the target of very successful boycotts in Copperbelt cities in 1953 and then extended into Lusaka by 1954.\(^{272}\) Later, nascent nationalist organizations employed boycotts against Asian and European traders for similarly discriminatory practices.\(^{273}\) These boycotts were followed closely by “rolling strikes” on the Copperbelt as mining labor organization gradually began to echo civil society protest organizations.\(^{274}\) Mining strikes through July and August of 1956 ultimately provoked a declaration of a State of Emergency throughout Copperbelt in September of that year.\(^{275}\)

The movement spread as conflicts emerging in different parts of the would-be nation provoked responses in other quarters. For example, when colonial authorities forced Gwembe Tonga villagers in the south into a resettlement scheme in 1958, villagers attacked the security forces. In the ensuing conflict, riots emerged and nine villagers were shot. What were remarkable were the immediate reactions this provoked in distant Lusaka and Copperbelt. A train was derailed, arson attempts were frequent and boycotts emerged in response to the abuse of would-be Zambians a world away.\(^{276}\) A nascent trans-national state was beginning to emerge.

By 1961, Zambians escalated their pressure from rights and respect to militant calls for independence in the so-called “Cha-cha-cha” uprisings from July to October

of 1961. Macpherson asserts that the phrase “Cha-chacha” was simply the name of a popular community dance. However, as Kaunda began to use it, it came to signify the need for colonial whites to “face the music”; a popular “dance” toward independence.\(^{277}\) In many ways, Kaunda’s slogan began to spiral out of his control as people, particularly in the Northern part of the country, began to act despite concern and reticence from UNIP leadership.

One prong of the Cha-chacha movement entailed demonstrations in which thousands of Zambians burned their identity cards, marriage certificates and any other ifitupa (literally “things”) issued by the colonial government as a symbol of their “radical rejection of foreign rule”.\(^{278}\) In one instance, the ashes of burnt ifitupa were then hand-delivered to colonial officials by the children of the community.\(^{279}\) Objecting to the slow pace of decolonization, “schools were burnt, dip tanks were destroyed and roads were blocked”\(^{280}\). In parts of the country protesters damaged roads and bridges, burned local courts and “anything with the Government stamp”\(^{281}\). Mulford reports that by September, 38 schools had been burned, 60 roads had been blocked and 24 bridges had been destroyed or seriously damaged.\(^{282}\)

Despite the violence, the evidence suggests that Cha-chacha was nonetheless, a very organized and disciplined affair. Despite retaliatory mass imprisonment,


\(^{278}\) Macpherson (*Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man*, 1974, p. 358) cites one report of the burning of 64,000 documents in all.


\(^{281}\) Macpherson, Fergus, *Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man*, 1974, p. 353, 354. In many respects, Kaunda ended up following a movement that was being urgently pushed by common Zambians themselves. For example, Kaunda burned his identity card five days after mass rallies of Zambians were already doing so.

beatings, the use of indiscriminant lethal force, destruction of granaries and burning of entire villages, Cha-cha-cha protestors continued to exercise restraint.\textsuperscript{283} Perhaps in deference to Kaunda’s cries for non-violence, the protestors resisted attacking Europeans except in clashes with security forces.\textsuperscript{284} In one case, demonstrators burned a government school only after “all the Bibles were removed and stacked safely away from the fire.”\textsuperscript{285} All in all, some 3,000 Zambians were arrested during the uprisings which “stopped almost as suddenly as they had begun” after the British Government agreed to consider revising the proposed Constitution.\textsuperscript{286}

This history of disciplined militant, transnational collective action illustrates the enormous potential of transnational activism in Zambia.

\textit{Pan-African Leadership}

Consistent with the pre-independence picture I have sketched above of a thorough Zambian transnationalism, it is perhaps no longer surprising that Zambia was also a \textit{transnational} force for African liberation. However, this was anything but a natural course of action. In this section, I argue that Zambia’s commitment to transnational African liberation was the result of an idealistic and principled national commitment that was \textit{not} in their self interest.

Certainly lip service can be given to the economic benefits of African unity and the ways in which Zambia’s enormous financial, ideological and political support

\textsuperscript{283} Macpherson, Fergus, \textit{Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man}, 1974, p. 356, 359, 360, 362
\textsuperscript{284} cited in Macpherson, Fergus, \textit{Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man}, 1974, p. 358
\textsuperscript{285} Macpherson, Fergus, \textit{Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man}, 1974, p. 354
of liberation struggles in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe were in their “self-interest”. However, even if early Zambian leaders did believe this was possible in some distant future, it was certainly not in their benefit in the short term. Furthermore, Zambian leaders knew too well the enormous stakes involved. Zambia had witnessed upheaval, international intrigue and murder in neighboring Congo. Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba had stood up to the mining interests of Western capital and ultimately was murdered for it. Zambia also saw the threat posed by the secession of Katanga province in Congo and the perils of a civil war along their Northern border.

When white Rhodesians unilaterally declared their independence of England in order to preserve a racist apartheid state, Zambia’s economic stability was threatened quite directly. The two countries not only share a long border, they also share control of the Kariba Dam and the electric power it generates. Shortly after independence, Zambia’s president became aware of Rhodesian designs to deny Zambia electric power from Kariba and enforce an economic blockade of Zambia which received two-thirds of its imports from southern Africa. 287 Ninety percent of the fuels and lubricants on which Zambian industry depended came via Rhodesian railway. 288

By aiding rebellion in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, Zambia chose, in the clearest voice imaginable, to support African liberation above and beyond their economic stability. Furthermore, where continuing economic entanglements with Rhodesia continued, Zambia prioritized ending these

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288 Burdette, Marcia M. *Zambia: Between Two Worlds*, 1988, p. 135
entanglements. For example, a new colliery was set up at great expense and production shifted to decrease reliance on Rhodesian coke for copper production. Oil pipelines, oil refineries and a railroad to the Tanzanian coast were all constructed at significant expense to reduce the odious dependence on the apartheid regime in Rhodesia.  

Zambia had seen Southern Rhodesian mercenaries rushing to help topple Lumumba in Congo. Five years after Zambia’s independence, Eduardo Mondlane, the outspoken president of Mozambique’s colonial resistance, was murdered. The Pretoria regime of South Africa invaded Swaziland and South-West Africa (soon to be Namibia), aided rebels in Mozambique and bombed Botswana. Nonetheless, Zambia’s commitment to Africa liberation seems to have continued unabated. President Kaunda allowed Joshua Nkomo’s ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union) rebels to set up bases in Zambia to train for guerilla warfare campaigns against Southern Rhodesia. After the African National Congress was banned in South Africa, Zambia hosted their party in exile. Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, and SWAPO (South West African People’s Organization) rebels trained in Zambia as well.  

Retaliation was consistent. In January 1973, Rhodesia closed its border to Zambia overnight. Despite the loss of jobs and rising prices, Zambian leadership maintained the closure from the Zambian side even after Rhodesia relented.

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Zambians themselves suffered not only the economic effects of poor relations, but violence as well. One of the Zimbabwe African National Union’s (ZANU) leaders was murdered in a car bomb on the streets of Lusaka.\textsuperscript{294} South African planes bombed a main bridge in the Northern Province of Zambia. Land and air incursions took place on Zambia’s western and eastern borders. In 1969 and 1970, Portugal bombed the border between Zambia and Mozambique as well.\textsuperscript{295} Rhodesian forces bombed far into Zambia, including Lusaka and continuously raided from the south.\textsuperscript{296} Nonetheless, Zambian leadership and the Zambian people sustained support for the complete liberation of southern Africa\textsuperscript{297} for 20 years until the release of Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Accordingly, Zambia is not only a marvel of transnationalism with a stalwart culture of activism, it is a nation filled with examples of transnational activism which precede any “global social justice movement” by decades.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The examples we have detailed here show that over-simplified understandings of activism and/or transnationalism in the developing world are not merely problematic theoretically, but empirically as well. Western simplifications of “nation” and “nationalism” minimize the depth of transnationalism occurring in much of the

\textsuperscript{294} Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 141
\textsuperscript{295} Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 137
\textsuperscript{296} Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 142
\textsuperscript{297} It should be noted that Zambia’s support for liberation and independence was not limited to southern Africa. Kaunda was a fierce critic of Idi Amin’s ascension in Uganda (He refused to attend O.A.U. meetings when Amin was chairman.). Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 150. Zambia was also critical of US interventions in Grenada, Vietnam and USSR interventions into Angola and Czechoslovakia. Burdette, Marcia M., \textit{Zambia: Between Two Worlds}, 1988, p. 155
developing world. This resituated frame helps us to see Africa and the West as struggling to navigate some similar challenges. European conflict can be understood as not very far from “African tribalism” or, conversely, and more respectfully, so-called African “tribalism” can be understood as national struggles for independence, prosperity, autonomy and peaceful coexistence with one’s neighbors.

In the present case, I have argued that Zambia as a cultural and political construct as well as a geopolitical reality is a surprisingly successful transnational space. Zambians have created a multi-national state out of a dizzying constellation of nations. Furthermore, Zambians have employed their trans-national and trans-cultural competencies internationally as well as domestically. Despite the very real threat of disastrous economic or military repercussions, Zambia aided an unprecedented number of liberation struggles in neighboring and far flung nations. In this regard, the first president’s philosophy of “Humanism” was certainly extended not only to the citizens of Zambia, but to peoples throughout the world.

Similarly, Zambia has a rich activist history. Ordinary Zambians and their leaders consistently have organized, protested and fought against perceived oppression and injustice. Whether in struggles against colonial occupation, civil rights abuses and indignities or international subjugation, Zambians have a history of vigorously redressing societal wrongs.

Accordingly, there is no compelling case historically, against the emergence of transnational activist identity among the Zambian people. Historically, activism has been high and transnationalism has been exceptionally high. In terms of the schema I have outlined earlier, this investigation gives us every reason to suggest that the
potential in Zambia for the emergence of the narrowly nationalistic “professional” ideal type is low. Potential for the emergence of missionary or localist identities is more likely. From an historical point of view, transnational activist identities (TNAs) are a real possibility. Chapter VI, however, will look at shifts that seem to have altered this landscape in recent years.

298 We have, for instance, seen mining movements or independence movements that could be construed as narrowly “localist” struggles. Similarly, joking cousin relationships and the emergence of transnational mining towns might be seen as encouraging transnationalism without offering any promise of activism (tendency towards the evolution of “missionary” identities).
In the previous chapter, I argued that there was no compelling case historically against the emergence of transnational activist identity amongst Zambian peoples. Historically, activism has been high and transnationalism has been exceptionally high. In terms of the schema I have outlined in earlier, this investigation gives us every reason to posit that the potential in Zambia for the emergence of the narrowly nationalistic, “professional” ideal type is low. Potential for the emergence of missionary or localist identities is more likely. Transnational activism is potentially high as well.

In this chapter, I detail the findings of more than three years of ethnographic research amongst HIV/AIDS healthworkers in Zambia. These findings suggest that Zambians continue to exercise their transnational cultural competencies. They maintain identities that are powerfully and thoroughly transnational. Despite a great many reasons for animosity between Zambians and foreigners (issues related to aid, debt, dependency, airs of superiority, etc.), Zambians often resist stereotyping foreigners (as representatives of their country’s policies, for example). On the other hand, Chapter VI will explore possible explanations for a relative absence of activism amongst HIV/AIDS healthworkers in Zambia.

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299 We have, for instance, seen mining movements or independence movements that could be construed as narrowly “localist” struggles. Similarly, joking cousin relationships and the emergence of transnational mining towns might be seen as encouraging transnationalism without offering any promise of activism (tendency towards the evolution of “missionary” identities).
Why HIV/AIDS Healthworkers? A Methodological Justification

The previous chapter detailed why Zambia is a particularly interesting case for studying transnational activist identity formation. “Tribalism”, so ballyhooed (and misunderstood) in much of Africa is rare to non-existent in Zambia. Unlike its neighbors in the Congo or Angola, there has been little civil strife to speak of along ethnic lines for generations and few Africanists would object to the notion that Zambia is an incredibly peaceful country in relative and absolute terms.

In studying international interactions within Zambia, which are the most fruitful arenas of study? One obvious space is that of the Zambian mining sector. The Zambian mining sector, as I have argued above, is a powerfully transnational space and has been the site of a great deal of historical activism. Nonetheless, at the time of my research, the mining unions were fairly united behind the ruling party, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). In the interest of soliciting a more diverse, and less institutionalized, range of opinions, I declined to choose this site.\footnote{Nonetheless, the mining sector remains a fruitful area of inquiry for future research on transnational activist identity formation for a number of reasons. First, the MMD coalition based around the miners unions seems to have collapsed as evidenced by their defeat at the polls in the election of 2011. Second, excellent, detailed, preliminary research has been compiled on this mining sector by numerous scholars (most notably Michael Burawoy \textit{[The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization, 1972]} and James Ferguson, \textit{[Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1999]}) that could serve as a basis for this research. Specifically, IMF-led neoliberal programs have led to policies “encouraging investment” by allowing foreigners to purchase and operate Zambian mines. This provides a renewed space for the study of international interaction in Zambia. In particular, European, American and Chinese interests have entered into substantive international business ventures in Zambia that may offer a unique space for studying transnationalism in Zambia.}

Furthermore, it has also been argued above that an understanding of processes of emerging transnationalism and/ or emerging activism are powerfully emotional. Accordingly, my research focuses on the emotion-laden space of highly charged
international healthwork. A nuanced understanding of extremely personal dimensions of culture is central to good HIV/AIDS healthwork. Negotiation of topics such as sex and sexuality, sexwork and fidelity, marriage and family, require a level of social understanding that is extremely complex. These interactions, by their nature (dealing with death, suffering, poverty, shattered relationships, orphans, etc.) are a particularly excellent site for the study of transnational activist identity formation.

One particularly striking example of HIV/AIDS activism has been a series of campaigns by the South Africa-based Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). Their campaigns are varied and comprehensive. Here, I discuss three activist minded campaigns that highlight the potential for transformative change through HIV/AIDS activism. First, TAC has been a leader in combating the social stigma around HIV/AIDS. In a region in which denying and hiding one’s HIV status can be of crucial importance to retaining one’s job, family or even one’s life. TAC members with the disease proudly declare their status on neon-colored shirts; “HIV POSITIVE”. The slogan has power on two levels. In one sense, TAC activists strike at the shame and fear which often accompany a positive HIV test result. Moralizing about the disease (for example, “sin”-based explanations, fidelity, abstinence, etc.), common inside and outside of Africa, is unknown within the TAC. As activists at the WSF in Nairobi declared, in the absence of a cure “the goal is to make HIV/AIDS a chronic disease, like hypertension, asthma and diabetes.” These diseases are not diseases to be ashamed of. Rather, they are public health concerns that first require their victims to

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know their status. On another level, the neon-shirted TAC activists declare that they are not dead, they have not given up living and that they still have a “positive” view on life despite this disease.

In the African context, this is a particularly striking development. News accounts have detailed murders\textsuperscript{302} and persecution of people diagnosed with HIV. Other accounts have detailed suicide, suicidal attempts and destructive behavior as well. Each underscores both the courage of those who defiantly proclaim their status aloud as well as the social need for support networks of people living \textit{positively}. Debatably, no organization has articulated this vision as forcefully or successfully as TAC.

TAC is also famous for its spirited international campaign of condemnation of “AIDS denialism”. When President Thabo Mbeki publicly questioned whether HIV was the cause of AIDS\textsuperscript{303} in 2000, TAC sprung into action. Rallying support throughout the region and the world, Mbeki was condemned in national and international fora and the press. It was the TAC that was most clearly responsible for this condemnation.\textsuperscript{304} Shortly thereafter, the South African President invited a number of “AIDS denialists” to his President’s AIDS Advisory Panel.\textsuperscript{305} Furthermore, Mbeki

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refused to dismiss his minister of health who prescribed a diet of garlic, lemons, African potatoes and beetroot to cure AIDS.\textsuperscript{306} Mbeki also placed a ban on distributing anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) in state hospitals to prevent mother to child prevention of HIV/AIDS. Eventually, the TAC sued in South African courts to make a new drug (nevirapine) available to pregnant women.\textsuperscript{307} Eventually, their multi-faceted campaign, including lawsuits, civil disobedience, direct action\textsuperscript{308} and media mobilization, succeeded in pressuring the South African government to implement a publicly available ARV treatment plan.

Perhaps the most visceral protest of this movement is their campaign against the international patent regime of the WTO. Calling worldwide attention to the callousness of steadfastly upholding the right to corporate profit in the face of a global pandemic, TAC activists deliberately sought to defy the international patent regime. Securing cheap generic ARVs from Thailand and Brazil, TAC activists defied South African law and international agreement to provide treatment and call attention to the irrationality of such a patent system.\textsuperscript{309}

The TAC are not only a dynamic and innovative HIV/AIDS social movement, they are a particularly transnational social movement. When the TAC called for a Global Day of Action in 2006, solidarity protests were held in the USA, Canada,

\textsuperscript{306} Blandy, Fran, “‘Dr. Beetroot’ hits back at media over Aids exhibition”, \textit{Mail & Online Guardian}, August 16, 2006
\textsuperscript{308} In addition to the examples noted, TAC activists have, for example, been arrested for occupying government buildings, have taken over the South African government’s controversial exhibition booth (pushing the efficacy of vegetable for curing HIV) at the 2006 International AIDS Conference in Toronto.
\textsuperscript{309} Thom, Anso, “TAC, Cosatu, bring in cheap Aids drugs”, \textit{Independent Online}, January 19, 2002
China and Brazil.\footnote{HIV/AIDS Advocates Protest South Africa’s HIV/AIDS Treatment Campaign, Call for Resignation of the Health Minister’, *Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report*, 28 August, 2006} For their excellent work, they were nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 and called “the world’s most effective AIDS group” by the New York Times.\footnote{TAC website, http://www.tac.org.za/community/about, accessed January 15, 2012} Not surprisingly, TAC activists have been a visible and vocal presence at the gatherings of the World Social Forum.

In addition, HIV/AIDS activism has been an explicit theme of the World Social Forum gatherings, especially in Africa. Activists and educators have highlighted politically charged themes connected to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Foremost amongst these is the correlation between HIV/AIDS and poverty. Poverty exacerbates HIV/AIDS in a variety of ways. For instance, economically subjugated women are likely to find their way to commercial sex-work. Lack of access to nutritional foods or adequate food reduces the effectiveness of ARVs. Prolonged absences from families as, usually male, Africans comb the region in search of employment also exacerbates the disease.

National poverty inhibits every aspect of effort to deliver preventative healthcare and treatment to HIV positive people. Enormous national resources, for instance, have been re-directed towards foreign debt payments in the midst of an exploding HIV/AIDS crisis. HIV/AIDS has an economic boomerang effect as well. Workers become less efficient as they become sick or dedicate extra hours to caring for loved ones. Similarly, the healthy who might otherwise invest their energy or resources to national development increasingly redirect their resources to caring for
loved ones who are ill or HIV/AIDS orphaned children. In the workplace, institutional memory and knowledge is lost as workers die relatively suddenly and young.

HIV/AIDS activists at the World Social Forum underline that the spread of this disease is largely determined by relations of power and powerlessness internationally. Western-dominated institutions, like the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, have famously chosen to protect international patent regimes over providing cheap, life prolonging medicines. They have chosen to privilege the continual wealth transfer from the developing world to the developed world (in the form of an increasingly destructive debt cycle) over national healthcare delivery. Uganda, for instance spends twelve times as much on debt servicing as health care.312

They also highlight that national health and development plans have to contend with the macro-economics of a massive “brain drain”. Generations of Africans are trained, at great national expense, to provide national healthcare. Yet, due to macro-economic power differentials313, Africans inevitably find a better price for their labor in the industrialized West. This produces and reproduces at least two damaging cycles. First, developing countries are continually enriched by a wealth of cheap, skilled laborers trained abroad, while Africans are increasingly left with a dearth of nurses, doctors at teachers at home. Secondly, African countries become increasingly

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312 Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*, 2006, p. 153
313 Strategically discriminatory immigration policies are important as well.
dependent on foreign NGOs to provide domestic healthcare, education and the like. Each cycle is reproduced and deepened with each generation.

These activists have also objected to a moralizing paternalism represented by George W. Bush’s PEPFAR (President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) program (see below). This program provided enormous funds for HIV/AIDS treatment, but in a surprising display of paternalism directed prevention resources to programs that called upon Africans to “abstain” and “be faithful”. In addition, PEPFAR severely restricted the ability of HIV/AIDS programs to deliver condoms and provided enormous resources to church-based approaches to HIV/AIDS. Among other consequences, this has directly undermined the capability of African nations to determine the best course of action in saving African lives.

HIV/AIDS activists at the World Social Forum have called on foreign governments to forgive (or on African governments to refuse to pay) the “unpayable and unjust” foreign debt in order to enable African governments to dedicate resources to addressing the enormous health crisis. They have called upon governments, organizations and individuals to defy international patent regimes that

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315 One activist at the 2007 gathering of the WSF in Nairobi, Kenya remarked, “You Americans, go home and tell your people to abstain and ‘be faithful’, then you can come back and tell us what to do”.

316 Activists argue that these debts are “unpayable” through a series of relatively straightforward mathematical calculations. They argue that they are “unjust” alongside scholars like Walter Rodney and Immanuel Wallerstein who have demonstrated an historical net transfer of the wealth from colonized countries to the colonial power. In addition, they echo scholars of neocolonialism like Nkrumah, Ferguson and Escobar that show the ways in which “aid” continues a net wealth transfer from the “developing” world to the developed. Accordingly, activists argue that this debt has been paid many times over and, in fact, the Western world in many respects still owes a debt to the “developing” countries of the world.
limit the distribution of low cost generic HIV/AIDS medication. They have called for a radical restructuring of (or an end to) the WTO and the IMF which have nurtured policies that have impoverished Africa.

As we can see, HIV/AIDS related activism has been a fruitful area of social movement activity amongst African activists in recent years. In this space, Africans have combined with peoples in other nations to generate a transnational HIV/AIDS advocacy network 317 that has a great deal of potential social, economic and political impact for Africa. When combined with the historical background outlined in Chapter IV, it should be clear that Zambia is a potentially rich research site for the study of the process of transnational activist (TNA) identity formation.

HIV/AIDS Healthworkers: Qualitative Data

The bulk of the research gathered here is from fifty-five in-depth, semi-structured interviews with HIV/AIDS NGO workers gathered over the course of two six-month stays in Zambia. 318 The interviews ranged from one hour to more than three hours in length. However, this research is also, and inevitably, informed by more than two years of service as a rural community healthworker in Zambia and countless informal discussions, experiences and debates with Zambian and foreign national colleagues, friends and family.

Roughly half of the respondents interviewed could be classified as Zambians and half as foreign nationals. As we shall see, this determination is not a simple one. In

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317 Particularly active in my experience have been activists from Uganda, South Africa and Brazil.
318 From February 2007 – June 2007 and again from January 2008 to July 2008
a study of thoroughly transnational, multiple and situational identities, “identity” itself often defies strict categorization. Theoretically, this is also a central theme of this dissertation; one’s sense of self and understanding of “we” is increasingly shifting beyond bounded parameters.

As in Chapter IV, my discussion focuses primarily upon the Zambian context and disproportionately engages Zambian history and Zambian culture as a practical necessity. This is justifiable methodologically as Zambia remains the context of the work and working relationships of the people I am studying. For that reason, I have focused on “Zambian” transnational activist (TNA) identity formation. Nonetheless, as it will be clear from this dissertation, such a national division is fairly arbitrary as the countries themselves are social constructions. Consequently, foreign national TNA identity formation is also important to understanding how TNA identity formation emerges, generally.

Using a snowball-sampling technique, I was able to identity respondents working in a very diverse collection of twenty nine HIV/AIDS organizations from informal charities to enormous multi-national HIV/AIDS responses. Their roles within their respective organizations varied widely as well from a stage actor/director of HIV/AIDS themed plays to medical doctors to country directors of national programs. All in all, I collected interviews from nationals of twelve different countries. Forty

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319 However, I concede at the outset that the cultural particulars of the various foreign nationals are crucially important to fully understanding movement along my continua of transnationalism and activism. There is simply not enough space to trace the varied national histories of transnationalism and activism of each of the respondents in my study.

320 The dynamics may differ. In fact, I argue below that they do. However, any in-depth study of the dynamics of TNA identity formation amongst foreign nationals would benefit from appropriate historical surveys similar to that developed in chapter IV for Zambia.
seven percent of the respondents are women and the higher percentage of these was foreign nationals.

Contextualizing HIV/AIDS work in Zambia: PEPFAR, NAC, independence and autonomy

Before I continue, the reader deserves a brief discussion of the context of HIV/AIDS work in Zambia. In many ways, Zambia is quite representative of the destructive impact of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. Life expectancy has plummeted below forty years old. Healthcare delivery is severely hampered not only by lack of funds, but also a “brain drain” of trained healthcare professions, poor infrastructure, etc. The plight of HIV/AIDS orphans and homeless street children is as enormous in Zambia as anywhere in Africa.

There is no cure for AIDS. This simple fact leads the development industry in Africa in two general directions. The first direction is that of prevention. Here, are listed all manner of programs directed at limiting the spread of new infections. This may include the prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs (PMCTP), workplace education campaigns, women’s empowerment programs and a wide variety of behavioral change strategies. Many of these are incredibly challenging socio-cultural interventions. Broadly speaking, “behavior change” encompasses efforts

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These projects are more controversial than they may seem at first glance. One of the many goals of these programs is to empower women enough to negotiate condom usage inside and outside of marriage. These programs are popular to fund as they are seen in the West as necessary and desirable for equal rights of women in Africa as well. Nonetheless, most Zambians agree such programs will fail without similar programs dedicated to educating men on gender. From a sociological perspective this seems obvious. Attempts to alter gender relations in a short window of time as a means to address a very urgent public health concern are challenging at best.
to alter the nature of historical and cultural sexual practices (amongst people who culturally do not speak of such things), gender and family relations. Though this statement might be refuted by many of my respondents; it is in reality a very direct attempt to compel cultural change in Zambia.

The second broad category of HIV/AIDS interventions are “treatment” campaigns. Prior to 2002\textsuperscript{322}, these were a series of largely local campaigns to cope with the societal stress of the disease. Zambia was particularly innovative in initiating a movement of “home-based care”.\textsuperscript{323} Challenged by limited medical professionals and bed space in hospitals and clinics, Zambian healthworkers trained and empowered local people to care for their sick loved ones at home. Other treatment campaigns, in lieu of a cure or expensive antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, focused on limiting opportunistic infections\textsuperscript{324} and improving diet.

Partly as a result of the extension of neoliberal patent regimes outlined above, antiretroviral therapy (ART), increasingly available in the West, was beyond the means of the overwhelming majority of infected Africans. Cheap generic versions of ARVs were outlawed by various economic treaties and laws. As one AIDS activist put

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\footnotetext{322}{This date is a bit arbitrary, but it does mark an important escalation in the battle against HIV/AIDS in Africa. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was established in that year (Brown D. 2002 “Global Fund Rebuffs U.S. in Picking Leader: Agency Aims to Help Poor Fight Diseases”, \textit{The Washington Post}, April 25, 2002) as was the first national African program (Botswana) to distribute free ARV drugs to its citizens (“BOTSWANA: Free antiretroviral campaign might not last”, \textit{Irin News}, January 2002). This is the earliest date we can reasonably assert an international response and resource mobilization to the plight of HIV/AIDS in Africa.}
\footnotetext{324}{Though it is, at some level a semantic debate, strictly speaking, people do not die of AIDS. AIDS attacks one’s immune system, making their bodies more vulnerable to attack from a series of opportunistic infections like tuberculosis, pneumonia, etc. Hence, these efforts were directed at limiting one’s exposure to potentially fatal diseases.}
\end{footnotes}
it, “The majority of the sick people are where the drugs are not and the drugs are where the majority of sick people are not.” It was not until 2000 that some pharmaceutical companies, pressured by the international community, agreed to negotiate on ARV pricing. These initial overtures, however, were merely “discounts” on drug prices and were provided as loans that would further indebt the nations of Africa. It was not until three years later that pharmaceutical companies in India and South Africa were pressured to significantly lower costs on ARVs. This infuriating state of affairs meant that in the intervening years millions of people in Africa watched their loved ones die knowing there was a treatment available that they could not receive because they were poor. After 2004, this sad state of affairs began to change.

In that year, the United States Congress funded an enormous HIV/AIDS program (an estimated $15 billion dollars committed over a five year period) known as the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This enormous influx of funding increased the number of Africans on ART (Anti-Retroviral Therapy) from 50,000 at the start of the initiative in 2004 to an estimated 1.2 million by 2008.

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325 Personal correspondence, January 2007 at the Nairobi World Social Forum
327 Sharma D. C., “ARV Prices Nosedive After Clinton Brokering”, The Lancet 362:1467, November 1, 2003
328 This shameful period (from about 1996 when ARVs became widely available in the West until at least 2002) in the history of global health responses is sadly not the only one. Generations of international health agencies and pharmaceutical companies have ignored or marginalized, until very recently, the enormous loss of life associated with malaria, for instance. Similarly, polio, which has had a cheap, simple and widely available vaccine for more than 40 years, has yet to be eradicated in Africa. These each point to the very real issue that geopolitical, economic and, perhaps even racial, considerations are all too prominent in decisions about public health. These issues are consistently highlighted by HIV/AIDS activists such as the TAC (see above).
prolonging life for many in ways that had never been imagined.\textsuperscript{329} One study has estimated that the program has saved more than a million lives and reduced the death rate in the countries involved by ten percent.\textsuperscript{330} This aspect of PEPFAR has been lauded as an unmitigated good by every respondent interviewed. Nonetheless, PEPFAR also plagued Zambia and Africa with a host of other problems.

PEPFAR was controversial in a number of ways. First, a provision of PEPFAR called upon all funded organizations to sign an “anti-prostitution” pledge.\textsuperscript{331} In what seemed like a favor to pharmaceutical companies and neoliberal patent regimes, the program also initially only funded branded ARVs, eschewing cheaper generic ARVs. Furthermore, U.S. President George W. Bush appointed a former executive of a major pharmaceutical company as the first Global AIDS Coordinator in charge of PEPFAR.\textsuperscript{332} In a scandalous coincidence, the very same coordinator resigned in disgrace after he was implicated in soliciting prostitution charges.\textsuperscript{333} However, the most offensive aspect of PEPFAR’s original funding guidelines were requirements that fully one third of all money spent on prevention programs under PEPFAR should be dedicated to abstinence until marriage programming.\textsuperscript{334} The weight of the funding had the effect or radically re-orienting many HIV/AIDS NGOS,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item [329] Gerstenzang, James, “In Tanzania, Bush urges Congress to renew AIDS relief program as it is Dems argue for less focus on abstinence maybe more funding”, \textit{Los Angeles Times}, February 18, 2008
\item [332] Lobe, Jim, “Bush’s ‘surreal’ choice for AIDS czar”, \textit{Asia Times}, July 4, 2003
\item [333] Ross, Brian and Rood, Justin, “Senior Official linked to Escort Service Resigns”, \textit{ABC news(online)}, April 27, 2007
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Furthermore, an enormous host of “Faith-Based Organizations” were supplied with enormous amounts of US taxpayer dollars in a manner that would have been controversial or unconstitutional/illegal were they distributed to church institutions in the United States. Critics charge that this amounts to a public subsidy of evangelical missionary work in the developing world.

A related offense of this program is that it altered the landscape of governance, sovereignty and autonomy in countries like Zambia. In the specific case of Zambia, the national government had organized a National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC) to coordinate the HIV/AIDS related activities of all donors, NGOs and international organizations in a coordinated national response. NAC would reduce duplication of efforts, encourage collaboration and direct foreign donors to areas of need. A related concern was to place NAC, as a representative council of Zambians, at the center of HIV/AIDS related planning. PEPFAR severely damaged each of these efforts.

First, PEPFAR directly undermined the principle of Zambian-directed responses to their HIV/AIDS crisis. A president and a legislative body, elected by non-Zambians thousands of miles away, effectively chastised that what Zambians needed was a good dose of religion. They should abstain from sex until marriage and stay faithful to that partner. These efforts and messages would now be fully funded regardless of whether Zambian public health officials thought these were an effective, productive or appropriate use of funds.

In particular, organizations that spent enormous resources on condom distribution or on programs connected with sex-workers found their funding drying up. Some changed the focus of their programs and some made do with less funding. Others (discussed below) strategically and nominally included “abstinence” talks (to secure funding) before moving onto the work they felt needed to be done (ex. condom discussions and distribution).
Second, AIDS-concerned organizations, projects and individuals quickly realized that if they wanted access to these enormous funds, they should alter their programs to conform to the whims and moral concerns of Americans, rather than Zambians. National sovereignty over public health responses to the most pressing domestic social, political, economic and health-related issue in the country fell by the wayside. Coordination of HIV/AIDS activities quickly fell apart as Americans and America-funded HIV/AIDS agencies developed their own targets, their own monitoring and evaluation procedures, their own conception of “the problem”. Duplication of HIV/AIDS efforts, especially along the “line of rail”\(^{336}\), expanded while difficult to access communities “up country” were neglected.\(^{337}\)

From a macro-economic perspective, the bilateral nature of the funding (rather than perhaps full funding of the multi-lateral Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), perhaps inevitably, has given the US enormous economic and geopolitical leverage in countries like Zambia. Put simply, Zambians are now incredibly dependent upon US funding. The constellation of policies associated with a neoliberal program (outlined in chapter one) is now very difficult to resist in Zambia. Can one risk the ire of the US when so many resources have been dedicated to prolonging the life of so many of your citizens? Can one oppose the import of

\(^{336}\)Zambian colonialism and its attendant infrastructure, as noted above, were organized around the copper mines. Historically, Zambians were forcibly removed from communities along a “line of rail” stretching primarily from the capital city of Lusaka to the mining areas of the Copperbelt in the north. HIV/AIDS organizations can easily access “rural” communities along this north-south corridor from headquarters in the capital. The predictable result is that these communities have experienced a saturation of HIV/AIDS related activities while many communities throughout Zambia remain poorly served.

\(^{337}\)A Zambian respondent outlined this problem directly when he suggested that the key to effective HIV/AIDS work should be to go where other organizations are not operating. G.B. interview June 26, 2007.
Can one stand up to US foreign policy in the UN, when the potential cost in terms of life is enormous? Funding could be cut at anytime in the name of other priorities. Looking towards the future, what would be the cost of refusing to host a US military base or re-nationalizing the mines? What nation is likely to get first crack at developing new oil or Coltan\textsuperscript{339} discoveries in places like Zambia? In other words, the bilateral nature of this funding is an enormous carrot and (potential) stick in the field of global power relations.

Zambian and foreign respondents were clear, consistent and concerned about the prospects for sustaining this level of foreign funding. Multiple respondents noted that the funding would “inevitably” cease and that the amount of resources dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDS were unsustainable. The implications of this looming politico-economic vulnerability have yet to be fully explored.\textsuperscript{340} Consequently, during the period of my fieldwork, I consistently noted that the policies and practices associated with PEPFAR were referenced implicitly or explicitly as a barrier to transnational identity formation in the Zambian context. Some even made explicit distinctions between Americans and other foreign nationals, partially as a result of the

\textsuperscript{338} This is a particular flashpoint in Zambia, as the nation has refused famine assistance in the form of genetically modified organisms from the US. This refusal made international headlines and has been seen by many as an attempt to force the adoption of biotech crops in Southern Africa. See for instance Zerbe, Noah, “Feeding the Famine? American food aid and the GMO debate IN Southern Africa”, \textit{Food Policy} 29 (2004) 593-608.

\textsuperscript{339} Also known industrially as tantalite, Coltan is used for laptops, cell phones, DVD players, video game systems and almost every kind of electronic device. Africa, particularly central Africa, is the world’s biggest producer of Coltan and has the largest reserves. The global demand for Coltan may exceed supply by 2013, making Coltan an incredibly valuable resource, indeed. Papp, John F., “Niobium (Columbium) and Tantalum” \textit{U.S. Geological Survey}, 2009 Minerals Yearbook, pp. 52.1-52.14

\textsuperscript{340} See for Instance, Fidler, David P., “Fighting the Axis of Illness: HIV/AIDS, Human Rights and Foreign Policy”, \textit{Harvard Human Rights Journal}, Vol. 17, (2004), pp. 99-136. This is an enormously rich area for future research. As global oil production approaches a natural “peak” and starts to decline, the Middle East will be the most crucial area of control in the world. However, much of Africa has yet to be fully explored for potential sources of oil.
perceived ulterior motives of the United States government. In the words of an orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) healthworker, “They make their money not have a human face”. “I’m not even allowed to buy a blanket [for a woman who recently lost her daughter to AIDS and would now be the caregiver of her grandchildren].” Another wished she could change the donor mindset to “how can we support you?” Most clearly, Fantine Nkanza described the problem.

Because we get external funding, it actually silences us… which is not to say we don’t need help because we do… but how that help comes and what we contribute to it is important.

Additionally, onerous “counting” requirements had the effect of privileging larger, more well-established NGOs that usually had an American connection. Large professionalized NGOs were more likely to adhere to stringent M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) protocols and accounting procedures. Intended or not, this created the impression that the United States thought most Zambians were untrustworthy, corrupt and/or incompetent. Furthermore, there was a widespread

341 For instance, in addition to circumventing NAC and carrying out programs that were not requested by local communities, a number of respondents noted the particularly American practice of “branding” every material aspect of their intervention with “USAID” stickers. This, in addition to the very problematic approaches to public health intervention noted above, has led many to perceive US HIV/AIDS intervention as an extremely self interested public relations project. Undoubtedly, there is some validity to this charge with respect to all foreign aid. Nonetheless, in terms of perception, American aid is usually seen as much more instrumental than that of other countries.

342 C.M. interview, June 27, 2007
343 E.Z. interview, June 27, 2007
344 Earlier in the interview, in reference to the commonly held myth that America has never been a colonial power, Fantine also sarcastically remarked, “Yes, it has nothing to do with us, we are just going in with PEPFAR money.” F.N. interview, June 23, 2007.
345 This was an almost universal complaint by Zambians and foreign nationals alike. One respondent noted that the community comes to feel “like they are statistics, not people.” L.H. interview, May 29, 2008. Another noted that in a narrow-minded concern with numbers, AIDS workers ignore the “things that surround what they are looking for”. C.M.P interview, July, 2007.
346 One foreign national flatly stated that though they will not say so publicly, foreign NGOs prefer to hire expatriates in leadership positions. Identity withheld.
belief, with some justification, that the overwhelming majority of PEPFAR funding to “Zambia” actually went to American staff, American companies and American products. In other words, people felt that much of this life saving “aid” was actually returned to America and helped “develop” the U.S.A. A more activist-minded Zambian employed a colorful phrase usually reserved for corrupt African politicians; “They’re chewing the money”.

The context of aid, development and PEPFAR, then, is important to fully understanding international “encounter” in Zambia during the time of my research.

Zambian Transnationalism

Consistent with findings from Chapter IV, I found that Zambians, speaking generally, are profoundly transnational. In particular, many take great pains to understand the transnational diversity within Zambia. Despite the efforts to create “one Zambia”, Zambian healthworkers, mired in a public health intervention that depends on cultural expertise, are extremely cognizant of the fact that the state of Zambia is composed of many (cultural) nations. One of the most transnational and multi-cultural respondents explained at length:

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347 One respondent noted that all products purchased with PEPFAR money required the purchase of American products (though a waiver was available). Another respondent estimated that of 11 million dollars funneled to a particular organization only 3 million made its way to the Zambian organizations that “actually do the work” of the project. Identity withheld.

348 C.C. interview, June 3, 2008
By the way… it’s not only with foreigners, even with nationals [they can be a] foreigner, in the sense of ‘foreign’ to that targeted area… and they do not understand the dynamics of that particular area… so it’s very important to go into an area and understand people’s culture and try to frame your response based on the people’s culture.\textsuperscript{349}

This understanding of the diversity of Africa within Zambia easily extends across the (arbitrary) borders of Southern Africa as well. Almost every Zambian respondent had traveled extensively throughout Southern Africa (Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Malawi were the most frequent destinations). Many had travelled much further afield to East, West and North Africa as well.

Though most of the international travel outside of Africa was to European countries or North America for conferences or trainings, many had made significant journeys to much more surprising locales including; Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Japan and Brazil. Though short term trainings and conferences are “par for the course” in HIV/AIDS NGO work at a certain level, many respondents had much more in-depth international experiences, usually in school. Many trained at African universities in Southern Africa, but others attended schools as far away as Norway, Egypt, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. (Harvard and Tulane).

Two of the Zambian doctors I interviewed had spent upwards of 7 years in communist Romania and Bulgaria, respectively. These were intensely transformative experiences for each. Not only did they acquire an excellent medical training, they also acquired cultural competencies to be able to navigate cross cultural interaction in multiple contexts. Each referenced the benefit of being “exposed” to other people and

\textsuperscript{349} J.A. interview, June 28, 2007
cultures and having been enriched by their experiences. “I consider myself lucky. I don’t have any problem to interact with anybody… as far as I’m concerned ‘exposure’ matters quite a lot.”

The usage of the term “exposure” has a particular meaning in Zambia. It is regularly used by Zambians to denote those who have been abroad and experienced the world outside Zambia in some way. While the precise definition is difficult to fix, it does imply a stay of some significant duration or frequent short trips abroad. Interestingly, the term can be used for Zambians who have never left the country, but have had consistent interactions through work or social circles with foreign nationals. In, and of itself, the use of this fascinating term implies a consciousness, and mutual social assessment, of levels of transnational cultural competency amongst Zambians themselves. In my experience, the “exposed” are almost universally applauded by Zambians.

Many had transnational families of some sort as well. Family members were found in Holland, Zimbabwe, Angola, Kenya, the U.K. or the Unites States. At least two were married to British foreign nationals. Three others had such complex transnational histories, families and experiences that identifying or articulating a “national” identity was almost impossible for them. More will be said of these transnationalists below.

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350 E. N. interview, July 22, 2008
351 In many ways, it parallels Ulf Hannerz’s (“The Global Ecumene” in Lechner, Frank J. and Boli, John, The Globalization Reader [Second Edition], 2004, p.109-119) distinction between “bush” and “beento” in Nigeria. However, just as in the case of “bush” and “beento”, the term is not without some baggage. Certainly, the usage of the term by some Zambians does imply a hierarchical rank. In a sense, those who have been “exposed” (to Western culture and ways) have been seen, by some, as more “advanced” than those who have the bad fortune to only know “African-ness”. An in-depth exploration of the intentional usage and perceived meaning of this term to Zambians would be a fascinating area for further research.
Within Zambia, respondents took pains to stress that their interactions with foreign nationals were highly dependent upon the signals they received from them. Though foreign nationals who had worked elsewhere in Africa were lauded more often for their openness\textsuperscript{352}, they stressed that levels of transnationalism were based on very individualized criteria. One identified a simple pattern; there are those who “take the time” and those who do not.\textsuperscript{353} Chimunya Mumba echoed a point repeated by other Zambians that initially, foreigners should watch, listen and learn from Zambians. “They need to empty themselves first”\textsuperscript{354}

For instance, one Zambian respondent noted that food rationing schemes that are located at the individual level are doomed to failure. He saw the targeting of families and communities as more effective given the communal cultural context of Zambia.\textsuperscript{355} Others noted that female empowerment projects, without a behavioral change component that includes men, are similarly doomed. Zambians need to play the central and crucial cultural role in the response to HIV/AIDS in their country. However, organizational structures, funding mechanisms and power relations not only bar particularly effective HIV/AIDS responses, they also place a barrier in the path of transnational identity formation.

The comments of Charles Mwaba, a critically important AIDS worker in Zambia, provide an interesting case in point. His work is of crucial import for the Zambian response to HIV/AIDS. He also praised his foreign counterpart, who he said

\textsuperscript{352} Another suggested that there were profound differences between foreigners who came for a fixed amount of time and others. E.S. interview, July 22, 2008
\textsuperscript{353} R.M. interview, June 22, 2007
\textsuperscript{354} C.M. interview, June 27, 2007
\textsuperscript{355} L.H. interview, May 29, 2008
took great pains to include him in every planning meeting and every aspect of the HIV/AIDS work they undertake together. They do socialize together and each heaps effusive praise on the other. Nonetheless, Mr. Mwaba objected to the nature of their working relationship. His position is designed so that he is the point person for their particular intervention and the foreign counterpart is, officially, merely an “advisor”. However, in actual practice, it is the foreign advisor’s choice to include him. Without the blessing of the foreign counterpart, he would easily be excluded from crucial planning discussions and interventions.\textsuperscript{356}

This example illuminates the “field” of power relations in Zambian HIV/AIDS work particularly well. Foreign money comes with foreign power and influence, discriminatory remuneration (see below) and a paternalistic attitude stemming from the implied “failure” of the donor country and its people (to develop, to fund their own programs, to retain educated Zambians, etc.). Zambians are frustrated, even angered, by the context of this “encounter”. Yet, as if directly borrowing from Foucauldian theory, they refrain from condemning foreigners as a whole. They are able to separate the “act” (cultural naiveté or insensitivity, discriminatory policies and prejudgments, etc.) from a totalizing identity (as racist, for example).\textsuperscript{357} As John Asha put it, “No individual is perfect. So it is always good to try to pick out the best things from the people you interact with [whether foreign national or not].”\textsuperscript{358}

\textsuperscript{356} C.M. interview, June 29, 2007
\textsuperscript{357} In Chapter II, I suggested that Foucault provides a particularly useful framework for understanding transnational identity formation. For Foucault, criminal acts, sexually “deviant” acts or acts of “madness” have mistakenly been taken as totalizing identities that inscribe actors with externally-imposed, totalizing identities like “criminal”, “homosexual” or “mad”. Here, I suggest a resistance to a form of power in the Zambian refusal to “totalize”.
\textsuperscript{358} J.A. interview, June, 28, 2007
Despite the frustrations of international encounter in a field of power that circumscribes their agency, the Zambian healthworkers I interviewed tended to judge acts and flawed structures, while generally resisting the temptation to condemn groups of people, nations and ethnicities. It is this skill, this practice, this repertoire of cultural competencies, emerging from a rich historical tradition of transnationalism, that make Zambia a particularly instructive space for understanding the development of transnational identities.

The overriding theme from my respondents was that they were very willing, even eager, to have rich interactions with their international colleagues. They saw foreign nationals making efforts to better understand the culture and increasing in their respect towards Zambians. With time, Zambians are included more frequently outside the office and given more responsibility within it.359 Indeed, the central question, for Zambians, seems to be whether the individuals in question are learning and/or improving. Perfection is not demanded, but improvement is a must.

Working and interacting with foreign nationals also represented an awakening of sorts for many Zambian respondents. One noted that her sense of self has “grown” from a time when she looked at herself from her “narrow”, local perspective.360 Another remarked that he had a “closed view” and had “looked at life as a Zambian”, before his exposure to working with foreign nationals.361 A third, who was very

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359 Again, the initial exclusion is certainly objectionable in its own right, but the respondents I interviewed tended to appreciate the movement from more rigid (discriminatory?), initial positions. This will be discussed at greater length below. Let us merely note at this juncture that the practices of reserving initial judgment and/or group judgment are hallmarks of a theory of the theory of transnational identity formation I articulate below.

360 M.M. interview, May 22, 2008

361 B.B. interview, May 21, 2008
critical of a number of foreign nationals, nonetheless, conceded that he has benefited immensely from his international interactions. It “has broadened my scope of thinking… I have learned to accept diversity… at the end of the day, we are human beings who can live together under the banner of humanity.”

There were, however, a series of barriers to transnationalism that were consistently apparent in my interviews with Zambians. Foremost among the complaints of Zambians was a dramatic disparity in salaries for foreign nationals and “locals”. Often working in similar areas, with similar skills and qualifications, this disparity in salaries was a severe source of tension between foreign nationals and Zambians. Foreigner salaries were purported to be more than ten times that of Zambians doing the same work. Though there are theoretical justifications for this system, it clearly smacked of disrespect and discrimination in the eyes of many Zambians. This is exacerbated by evidence that a significant number of foreign nationals are under-qualified for their position. In the words of one respondent, some have come to use Zambia to gain the experience they lack, to “take our jobs” or “create jobs for themselves”.

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362 R.M. interview, June 22, 2007  
363 L.H. interview, May 29, 2008  
364 The “logic” for this difference is that foreigners who are “needed” in Africa must be recruited by comparable salaries. In some cases this may be true. A parallel logic is that locals are paid consistent with local standards. However, each of these logics appears to be largely fallacious. Indeed, foreigners often make wealthy careers from years of service in countries where the standard of living is incredibly low. In some cases, housing, schooling and living allowances are provided which effectively make their “salaries” bonuses of tens of thousands of dollars a year. In other words, these jobs are highly desirable. The logic also falls apart in the case of Africans working transnationally. Some appear to receive large salaries as foreign nationals, but others are still considered (and paid as) “locals” despite working in another country. C. M. interview, June 29, 2007.  
365 One foreign national stated that when she took her first oversees job, “I had no experience”. Another, after noting her lack of professional or academic training in health said she is “completely a generalist”. Names withheld.  
366 R.M. interview June 22, 2007
A corollary barrier to the divisive salary issue seems to be a ripple effect on socializing activities that might otherwise nurture transnational interactions. Foreigners and Zambians tend to socialize in different spaces as a result of different incomes. Foreigners, partially as a result of larger salaries, can be found socializing more often and in higher priced venues.

In addition, Zambians often have cultural and financial duties that foreign nationals do not. For instance, family members with decent incomes or employment often hold a cultural obligation to spread their income amongst a large, extended family, reducing any discretionary “socializing” income. Some respondents suggest that this is one reason Zambians are reticent to open their homes to foreigners. Others see foreign nationals as particularly insular and not willing to socialize with Zambians. Yet another respondent suggested that some Zambians were fearful of being viewed as trying to extract some benefit from foreign nationals. In order to guard against this judgment on the part of fellow Zambians, they may, at times, intentionally avoid socializing with foreigners. In any case, it is clear that, in terms of sentiment, most of my respondents were willing or eager to interact and learn from the diverse experiences of foreign nationals.

367 B.B. interview, May 21, 2008. These extended family obligations may also be a barrier to activism amongst the healthworkers I study. See below.
368 J.A. interview, June 28, 2007
369 E.M. interview, May 20, 2008
370 J.A. interview, June 28, 2007. This same, particularly transnational respondent also suggested that what Zambians consider “socializing” may differ markedly from the conception foreigners may have. For instance, Zambians may consider an afternoon talking and dining with their parents an enriching (and low cost) “socializing” experience, whereas foreigners more often choose to socialize at (more expensive) restaurants, pubs or coffee houses.
371 Parenthetically, I might add that in my experience any foreign national who opens themselves to the conversation, can easily engage nearly any Zambian in hours and hours of conversation about their
Consistently, Zambians made (sometimes dubious) efforts to understand the perspective of the “other” or excuse their missteps. One respondent lamented that foreign nationals do indeed tend to socialize together, yet immediately excused them on “safety” grounds. Another particularly friendly respondent seemed genuinely hurt by foreign nationals who do not respond to her attempts to keep in touch. She has also invited the foreign nationals in her workplace to Christmas parties to no avail and consistently gets no response from foreign nationals when she sends friendly inter-office email jokes, pictures, etc. Without a hint of bitterness, she continues her efforts unabated.

Despite what appear to be legitimate concerns and tensions between Zambians and some foreign nationals, Zambians consistently appreciated, even praised, the role foreign nationals have played in HIV/AIDS work. They were said to encourage openness in discussions, be open to learning and provide diverse experiences and viewpoints. They were thought to help “broaden your mind”. One remarked that without foreign nationals, there would be a “blind spot” in their response to HIV/AIDS. Others thought foreign nationals aided HIV/AIDS work because they are not “tied up in local baggage” and consequently can break through domestic social homeland. To put it another way, I find Zambians intensely interested in the “world outside their front door”.

372 E.M. interview, May 20, 2008
373 G.N. interview, June 22, 2007
374 C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
375 E.S. interview, July 22, 2008
barriers\textsuperscript{376} and that Zambians themselves were sometimes more willing to open up to foreign nationals.\textsuperscript{377}

They were also praised for their passion and principles. “It’s as if they’re willing to die for it.”\textsuperscript{378} With an air of mockery mixed with admiration, one Deputy Chief of Party remarked that Americans, in particular, “believe one person can change the world.”\textsuperscript{379} Still others appreciated their insistence on female inclusion in discussion and planning as well as gender empowerment as a programmatic imperative. One said that foreign nationals “give me hope” and a feeling that there is “light at the end of the tunnel.”\textsuperscript{380}

Foreign nationals were also praised for emphasizing a perceived selflessness. At base, they assert, foreign nationals are volunteers. They volunteer to leave their home and their comfort zone to help others. In hyperbolic praise, a well-travelled, veteran Zambian AIDS worker appreciated that foreign nationals “desire to support other nationalities… Zambians don’t do that… [we don’t] see ourselves doing that… We are not proactive.”\textsuperscript{381}

Time and again Zambians seemed to appreciate what foreign nationals had to offer despite genuine grievances. They seemed eager to learn what they could while rejecting what was not useful in their context. They are frustrated by power imbalances, but continue to mine these relationships for useful, cultural or technical competencies. In short, the “encounter”, though fraught with difficulty and awash in a

\textsuperscript{376} J.A. interview, June 28, 2007
\textsuperscript{377} C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
\textsuperscript{378} R.M. interview, June 29, 2007
\textsuperscript{379} B.B. interview, May21, 2008
\textsuperscript{380} C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
\textsuperscript{381} R.M. interview, June 29, 2007
field of power relations, provided a space for agency. One poetic Zambian shortly after complaining of cross-cultural misrecognition put it nicely. Foreign nationals were still needed in Zambia, he said, “No one can run away from that in this global village [we] just need to harmonize a few things.”

A recurring pattern in my interviews of foreigners and Zambians alike was a generalized criticism of the “other” that was quickly followed by the personal “exception”. Despite the generalized description, each had “their one good Zambian” or “their one good foreigner”. Many did socialize together, appreciate their depth of understanding, cross cultural openness, intelligence, humility and initiative even though they would not say this was true in the majority of cases. This relatively consistent pattern lends credence to the notion that a great deal of learning occurs over time. Cultural competencies developed in the crucible of emotion-laden, international health work. Initial interactions might be fraught with difficulty, but over time, many foreigners and Zambians came to appreciate “their” Other.

Overall, consistent with picture of Zambians sketched in Chapter IV, Zambians have deep, rich transnational sensibilities and cross-cultural competencies. Even Zambians who did not consider themselves “exposed” had a rich understanding of what it means to feel “foreign”. Indeed, it seems to be the rich history of transnationalism within Zambia which has prepared its people for cross-cultural exchange in a rapidly globalizing world. On the whole, my research has led me to the conclusion that Zambian “tolerance”, often mistaken for a thoroughgoing colonialism,

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382 L.H. interview, May 29, 2008
is the result of a compassion for “otherness”. This will be explored further in Chapter VII.

*Foreigners and Transnationalism*

What of foreigners living and working abroad in Zambia? What can be said of their levels of transnationalism? Assessing levels of transnationalism amongst foreign HIV/AIDS workers in Zambia is a difficult task. On the one hand, we expect that foreigners who have chosen to live and work amongst poor people in a culturally foreign place have self selected themselves prior to their arrival. We assume they would not have chosen this life or career path without having already acquired an appreciation (or, at least not a hatred) of other cultures. Indeed, this appears to be the case for many HIV/AIDS foreign nationals living and working in Zambia.

Nonetheless, this can easily be overstated. Indeed, much of the ethnographic evidence provided by Zambian counterparts suggests as much. Many middle class foreign nationals arrive in Zambia with a host of perks and benefits they could never afford at home. Their houses may be enormous and serviced by gardeners, nannies and maids they could never afford (or be seen employing) at home. They may have personal drivers and/or the use of company vehicles.

Tuition for their children is often covered at incredibly expensive international schools. Indeed, more than one respondent noted that their intent was to stay overseas *until* their children graduated from these (elite) international schools. Far from a deprivation, schooling one’s children abroad was seen as an enormous benefit that should not be wasted. These schools may even be the locus of very insular and elite
international socializing circles. The wife of a Chief of Party for an enormous NGO explicitly noted that she had very little interaction with Zambia or Zambians until her children graduated from the international school.\(^{383}\)

In a transnational context these schools may also represent an enormous barrier to transnational identity formation for children and adults. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these schools may represent significant spaces for the reproduction of ideologies of segregation and even “apartheid”.\(^{384}\) Whether implicitly racial or simply class-based, these schools may represent a flight from “Africa” in the same way that desegregation in the US South led to a white flight from integrated public schools. Here, these schools compete against each other in swimming competitions, golf and cricket tournaments that are virtually unknown in other Zambian schools.

Though personal connections and social networks have long been noted as the most useful spaces for securing employment, in Africa, this takes a not too subtle racialized form. Foreign nationals noted again and again that their positions were secured through personal connections. “It’s very incestuous.”\(^{385}\) One expatriate had secured his present job through his squash partner, an avenue fairly well blocked to others. Another couple admitted that the incentive that may have pushed them to finally get married was that it would help their employment chances abroad.\(^{386}\)

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\(^{383}\) L.W. interview, May 2007. Clearly, this represents another rich area for future research. To my knowledge, Bourdieu’s insights (see “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction” in J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey, *Power and Ideology in Education*, 1977) about the reproduction of social, cultural and symbolic capital in elite schools have not been applied to international schools abroad.

\(^{384}\) This seems particularly likely in light of a relatively recent wave of white Zimbabwean immigration to these “international” schools in Zambia.

\(^{385}\) L.L. interview, May 24, 2007

\(^{386}\) Identity withheld
For middle class citizens of the U.K. or U.S., an NGO position in Zambia invariably means a marked improvement in “status situation”. Whether they approve of the situation of not, foreign nationals all earn significantly more than their Zambian counterparts. These workers easily socialize with diplomats, government officials and ministers in the finest homes, clubs and restaurants the country has to offer. They can easily travel to see the pyramids in Egypt or go on wildlife safaris that would be well beyond their means if arranged from home.

As technology improves, the “hardship” of such a life has virtually disappeared. Family members can communicate through Skype or increasingly reliable cell phones. Western products are increasingly available and expatriate enclaves are built by enterprising entrepreneurs. As one healthworker put it, “I’m not a volunteer. I make a good living.” Another confided, “Isn’t it funny how we [expatriates] live well off, better than [home]?” For those looking for a relatively short term “adventure”, a post in Africa might be just the thing. Nonetheless, many of the healthworkers were clearly motivated by impassioned, personal connections to their work (see Chapter VI) and genuinely transnational identities.

Consistent with the observations I trace in Chapter III, foreign nationals in Zambia have also frequently been exposed to “the international” at a fairly early age. Angela Trujillo, for instance, was born in Argentina before relocating to the United States. Her international family makes her feel that she can understand “dual

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388 D.C. interview, June 20, 2007
389 C.T. interview, May 18, 2007
cultures”. Similarly, the parents of African American Natasha Grimes are from Panama and Barbados. Another healthworker is a second generation development worker. She and her brother were born in southern Africa to parents who were both overseas development workers.

Eve Santos remembers hearing stories of her aunt and uncle’s exploits as travelling anthropologists. Kasey Kraft took annual international trips with her family her whole life and lived abroad with her father in the UK at the age of thirteen. Subsequently, she came to volunteer in the Dominican Republic and Mexico and studied abroad in Kenya. Roger Howard studied abroad in France at an early age as well. Murai Sata, a healthworker from Japan, was inspired during a yearlong high school exchange program in the United States. There, she learned about the plight of refugees and became dedicated to further development work upon her return to Japan. Another longtime development worker says she became interested in international work after her mother began hosting international students in their home when she was eleven. She recalls fondly growing up with three international students including two Angolan girls. Another remembers a German exchange student in his home and the photos of a well-travelled great uncle as the inspiration for his international work. In addition, he remembers the influences of his particularly activist

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391 N.G. interview, July 2007
392 A.C. interview, June 20, 2007
393 E.S. interview, June 15, 2007
394 K.K interview, June 29, 2007
395 R.H. interview, June 20, 2008
396 M.S. interview, June 25, 2008
397 L.L. interview, May 24, 2007
minded church. Yet another recalled a profound early international connection through her family’s staunch Zionist beliefs. At an early age, she made multiple trips to Israel and was involved in an international youth movement connected with her Judaism. These, generally positive, experiences broadened their horizons and nurtured a curiosity for the “world outside their front door”.

Moreover, foreign nationals are often transformed as a result of their overseas experiences as well. Emotion-laden connections to the people they work with can have life-altering consequences. At least three women in my study married Zambian men whereas at least another seven respondents had married overseas or to other development workers. Though they were not specifically asked, Denise Combs and Donna Petry each volunteered that they have adopted Zambian boys. Another respondent has adopted her Zambian husband’s child as her own. Donna Petry has taken a Zambian family into her Zambian home as well.

The story of Nathan Watts connects the varied threads of transnationalism I have outlined thus far. Nathan was adopted by his parents when they were serving as United States Peace Corps Volunteers in Ecuador. Throughout his life he made

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398 L.M. interview, May 2007
399 A.C. interview, June 20, 2007
400 D.C. interview, June 20, 2007, D.P. interview, May 20, 2008. It would be an interesting area for future research to methodically study how widespread this phenomenon is amongst foreign nationals. Certainly adoption in, and of itself is not a sufficient indicator of transnational identity. At the same time, it seems irrefutable that such a long term commitment to a child that is not from one’s home nation/ culture/ race is an indicator of transnational openness. Moreover, HIV/AIDS healthworkers have often seen firsthand families overburdened in their attempts to care for growing numbers of AIDS orphans. Many of these orphans eventually become homeless “street children”, a constant feature of life in the capital city of Lusaka. It seems reasonable that the decision to adopt is informed by emotion-laden movement along the transnational continuum I have described above. Such supposition, however, is outside of the scope of the present study, but remains a fruitful area of future research.
401 A.B. interview, May, 2007
402 D.P. interview, May 20, 2008
occasional trips to Central America with them. In a life that is coming full circle, it is he who is now serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zambia stating simply that it was “a good way to do some service” and that he “wanted to see it for myself”.

Another consistent theme of many of the development workers was that far from a short term “adventure”, living abroad had become for them their permanent life, their permanent “home”. The most transnational amongst them unapologetically thought of themselves as “citizens-of-the-world”. A French healthworker remarked that for him, this was a “way of life” and he would do whatever he could to try to stay abroad. Likewise, Roger Howard has made a life of development work having spent 20-25 years living and working abroad in Africa and South Asia. Lisa Watson and her husband, a former Peace Corps Volunteer, have also spent more than twenty years together overseas. As they approach retirement age, they are settling upon the notion that rather than return to the United States, they would like to retire in Zambia.

Another was soon retiring after having completed thirty years in development work, eighty percent of which was abroad. William Price, another former Peace Corps volunteer, has spent his life in development work having lived and worked in thirty-eight countries over the course of eighteen years. When asked how long he intends to stay abroad, he simply states, “I’m a lifer”. One respondent, upon explaining she had not worked very much in the United States, added, “Thank God”. Yet another

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403 N.W. interview, May 31, 2007
404 E.S. interview, June 25, 2007
405 R.H. interview, June 20, 2008
406 L.W. interview, May 2007
407 B.H. interview, May 24, 2007
408 W.P. interview, May 10, 2007
409 A.B. interview, May 2007
proudly declared that over the previous twenty years, she had only worked for one year in the United States. In this context she remarked that Africa, for her, “isn’t a foreign place”.410

On multiple occasions, various foreign nationals came to international development work as a result of compulsory national service. Evan Serneau, a Frenchman, came to develop a passion for development work after serving two years of compulsory military service with his wife in Nepal.411 This is in addition to an almost universal pattern of American participation in the US Peace Corps.

This gradually emerging transnationalism is closely connected to emotion-laden processes that break down the artificial distinctions between “we” and “they”. Zambian Eve Zumba believes that the connection between Zambia and the foreigners who work in HIV/AIDS improves over time. “Most of them don’t even want to go home” as they gradually “put a human face to the things they do”. Some lament upon departure that they haven’t contributed enough.412 A Chief of Party of a very substantial NGO marked her emotional change in this way, “You become more of a world citizen… You take it more personally when a truck goes off the road… When there’s a plane crash… you may know someone.”413

410 C.T. interview, May 18, 2007
411 E.S. interview, June 25, 2007
412 E.Z. interview, June 27, 2007
413 C.T. interview, May 18, 2007
African Transnationalism

Amongst my respondents were four Africans who were not born in Zambia. These four respondents represent an interesting subgrouping which is difficult to categorize for a number of reasons. Firstly, they represent a very small sample size. Second, while they are certainly not Zambian the character of their interactions with Zambians is often of a different nature than that between Zambians and foreign nationals. Whether they are seen as “black” or “African”, it does appear that Zambians do often extend a degree of familiarity to other Africans more easily than foreign nationals. For instance, they seem to more freely, and more frequently, socialize together.

However, identities and cultural affinities can be quite complex. Former British colonial subjects may feel an affinity for their “fellow African” in a way that might marginalize a “fellow African” from Francophone Africa. Depending on the context and the topic, Zambians might also have more in common with their Lusophone Mozambican neighbor than an Anglophone, but distant, Nigerian.

Complexity reigns in a continent which was divided, ruled and colonized by non-Africans and according to non-African logics. One of the Africans I interviewed moved to Zambia at a very young age and has lived there most of his life. Nonetheless, many of his family members live in neighboring Angola and consequently speak different languages, are influenced by a different colonial history.

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414 I have felt compelled to address “African Transnationalism” as separate from the “Zambian multinationalism” I have argued for in Chapter IV. Nonetheless, I hope it is clear to the reader at this point in the dissertation that the difference between these categories is one of cultural, and perhaps geographical, distance and not as the result of any “natural” distinction. To put it another way, I remain steadfast in my argument that Lozi and Bemba (Zambians), for instance, are justifiably “nations” despite this subheading.
(Portuguese, as opposed to British) and have suffered the prolonged effects of revolutionary and civil wars. He does not call himself Zambian, but he has certainly been influenced by his lifelong residency in Zambia.\textsuperscript{415} Another woman was born Kenyan, but spent much of her life in America. Having lived, worked and travelled throughout the world for more than twenty years, she feels like she is seen as a foreigner in Zambia and that she is not part of an “inner circle”.\textsuperscript{416}

Similarly, a Ghanaian respondent suggested that Ghanaians are more ambitious than Zambians who are “too calm”. While acknowledging that Zambians see him as “pushy”, he was largely unconcerned. He says “Zambians are not givers” and seemed bothered by the fact that Zambians do not invite others into their homes.\textsuperscript{417} A Nigerian respondent echoed some of these sentiments. Nigerians were more “fearless” and less easily “intimidated” than Zambians, he said. Though he praised Zambian “diplomacy” and the fact that they are not easily aggravated he interpreted this in an interesting manner. According to him, they “can’t see through to hearts very quickly”.\textsuperscript{418} These interpretations seem to reinforce the notion that transnationalism does not easily map onto race, ethnicity or perceived cultural affinity (i.e. an “African” identity) in a simple fashion.

Nonetheless, these Africans did offer a range of interesting cross-cultural insights as well. For example, the Nigerian respondent attributed the differences between Zambians and Nigerians to population density. He suggested that Nigerians must be more aggressive to survive in a crowded country. He also noted that the

\textsuperscript{415} N.D. interview, June 26, 2007  
\textsuperscript{416} C.B. interview, May 29, 2008  
\textsuperscript{417} K.T. interview, June 5, 2008  
\textsuperscript{418} M.G. interview, June 24, 2008
injustice of the divergent salary structures was a central reason Zambians were always looking for “allowances” in their NGO work.\textsuperscript{419} The Ghanaian respondent who was angered by what he perceived as Zambian rudeness in keeping their homes private also acknowledged that, when you are invited into their homes, it makes you feel “special”. Furthermore, this well remunerated doctor has a passion for helping Zambians that is palpable, volunteering in a local Zambian clinic every week.\textsuperscript{420}

In short, much more work is needed to understand the depth, complexity and diversity of transnational interactions within Africa and amongst Africans themselves.

\textit{Transnational Identities}

In the course of my interviews, it became clear that there were clear tendencies amongst the most transnational healthworkers that separated them from their more nationalist, or localist, counterparts. First, many transnationalists had particularly complex identities that would not allow them to feel comfortable in any particular “box”. Natasha Grimes’ parents are Panamanian and Bajan,\textsuperscript{421} but she grew up in the United States. “I have lots of identity issues”. She admitted that in coming to Africa she “thought I would get closer to African roots, but I haven’t. It’s so difficult”.\textsuperscript{422} Her understanding of the complexity of differences between groups often assumed to be monolithic was typical of the transnational worldview. For instance, John Asha and other Zambian transnationalists noted above are extremely cognizant of the diversity within Zambia and amongst Zambians. The more transnational the respondent, the

\textsuperscript{419} M.G. interview, June 24, 2008
\textsuperscript{420} K.T. interview, June 5, 2008
\textsuperscript{421} Barbados native
\textsuperscript{422} N.G. interview, July 2007
more likely they are to object to overgeneralization and stereotyping in any form. They embrace intricate and complex conceptions of diversity.

Related to this, many transnationalists had unique and varied conceptions of one’s “home”. As we have noted above, many foreigners have adopted Zambia or Africa as home. Some consider themselves “citizens-of-the-world”. One respondent noted that initially she “didn’t understand Africa”, but after eight years of living “it’s a second home”. Interestingly, Africans were affected by shifting conceptions of home as well. We have already noted the Kenyan woman above who had spent more than twenty years living, working and travelling abroad. She remarked that she is seen as a foreigner in Zambia and stated explicitly that she sees her identity as constantly “shifting”.

Yet it seems as one’s sense of “community”, “home” or “self” shifts, transnationalists also become increasingly fascinated with acquiring new, transnational cultural competencies. Indeed, many transnationalists took pride, even joy, in consistently learning more about varied and complex cultures. Lance Marks, for instance, finds it stimulating to figure out the “disjuncture” in any cultural setting because he feels he is then, constantly learning something. Another explained that his cross cultural interactions were the crucible in which he refined his own sense of self. “When you are exposed to different cultures… approaches, you form your own perspective… [and when others are exposed to you] they have to define

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423 U.K. interview, July 4, 2007  
424 C.B. interview, May 29, 2008  
425 L.M. interview, May 2007
themselves.” Yet another remarked, “You learn more about yourself… by actually getting to know people wherever you go.” Though these transnationalists often work hardest to understand the “other”, they do not allow themselves to imagine that they have completely succeeded. Rather, they are on a journey towards greater understanding. Despite a Zambian husband, three years of Peace Corps service and multiple years of employment in Zambia, Alice Brown concedes, “there’s just no way to get it… culture runs deep.” However, transnationalists never stop trying.

Transnational respondents took pride in developing and expanding their rich repertoire of “cultural competencies”. These healthworkers were more likely to have learned local languages or to have taken the time to learn traditional greeting rituals. They generally know more about African or Zambian history. As a whole, they also were more likely to socialize with coworkers outside of work functions. In this context one noted, “If it’s just about work, then what people start saying is ‘They’re not really interested in Zambia, all they’re really interested in is the money they come and earn’.” Indeed, transnationalists were much more concerned about respect, cultural inappropriateness and their general “presentation of self” than other respondents. Overall, the transnationalists have more access to the “backstage” of Zambian life.

426 S.A. interview, June 27, 2007
427 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
428 A.B. interview, May 2007
429 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
430 Erving Goffman (The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 1959) invoked the metaphor of the actor on a stage to understand the complex and diverse “presentations of self” that people engage in when addressing diverse audiences. Though Goffman’s metaphor is entirely too manipulative and self-serving to serve as an appropriate metaphor for these transnationalists, his concept of a relaxed, genuine, and relaxed “backstage” where actors could take off their masks and engage in more genuine interaction is a very apt metaphor.
or the “backstage” of foreigners’ lives. For example, they may hear gossip from family members or be given access to conversations in “privileged” spaces.

More than one transnationalist strictly managed and diversified their social interactions in order to avoid insular social networks. One “promised” herself that she would not socialize with other foreign nationals while in Zambia, preferring to socialize as much as possible with Zambians while in Zambia. Another explained at great length the importance of actively nurturing connections with local people. Protesting the “unwritten rule” that expatriates should socialize only, or predominantly, with expatriates, she elaborated upon her experience in the Congo.

I didn’t come to Congo to socialize with expatriates. I want to go to Congo. I want to miss Congo. Because, if all I miss is my job, I won’t miss anything, you know? I can’t go to a country and not know a country through people. Wherever I go, I have friends that are from that country. That’s how I know a place. How can you know a place when you don’t know anybody from it?

Like Natasha Grimes, the complex identities of many transnationalists were occasionally presented, or felt, as weaknesses. However, others have turned this perceived weakness into a strength. Fantine Nkanza, a Zambian who lived and worked in Zambia until her young adulthood, has reflected at great length the nature of her complex identity. She married and had children with a British citizen and lived much of her adult life in Tanzania, Sierra Leone and the U.K. She has relatively recently relocated to Zambia to dedicate her life to service in her home country. Nonetheless, she states, “I really don’t know what ‘to be a Zambian’ is… I am not Zambian, you

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431 C.B. interview, May 29, 2008
432 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
know?‖ The refusal is not one of self-hatred, however. Rather, she has such a rich understanding of the layering of her identit(ies), that a single narrow national identity will not suffice. Indeed, it is complex. She reflects on the irony of the fact that “I am more ‘African’ when away from Africa.” Though not being able to “define” her own identity frustrates her at times, she also sees in this “weakness” (indeed, she constructs from this “weakness”) a strength. Referencing her multinational children who are “chomping at the bit” to be a force for social change, she proudly proclaims, “We are global people. We are internationalists… that’s how I feel.”

What her comments illuminate is that a new identity (or more properly, constellations of identities) is emerging, globally. It is not rooted in the particular or narrowly national, officially sanctioned, passport sanctified, constellations that we are familiar with. “Global people” are emerging whose cultures, nations, sense of self and space can no longer be boxed into the socially constructed nation state. In the recent past, such identities were rare and quite isolating. Such people did not fit or have a “place-in-the-world”. Like the “tragic mulatto” characterization in much American film, they were seen as a people without a “home” community and therefore tragic. In the present, however, the “global people” are finding each other. They are developing a sense of “we”. They are embracing collective identities that “reject what we are” and embrace wider collectivities. Gradually, they are moving from a “tragic” community to a proud constellation of identities.

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433 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007

434 It is not difficult to imagine, indeed to observe, that these transnationalist communities, or interconnected networks, are growing in number. As their numbers grow, their “tragic” nature is likely to fade. The once shameful and tragic “in-between” identity will gradually acquire more pride, more confidence and more members.
They are beginning to embrace a “universalism of difference” as a value worthy of emulating. Implied in this phrase is a dual consciousness. On the one hand, they embrace a radical appreciation of diversity, yet this diversity is nonetheless overlaid with a sense of unity amongst all humanity. Consequently, the more transnational healthworkers were also opposed to various divisions and sub-divisions amongst humanity. A British healthworker who had married a Zambian man and was raising their child in Zambia may have overstated her point when she said, “I’m almost Zambian as well”. Nonetheless, the sentiment certainly flies in the face of nationalist and localist strivings. Holidays with her Zambian family, weddings of her Zambian in-laws, shared meals and day to day living in the cultural milieu that is Zambia understandably give her the feeling that she is indeed “almost” Zambian.

One particularly transnational Zambian, Dr. Musonda, objected to the very term “foreigner” itself. Having spent a significant amount of time abroad, he had lived life as the “foreigner”. The experience was profound enough that he bristled at the term, chastising the interviewer that “Zambia is not an island”.

Though the sentiment was expressed kindly and without hostility, its importance should not be underestimated.

In a superb exploration of the place of Africa in a rapidly globalizing world, James Ferguson has outlined a very similar pattern. Africans, perhaps Zambians in particular, do not feel overwhelmed by waves of globalization. Rather, very often they feel excluded from what Ferguson calls a “place-in-the-world”. Unlike Latin America

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436 M.S. interview, June 26, 2007
437 C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
and Asia, Africa (and Africans) is often pushed to the margins in discussions of globalization and its people do not seem to receive even a passing benefit from its “wave”. Ferguson argues that the African struggle with globalization therefore takes a different character. Rather than seeking a space to preserve a disappearing culture, Africans are often clamoring to not be “left behind”, separated and excluded from the world community, a “place-in-the-world.438 Dr. Musonda, having been “exposed” to this larger world, was objecting to any barrier placed between him, his fellow Zambians, and the world.

Indeed, it is precisely the combination of a radical appreciation of diversity fortified with an overarching unity of humanity that makes the transnationalists such excellent healthworkers. Good healthwork must begin with understanding one’s community. To fully understand a community, excellent healthworkers must be open to being surprised. They must be open to the possibility of being wrong. Their programs must be flexible and their “feedback” loops must be outstanding.439 From the point of view of communities served, they must perceive that the healthworkers understand their particular culture, yet at the same time do not see them as strange and problematic “others” who’s cultural beliefs or practices are “the problem”.

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438 Ferguson, James, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, 2006
439 In practice, these features are rare in HIV/AIDS NGOs in Zambia. Emphasis on “quantifiable” indicators, “rigorous” monitoring & evaluation, standardization, meticulous accounting and surveillance of funding and a generalized bureaucratization all undermine any flexibility in organization form. A full discussion of the organizational weaknesses of HIV/AIDS NGOs is generally outside of the scope of this dissertation and will be presented at a later date. However, to preview, in light of the present discussion, I suggest that a high degree of “success” of HIV/AIDS work is the result of healthworkers breaking organizational rules, circumventing regulation and forcing “flexibility” despite their structure. That is to say, that transnationalism itself, separate from organizational forms, programs and agendas is responsible for a great deal of “success”. Furthermore, highly transnational and highly “active” Transnational Activists (TNAs) obscure what would otherwise be obviously counterproductive organizational forms, programs and agendas.
Indeed, the ideal typical transnationalist seems *passionately* “connected” to the larger “we” he or she embraces. In being connected, that (“your”) community can see that you are doing this “because of who you are” and the work itself is connected to a “part of who they are”. Fantine Nkanza, more than any of my respondents, consistently drew parallels between collective identity and quality HIV/AIDS work. Perhaps because she is arguably the most transnational person in my study, she articulated quite clearly the most significant barrier dividing many foreigners and Zambians in the context of HIV/AIDS work. “My suspicion is that it’s still distant from them. It’s still a job… I don’t think many expatriates, or foreign nationals are personally touched by AIDS.”

Yet, consistent with the pattern described above, Fantine refuses to condemn all foreign nationals. When discussing the differences of a more respectful, transnational foreign national and others she has encountered, she explained

I was just talking to him and I thought, my god, he’s human… somebody who is human. How do you explain this?... They don’t get off on the fact that they’re an expatriate. Because the people that I have found problematic are… people who come into this job because they have *that* qualification and therefore they think they’ve come on a mission to do some amazing thing in Africa for these Africans.

Fantine highlights a central theme of this study in this important passage. On the one hand is (for her) a very clear distinction between the collective “we”, in this case, “humans”, and others. Echoing in many respects Melucci’s understanding of

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440 G.B. interview, June 26, 2007  
441 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007  
442 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007  
443 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
“recognition”, she highlights the mutual understanding that is necessary to expand one’s sense of community. Someone who separates themselves, who sees themselves as not part of the “we”, would obviously never be included within her transnational community. In other words, someone who sees themselves on a “mission” to save “these Africans” could never be included in her collective “we” (i.e. “human” community).

Fantine implies something else, as well. Neither race, nor national origin, nor religion is the basis for this collective recognition. What is at issue is a much more complex assessment of one’s humanity. What is suggested here is a “connection”, an approach to the “Other”, an open sense of respect that starts with humility. In the words of Chimunya Mumba, “They need to empty themselves first”.

Perhaps because of their international experiences and “exposure”, another hallmark of the transnationalists was an openness and willingness to “translate” between cultures. We have already noted above that though many foreigners are concerned with a perception that Zambians spend too much time looking for “per diem” or “sitting allowances”, more transnationalist observers can see this as an inevitable consequence of salary discrepancies. Whereas some see Zambians as unwilling to socialize, transnationalists are more apt to see Zambians’ friendship as slow developing, but long lasting or more genuine than other friendships. Foreigner

444 Melucci’s (Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age, Cambridge University Press, 1996) insights on this process are truly insightful. Yet, Melucci also echoes the perspective of many New Social Movement scholars that NSMs are essentially apolitical, identity-based movements for individual self-fulfillment. In the view presented here, Transnational Activists may be thoroughly and militantly political, without retreating into a sense of collective identity that is reduced to increasingly parsimonious communities. Rather, these activists seek out a larger and bigger community of “we”.

445 C.M. interview, June 27, 2007
concern with the “ethical” issue of Zambian corruption\textsuperscript{446} is counter posed by the transnationalist who perceives an equally ethical obligation to provide for orphans and extended family members who are suffering. Similarly, as noted above, transnational Zambians are more apt to look past individual shortcomings or cultural struggles of foreigners, preferring to emphasize their effort, willingness or improvement.

A particularly transnational Irishman turned a personal tragedy into an opportunity for an ambitious experiment in “translation”. The victim of a severe beating in his home country, he decided to use a significant financial settlement to change his life. Unconnected to any organization, he flew alone to South Africa to begin a trip around the world in pursuit of a single goal; to see if a one piece of theater could transcend the boundaries or race, nation, religion, etc. He performed first in orphanages in South Africa, gradually making his way through southern Africa to Zambia. There he performed, taught, directed and collaborated with Zambian “street children” to help them tell the stories of their plight to the world.\textsuperscript{447} Helping to translate the stories of these homeless, powerless and, too often, voiceless children has now become his life.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{446} Above I have critiqued this stereotype. Certainly there have been some exceptional cases of African corruption. However, by and large, what passes as “corruption” in the African context is morally neutralized by such terms as “lobbying” or “campaign contributions” in the American context, for example.

\textsuperscript{447} A.M. interview, May 8, 2007}
Conclusion

The picture of transnationalism I have outlined in this chapter seems clear. Though Africans are perceived as, treated as, and often feel marginalized in the global community, they are surprisingly transnational. In particular, Zambians and Zambian healthworkers are adept at combining an appreciation of diversity and particularity though including, accepting and welcoming so many “foreign” Others. They often have a rich repertoire of international experiences and cultural competencies to draw upon in translating Zambian experiences for so many “Others”.

On the other hand, foreign nationals living and working abroad represent a more diverse grouping. Some foreign nationals have become quite transnational, while others have maintained much more localist or “professional” outlook. Consistent with findings outlined in Chapter III, the more transnational foreign nationals often have generally positive, early experiences with “the international”. Whether through family travels, international parentage or student exchange, the more transnational healthworkers have incorporated a sense of self, an identity that eschews the notion of a “natural” segregation of the world’s people.

On the other hand, more professionalized healthworkers have less often had early exposure to the international and have been driven more often by careerist goals. Nonetheless, their present international experiences do offer the possibility of movement along the continua of transnationalism. Foreign nationals who socialize in insular circles around embassies and international schools find it difficult to “connect” with Zambians. Their “lived experience” reinforces a sense of difference and division.
However, when foreign nationals are open to integrated and genuine cross cultural exchange, they frequently find willing participants, at least in the Zambian context.

I have argued that what separates the transnationalist from the more localist or professional subject is collective identity (or identities). Beyond a strategic “presentation of self” \(^{448}\), transnationalists genuinely acquire a new sense of self. Rather than selectively borrowing from instrumental “toolkits” \(^{449}\), transnationalists enjoy learning, exploring and understanding difference. As I have remarked repeatedly, their sense of “we” of “community” of “home” has changed. This change is emotion-laden. Joy, pain, sadness, grief, embarrassment, fascination and love all play a role. Here, we can begin to preview patterns we will trace in Chapter VII.

Building on the argument of Chapter II, emotion-laden shifts in collective identity are crucial not only to transnationalism, but also to any realistic hope for transnational collective action or social movements. Numerous social movement scholars have underscored the emotional nature of collective identity. They demonstrated that social movement actors stay together, struggle together and work together, when they think they are alike.

Unfortunately, this rich literature has distorted the dynamics of transnational social movements by neglecting the study of transnational collective identities and their formation. Transnational social movements are assumed to consist of strategic collections of localists, cooperating in “advocacy networks” for generally narrow nationalist goals. Identity is studied in an extremely superficial fashion; race, nation, identity.

\(^{448}\) Goffman, Erving, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959
Consequently, they cannot explain much transnational action and cooperation that does not seem to be in the “interest” of one or another parsimonious collectivity. The misstep should now be clear. It is because “interest” is misunderstood. When transnational collective identities are properly understood, genuine, long-lasting, collective action is possible on behalf of the interest of “global peoples”. At the risk of oversimplifying, they now care about the “Other”.

I wish to elaborate one final point on transnationalism before we turn to explicitly address the nature of activism. Though my study in grounded primarily in the study of Zambia and I have outlined a number of unique factors about the Zambian context, I would like to suggest that transnationalism “naturally” unfolds in the absence of actively reproduced barriers. Without the constant reproduction of nationalist discourses, I suggest that nationalized divisions amongst humanity would emerge relatively easily. Nazi propaganda in Germany and “hate radio” in Rwanda are two extremes of the ways in which the flames of narrow nationalism have been fanned to tragic effect. Nonetheless, in each case (perhaps in every such case) people resisted these manipulations and crossed these borders to save their fellow “global people”. Though history and the news draw our focus to the persistence of the horrors of man against man, the world has also never been able to permanently divide humankind. At the risk of their lives, human beings have resisted again and again attempts to convince them that “these” or “those” are fundamentally different kinds of people. I would argue they never will. Moreover, as globalization proceeds, greater and greater

effort will need to be expended to reproduce narrow nationalism and convince people of their “fundamental” differentness. In this changing world, an understanding of transnationalism becomes a crucial area of research for the emerging field of global sociology.
Chapter VI: Activist Journeys of HIV/AIDS Healthworkers in Zambia

A central argument of this dissertation has been that activism and transnationalism are journeys. Moreover they are journeys that are often fueled though intensely emotion-laden processes. As outlined in chapter III, catalytic experiences often fuel increased activism. Early exposure to “the international” often fuels increased transnationalism. Indeed, as I have detailed above, this is precisely why HIV/AIDS healthwork is such a rich area for the present study.

From the point of view of social movement theory, we might expect to find very little activism amongst these foreign HIV/AIDS healthworkers. Nonetheless, if we are able to find any activism amongst these “professionals”, the finding would be significant. If ideal typical “professionals” journey along the continua of transnationalism and activism to “TNAs”, the explanations of that journey will be of enormous import to both social movement theorists and students of transnationalism.

Activism, in any community, is inconsistent. Even in the most activist nations of the world, the majority do not protest, organize and mobilize for social change on a regular basis. Zambia is no exception. Nonetheless, as we saw in Chapter IV, Zambia does have a rich history of social movements and collective action. Whether by resistance to colonialism, militant copper miner unionization, independence protest movements or in the form of support to African liberation struggles, Zambians have a proud history of struggling for their rights. Furthermore, it would be difficult to state without reservation that Zambians have fewer grievances than they did in the past.
Nonetheless, it is difficult to escape the consistent self-declaration by many, even most, modern Zambians that the reason they do not protest, demonstrate or vocally decry corruption is because they are simply “docile” as a people. This frequent comment or similar sentiments are also proffered consistently as explanations for why “we, Zambians” allow so much “corruption” in government or business affairs generally. Below, I will argue that activism does exist in Zambia, if in hidden and muted forms. However, these self-declarations do seem to reflect a shift in Zambian militancy in recent years. Below, I will suggest a number of possible reasons for this decline, real or imagined.

Barriers to Zambian Activism

In order to understand the challenges of social movement activity in the Zambian context, we must revisit two theoretical frameworks referenced above. First, it is important to remember that Zambia’s “place-in-the-world” has declined over the last twenty years. Once a very strong African economy, lauded by development economists as the “Paris of Africa”, Zambia ultimately succumbed to neoliberalism, debt and economic stagnation like so many of its African neighbors. Its decline,

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451 While it is outside of the scope of this study it is perhaps important to note that the practices considered “corrupt” in Zambia, and Africa generally, are often quite legal, even foundational, elements of governments in the West. For instance, giving money or favors to influence government policy or laws is generally considered a form of corruption and the target of so many “good governance” programs and reforms emanating from the West. Yet, in the West, the same practices are often quite legal, even respectable, “lobbying” activities and in the somewhat absurd Supreme Court case of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, the Court declared corporate spending to influence elections a form of “free speech” and therefore protected against limitation by the people of that country.
however, came at a much later date than many of its neighbors and has produced a less
clear conception of the cause of their decline than that of their neighbors.\textsuperscript{452}

Consequently, its relatively recent poverty has dramatically altered the
landscape of activism in Zambia. In this regard we must recall the insights of Piven
and Cloward regarding poor people’s movements. The challenges of organization,
resources, biographical availability and access to technology are substantial for poor
people’s movements. In addition, feelings of powerlessness and psychological
components of domination emerge for poor people as a significant barrier to their
collective action. More than others, poor people may be particularly fearful of the
consequences of their actions. Consequently, Piven and Cloward have challenged
social movement theorists to recognize the substantial and courageous nature of any
social movement activity by poor people.\textsuperscript{453} It is in this light that we will seek to
understand collective action in the Zambian context.

Second, while I argue that transnationalism emerges with relative ease in the
absence of the reproduction of narrow nationalist sentiment, activism is a separate
case. Consistent with other social movement scholars\textsuperscript{454}, a “culture of activism” must
be reproduced and sustained generation after generation or it may decline.
Consequently, though Zambia’s history of transnationalism is of great import to the
presence of transnationalism today, its history of activism is less causal.

\textsuperscript{452} James Ferguson has produced a number of excellent works in this regard. \textit{Expectations of
Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt} (1999) details the social
upheaval in Zambia as it became clear to Zambians that modernity, though expected, would not be
coming. Also, his work in Lesotho is an excellent illustration of the ways in which “independence” can
have a depoliticizing effect on the people of a country. (see below)
\textsuperscript{453} Piven, F., & Cloward, R., \textit{Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail}, 1977
\textsuperscript{454} Taylor, Verta, “Social Movement Continuity: The Women’s Movement in Abeyance”, \textit{American
Sociological Association}, Vol. 54, No. 5, Oct., 1989
Poverty matters. Though the resource mobilization theorists have dramatically overstated the correlation between resources and collective action, there is no denying the basic conclusion. All things being equal\textsuperscript{455}, collective action is easier for those with jobs, savings, a sense of their power to influence decision makers and resources to make those grievances heard. Aspects of this basic insight hold for Zambia as well. In the absence of widespread resources to make their grievances heard, many grievances are not taken seriously or go unnoticed. High unemployment rates certainly affect the willingness of jobholders to engage in nonconformist behavior including many social movements. Certainly the consequences of the loss of livelihood are more significant in poor nations than others. Moreover, in the modern world, so many social movements have been aided by the internet, mobile and cellular technology. These tools are also less available in less developed regions.

In addition, social theorists have traced the ways in which peoples can be manipulated through overt and covert forms of cultural domination. Whether we employ the insights of Foucault\textsuperscript{456}, post-colonial\textsuperscript{457} or Neo-Gramscian\textsuperscript{458} scholars it

\textsuperscript{455} The problem with RMT scholars is not their (very basic) insight, but their neglect of the fact that a wide variety of social, cultural and political criteria that \textit{also} matter are \textit{rarely} equal. It is important to note that they are by no means alone in this error. Indeed, one of the central arguments of this dissertation is that most social movement scholars make this error in one fashion or another. The most significant oversight from my point of view is the (also basic, though undertheorized) insight that grievances are \textit{emotional}. Relative anger, outrage, compassion and heartache can dwarf most other components of a resource-oriented approach to social movements. This insight is obvious to any student of collective behavior \textit{outside} of the West. Indeed, poor people’s movements and revolutions have been a consistent historical feature regardless of country.


seems clear cultural and psychological factors often play a role and that resources alone cannot explain the entire story.

James Ferguson’s work in Lesotho is an excellent illustration of the ways in which “independence”, for instance, can have a “de-politicizing” effect on the people of a country. To simplify an elegant thesis, Ferguson argues that South African “Bantustans” rejected the legal fiction of apartheid sponsored [sham] “independence”. However, the people of Lesotho internalized a [sham] conception of “independence” and autonomy. Consequently, they came to see their “underdevelopment” in narrowly domestic terms, as a failure of the people of Lesotho. South Africans, on the other hand, remained politicized as a result of their rejection of so-called “independence”, whereas Lesotho became “de-politicized”. In other words, I am suggesting that Zambia’s conception of itself as “independent” and autonomous may have a de-politicizing effect. Indeed, this appears to be the case amongst many Zambians who are extremely critical of their leaders and Zambians, generally. Though I am suggesting that the number is growing, Zambians rarely point to foreign governments and international economic arrangements as the source of their troubles. Consequently, employing Ferguson’s frame, we could say that a large number of Zambians have been “depoliticized” since Zambia achieved its “independence”.

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459 Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantal, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics, 1985


460 This problem is probably exacerbated in the Zambian case as their economy thrived for much longer than Lesotho, for example. Many African countries can see a clear decline since [sham] independence as a result of a consistent story of underdevelopment. Ironically, Zambia’s early successes may muddy
Another factor that has altered the landscape of Zambia in its entirety is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is no less true in terms of its effect on activism. As we have detailed above with our discussion of the Treatment Action Campaign, HIV/AIDS has certainly produced a wave of grievances and activist impulses. However, it is also a potent deterrent to collective action. The peoples of Zambia, as is the case in much of Africa, embrace obligations to extended families to a much greater degree than most cultures in the West. HIV/AIDS has strained these traditional mechanisms to an extraordinary degree. For instance, as the numbers of orphans and vulnerable children have risen, the common practice of incorporating them into extended families has been tested. Orphanages are now a prominent institution in modern Zambia despite the fact that they are culturally “foreign”.

The cultural and financial obligations of the average Zambian to their kin are numerous. Even before HIV/AIDS rates began to skyrocket in Zambia, the once strong economy was already in decline. Consequently, those Zambians with consistent employment found themselves supporting wider and wider circles of ill, unemployed or under-employed extended family members. In modern Zambia, each paid position with an international NGO is a lifeline to many extended family members behind the scenes. One respondent explained this cultural obligation at great length.

\[\text{Footnote 461}\]

For a fascinating example of the American case, see Epstein, Steve, Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge, 1996

\[\text{Footnote 462}\]

This may even be a form of “hidden” activism as Zambians find ways to sustain the lives of others through sometimes massive distribution networks.
I have a number of arguments [with foreign national friends] when I say, ‘I’m broke. I don’t have money.’ They’ll ask ‘Well, what have you done with your money?’ Well, I’ve given it to my uncle who has to pay for school fees for children… ‘Why does your uncle have to get money from you?’ and culturally, I cannot separate myself from my family. And my family here means; my father, my father’s brothers, my mother’s brothers and sisters, their children and their children’s children, you know? If you are privileged to be in a position such as mine and able to make a little bit of money, everyone looks up to you, the entire tree looks up to you to help… this family tree goes to an extent of actually sacrificing my even own children at the expense of making sure the entire family tree is well looked after…

One of thirteen children himself, this gentleman had lost three brothers to AIDS.

Consequently, he now cares for five children from one brother and three others from a second brother. With eight additional mouths to feed, his “biographical availability” for social movement participation is severely handicapped.

One Zambian widow related her story of struggle abroad trying to raise her two young children. Evicted on multiple occasions, she tried to provide a better life for them through her schooling. On one occasion, the family was reduced to spending a cold night in their car. Not every respondent had such a direct visceral experience with poverty and struggle, but certainly all were aware of the situation that would likely await them if they lost their regular income.

In addition, HIV/AIDS is sapping the emotional strength of Zambians. If, as I have argued, emotion, passion and energy are crucial to social movement participation, the emotional toll of HIV/AIDS is certainly a devastating blow to potential activism. Home-based care, a truly Zambian innovation, has resulted in

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463 B.B. interview, May 20, 2008
464 B.B. interview, May 20, 2008
465 E. M. interview, May 20, 2008
untold hours dedicated to caring for loved ones and extended family. With keen insight into the emotional and social psychological complications of HIV/AIDS work one charged that healthworkers have not fully appreciated the collective psychological damage done to HIV/AIDS ravaged communities. It is, she asserts, “a context where [Zambian] people don’t even have the energy to value their lives”. In this context, “[Sex] might be the only emotional attachment they have to people”\textsuperscript{466}. Certainly some Zambians have channeled the emotional devastation into action, but for many the toll is too much.\textsuperscript{467}

It cannot be overstated how destructive it is to live in an environment of constant death. I have already commented on the impact of a Zambian “brain drain” as educated and skilled Zambians flee their homeland in search of a better opportunity for their children. This exodus is not peculiar to Zambia. Nonetheless, the day to day immersion in an environment of death and disease can only exacerbate this flight. Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain how many potential Zambian activists have already fled Zambia. Again, invoking Piven and Cloward’s framework, any Zambian activism in such a context is truly remarkable and laudable.

More to the point, HIV/AIDS is killing Zambians. Zambians of all classes, ideologies and skill levels are dying. Thus, in every way possible, AIDS eviscerates the potential for Zambian activism. Potential activists die. Actual activists die and often they die young. Often they die before being able to pass on the skills and lessons they have learned over a lifetime. Social networks, so crucial to social movement

\textsuperscript{466} F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
\textsuperscript{467} Another Zambian respondent noted that “aid” itself can be disempowering. “Help’s not free,” he lamented. Asking for help, he suggested, can produce “something like an inferiority complex”. C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
recruitment, solidarity and longevity, are truncated and blunted as well. Emotional energy for activism is sapped and stable, secure employment is intensely guarded, further limiting participation in what could be seen as “disruptive” collective action.

However, some Zambians I have interviewed are able to justify their employment itself as a form of “activism”.\textsuperscript{468} Though the point can be overstated, many Zambian respondents did have a general view of themselves as trying to “make a change” or improve the lives of people. From a Western perspective, this may lead analysts to misunderstand activism here. In much of the West, activist roles are quite different and distinct from professional employment. Fantine Nkanza, who had been living and working in England for many years, told me that she came back to AIDS work because in some of the families she grew up with “the whole family has disappeared, everybody”.\textsuperscript{469} At least in the HIV/AIDS NGO sector in Zambia, many Zambians can consider themselves “activists” without needing to assume a separate role.

Though I have sketched a picture of Zambia as a nation with a proud history of activism (see Chapter IV), there may also have been post-independence developments that limit Zambian political activity. First, the first national party, UNIP, and the first President, Kenneth Kaunda, may have unintentionally subverted potential activism as a result of one of their clearest successes; multi-national integration. Zambia has virtually avoided ethnic conflict despite the fact that conflict has led to lengthy and

\textsuperscript{468} This is not a term widely employed by Zambians. Though I do not wish to overstate the point, this may, in itself, be an indicator of a Zambian understanding of collective action that need not be divorced from other roles in one's life. Providing a home, income or medicines to extended family members may be every bit as “activist” as a demonstration or letter-writing campaign, yet neither Zambians nor most Western scholars would consider these actions as those of an “activist”.

\textsuperscript{469} F.N interview, June 23, 2007
recurring wars in at least two neighboring countries.\textsuperscript{470} Zambians are quite proud of this tradition and at times, the tone of the “docility” comments noted above takes a much more positive tone as Zambians come to see themselves as a peace-loving people. After all, doesn’t “docility” mean peace or at least the absence of war?

Many Zambians seem to have embraced the former President’s abhorrence of inter-ethnic conflict to such an extent that many seem to equate “activism” with violence, instability and war. Consequently, frustration at the supposed “docility” of Zambians must be balanced against a very proud Zambian history of the virtual absence of “tribal” or ethno-linguistic violence.\textsuperscript{471} In this context, even Zambians who are critical of the first president proudly embrace his national motto, “One Zambia, one nation”.\textsuperscript{472} This motto is more than lip service in Zambia. Nonetheless, it is possible that the effect of unity and equating ethnic division with a lack of loyalty or national pride has dampened subsequent activism. Activities labeled as “political” are avoided by most Zambians and seen as the sphere of a very small segment of society.

\textsuperscript{470} I mean here Congo and Angola, though ethnic “tension” is certainly not absent in Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia as well.

\textsuperscript{471} It is perhaps important to note that Zambia seems to have been fortunate that no significant natural resource is found disproportionately within the jurisdiction of a particular ethnic grouping. Consequently, Zambia has been able to avoid the ethnic-resource wars or secession that one finds in Congo (Katanga province) or even in Nigeria (which is also complicated by a significant religious divide). A clear exception is the Copperbelt province which was made a “multi-national” labor zone of sorts under British colonialism. There have been rumors of oil deposits in the Northwestern region of the country. Whether such a development has any basis in fact, what is quite striking is the near universal apprehension and dread that Zambians feel at the prospect. Rather than cheering the prospects of increased revenue, Zambians seem to want to avoid a) an increased, perhaps militarized, foreign presence in Zambia and b) the emergence of regional resource rivalries.

\textsuperscript{472} As we have discussed in Chapter IV, Zambia in many ways is a stunningly successful “multinational” country. Few countries in the world as diverse (more than 70 ethno-linguistic groupings) as Zambia, can rival its profound absence of inter-ethnic conflict. This is all the more “surprising” given that it is surrounded by nine other nations, some with lengthy inter-ethnic conflicts (Congo, Angola, Namibia, to name a few). It is also noteworthy that this unity was fused not through the adoption of a unifying language like Swahili in Julius K. Nyerere’s Tanzania, but rather through the embrace of a thoroughgoing ethno-linguistic diversity. This has all been achieved despite rising poverty and steadily declining life expectancies. It is hard to imagine any other multinational country passing through such difficulty without seizing upon the convenient tool of ethnic scapegoating.
Additionally, the post-independence national party did institute nearly twenty years of a “one party” political system. Stories of secret police making political opponents “disappear” are common tavern tales. For our purposes, the veracity of such stories is irrelevant, but the effect is not. The fact that some segment of Zambian society is still fearful of such a possibility may be enough to dampen activist leanings. A less disputable fact is a very tightly controlled national press. For most of Zambia’s history, the major newspapers and television stations would not criticize government in any meaningful form. Though some change has occurred\(^\text{473}\), the cultural landscape of Zambia has been formed by a media that, as a rule, has not criticized government decisions and has portrayed protestors (often students) in an extremely negative light. Popular media, then, has certainly not nurtured a romantic vision of activism as campaigning for “social justice”.

As I have detailed in Chapter IV, this was not always the case. Zambians aided liberation struggles throughout the region and the government generally nurtured protests against minority rule in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola. However, after independence, government support for, and tolerance of, protest has declined precipitously. Government may also be increasingly viewed as the “cause” of

\(^{473}\) There is now at least one “independent” newspaper in Zambia (The Post). In addition, the internet and satellite TV have now muted the culture-shaping effect of the national television station. Nonetheless, in 2004, the government did initiate deportation proceedings against one of the nation’s most popular government critics and satirists (he is a British national, but a longtime Zambian resident and married to a prominent Zambian activist) after a particularly scathing editorial. See “Court Quashes Roy Clarke Deportation Order” \textit{Times of Zambia}, April 27, 2004
underdevelopment leading government officials to respond harshly to protests that are now unwanted.474

**Zambians and Activism**

Nonetheless, despite the barriers noted above, many respondents do show a marked propensity towards activist identities. Much of this sentiment emerges as a result of a extremely emotional connection to the work they do. Though many of the characteristics described above would suggest the “Professional” or “Missionary” ideal type, the passion of so many of these healthworkers suggests “Localist” or “TNA” potential.

Perhaps the most profound barrier Zambians articulated between some foreign nationals and themselves was a perceived lack of identification with the HIV/AIDS victims themselves. In broad strokes, Zambians felt that though foreigners might do good work and be very dedicated, many could not understand the emotionally visceral nature of watching so many of your family members, neighbors, friends and mentors die at such a young age.475 “For us, it’s not just a theoretical thing…Every single Zambian is traumatized by AIDS, every single Zambian.”476 Another commented that

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474 In this respect, Ferguson’s insights regarding depoliticization (see above) may be particularly relevant. As Zambians come to see their own leaders as the source of failure, domestic protest mounts. International protests are rare. On the other hand, Arturo Escobar (“Power and Visibility: Development and the Invention and Management of the Third World”, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 3, No. 4, [Nov., 1988], 428-443) and others have highlighting the training of cadres of Third World development “experts” who return to their countries to “sell” neoliberal development orthodoxy to their own people. In this sense, domestic protest may be particularly apt and important.

475 Again, in the cases where foreign nationals do begin to see Zambians as “we”, there is also a high degree of activism. When Zambians are kept at a distance, and transnationalism is low, activism is likely to be low as well. In other words, activism and transnationalism reinforce each other at the far end of the spectrum.

476 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
a weakness of foreigners working on HIV/AIDS was that they “don’t fully engage the subject matter.” From the point of view of the activist-minded Zambian, detached, impersonal, healthwork is subpar.

For most of the Zambian respondents I interviewed, HIV/AIDS work was something that they were passionate about. Most had lost family or friends to AIDS. Consequently, ineffective AIDS work, endless meetings, bureaucratic delays and regulations provoked anger or frustration in many respondents. For these respondents, each delay, each wasted “ingwe” was potentially costing lives. In matters of life and death, one particularly activist-minded respondent complained, how can you justify wasting money on “fancy cars” or lengthy workshops at “fancy lodges”? Another recalled a project in which $4,000 was spent in on one trip, “Can you imagine how much $4,000 can do at a community level? You can’t imagine it.” The same respondent was upset at regulations that dictated that funds from a particular nation must be spent on procuring goods from companies of that nation. But his anger was not directed at the self-serving nature of this “aid”, rather he was upset that the goods cost more. For activists like this, the tragedy lay in the lost opportunity to save more lives.

Others voiced rare indignation at (often PEPFAR inspired) HIV/AIDS regulations. In what has become development industry orthodoxy, enormous emphasis and resources have been (re)directed to extensive monitoring and evaluation divisions.

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477 B.B. interview, May 21, 2008
478 Zambian currency once consisted of “kwacha” and the lesser valued “ingwe”. Ingwe are no longer used, but it is still used as an expression. Here, it is akin to “every last cent”.
479 G.B. interview June 26, 2007
480 R.M. interview, June 29, 2007
US-funded programs, in particular, called upon their partner programs to “count” each person, each condom, each lesson, etc. The emphasis on “numbers” has generated resentment in many potential Zambian activists. Many believe that this emphasis has distracted workers and programs from quality programs and has robbed them of precious time. Instead, “I’ll be panicking about the numbers”. \(^{481}\)

A related passion of the activists was the indignity of being paternalistically instructed on how to address a public health problem that is so inextricably linked to the particular cultures of Zambia. Said one, “HIV work shouldn’t be general, it should be particularized.” \(^{482}\) Another objected to “downloading pre-packaged programs” from other contexts. \(^{483}\) Nearly all Zambians remarked that foreign nationals often miss an aspect of cultural specificity. They might not quite understand a particular aspect of marriage, gender relations, community obligations, rural-urban ties, extended family dynamics or sexual taboos that are important to the particular context if HIV/AIDS healthwork in Zambia. Many Zambians echoed the sentiment above that “They need to empty themselves first.” \(^{484}\) Again, however, the more activist-minded respondents did not seem to object to the paternalism, arrogance or cultural misunderstanding *per se* as much as the lost time and opportunity in the attempt to save lives. They seemed driven by an *urgency* that made delay, wrong turns, excessive deliberations and wasted funds insufferable. Indignity could be suffered, but delay could not.

\(^{481}\) E.Z. interview, June 27, 2007
\(^{482}\) C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
\(^{483}\) C.M. interview, June 29, 2007. This respondent was also adamant about the need to support the already existing work of Zambians.
\(^{484}\) C.M. interview, June 27, 2007
This was not simply lip service. Despite poor salaries and extended family obligations, many Zambian respondents did volunteer time to help in caregiving projects or outreach “off the clock”. Many volunteered as community HIV/AIDS counselors, in home-based care and voluntary church projects. More than one respondent had formed their NGOs in their spare time and a Zambian doctor started his own program to increase medical workplace safety with regard to HIV/AIDS.  

Again, invoking Piven and Cloward, this is not to be underestimated. As a result of extended family obligations and low salaries, many Zambian healthworkers (and others) engage in “side businesses” to try to make ends meet or get ahead. Many also care for orphans or children of their own. In this context, the volunteer work they do engage in is noteworthy.

George Banda, one of the more activist-minded respondents was particularly ardent about volunteerism. For him, effective HIV/AIDS work is work that motivates people, work that mobilizes community volunteerism. In his mind, volunteers are the only truly “sustainable” aspect of HIV/AIDS work in Zambia. All else is dependent upon funding. Activists, grounded in actual communities, are the best “feedback loops”. For Mr. Banda, paying people to do HIV/AIDS work “kills the spirit of the volunteer”. While employees are loyal to their pay, volunteers are loyal to the communities they serve.

Other activist minded respondents continually emphasized that quality HIV/AIDS work must address the systemic problems of structural poverty. While

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485 C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
486 G.B. interview June 26, 2007
more “professionalized” respondents would emphasize treatment, adherence, M&E, rigorous accounting and the like, activist-minded Zambians continually emphasized the connection between poverty and HIV/AIDS. A flood of monetary aid has altered the landscape of HIV/AIDS work in Zambia. However, activist minded Zambians continually underscored that little has been done to alter structural poverty in Zambia. Zambia will continue to be poor and the poor within Zambia will continue to be most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. From a strictly medical point of view, anti-retroviral drug regiments are not designed to be consumed on an empty stomach. One activist-minded Zambian put this in specific context. For him, poverty and issues of food and shelter were central human rights issues. For him, freedom from poverty is a human right and until it is recognized as such, these problems will continue. In a country where malnutrition is common and rural communities refer to particular months of the year as the “hungry season”, the central problematic of poverty is clear.

A central flaw of much of the social movement scholarship crafted in the West is the assumption that Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) are a clear indicator of social movement activity.487 Again, the scholarship of Frances Fox Piven is one clear exception. In Challenging Authority she details the clear pitfalls of organization and institutionalization to achieving social movement goals.488 Much of effective social movement activity outside of the West does not take institutionally organized forms. Consequently, analysts must also seek to understand subtle, less organized forms of protest.

488 Piven, Frances Fox, Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America, 2006
Individuals unconnected to activist organizations are involved in volunteer work, community empowerment projects and leadership development in their families and communities. Communities construct schools, build bridges and repair community centers throughout Zambia. They form agricultural cooperatives and fundraise for worthy causes. In fact, much of Zambia’s health infrastructure in the rural areas is carried out and directed by community volunteers; Neighborhood Health Committees (NHCs), Community Health Workers (CHWs) and traditional midwives. Invoking again, the framework of Piven and Cloward, we can see that this level of participation, involvement and voluntarism amongst poor people is significant.

In addition, much of Zambian activism occurs on a small scale. For instance, cultural change movements emerge from day to day interaction in which HIV positive people declare their status in order to erode community stigma regarding the disease. Countless small women’s groups work day to day to achieve gradual change through empowerment of women, development of leadership skills and confronting patriarchal practices in Zambia. A Zambian doctor remarked that he actively tries to influence any politician he comes across, foreigner or Zambian about what needs to be done in the HIV/AIDS field. “I try to lobby thinking of the grassroots.” Strategically, he also works with those “pressure groups” to “generate demand” at the grassroots”. 489 John Asha tries to train locals he works with to “hold your member of Parliament to account”. 490

489 C.M. interview, June 11, 2008
490 J.A. interview, June 28, 2007
Despite the evidence above, my research indicates that Zambians, in Zambia, are more likely to be localists than TNAs. However, my research indicates that despite enormous barriers to activism in the Zambian context, a potential for transnational activism remains high. What would be required to ignite this potential? I would argue that any number of issues might trigger renewed activism. If international funding for ARVs were to decrease or international military intervention in Africa were to occur, it is quite possible that Zambia’s once activist culture and present transnationalism might combine in a potent transnational social movement. This was the case in anti-apartheid movements and African liberation movements in the not too distant past.

Recent developments in Zambia also seem to highlight a re-emerging activist culture. In 2011, a grassroots popular movement of Zambians changed political parties for only the second time in their history.\footnote{491} The Multi-Party Movement for Democracy (MMD), which had been entrenched in power for two decades, gave way to the Patriotic Front and the energetic, populist president, Michael Sata.\footnote{492} Alongside these developments, Zambian civil society organizations have grown more visible, holding a series of Zambian Social Forums since 2005.\footnote{493} More will be said about this potential in Chapter VII.

\footnote{491} Noteworthy in the context of Zambian transnationalism is the fact that Zambians also elected a Zambian of European ancestry as Vice President. Smith, David “Zambia’s white vice-president hails new ‘cosmopolitan’ era”, The Guardian (U.K.), October 4, 2011
\footnote{492} This was after two disputed election results in which Sata showed early poll leads and subsequently was not declared the winner. After the 2006 results were announced, Zambian cities erupted in rioting. “Zambia vote count sparks violence”, BBC News (online), October 1, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5396884.stm, accessed February 23, 2012
Foreign Nationals and Activism

Assessing levels of activism amongst foreign HIV/AIDS workers in Zambia is as difficult a task as assessing transnationalism. For all of the reasons detailed in Chapter VI, foreigners, as a group, do not appear to have reason to “rock the boat” or engage in activism in most forms. Certainly, the majority of them have self-selected against activism. As the respondent above stated, “I’m not a volunteer. I make a good living.”

Foreign nationals in Zambia more often than not have chosen professional, international careers. Being seen as an activist can easily be viewed negatively by employers and potential employers. They, as a rule, are not inclined to risk their careers in pursuit of any particular cause.

Furthermore, immigration officials expect foreign nationals to be competent, professional experts who bring an expertise in their field that is not easily found within Zambia, not activists. Recent shifts in development industry orthodoxy have also placed a heavy emphasis on “M&E” (monitoring and evaluation) and grantwriting. Consequently, NGOs now hire fewer foreign social workers and MPH graduates and more foreigners with MBAs and public relations experience. As a rule, these professionals tend to be older and less “biographically available”. Moreover, Zambian government officials certainly have no interest in granting or extending visas to foreigners who organize protests and mobilize anti-government sentiment.

As we have mentioned above, they may also jealously guard their relatively upper class lifestyles (large houses with maids, nannies and drivers) and the international schools for their children. In general, all of the pressures that dampen

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494 D.C. interview, June 20, 2007
protest when it becomes formally organized are heightened for professionals working overseas. From an institutionalist or structuralist perspective, we should expect very little activist sentiment amongst foreign nationals. In a sense, it would be quite surprising to find high levels of activism amongst foreign national healthworkers.

Nonetheless, the foreign nationals I interviewed were strikingly forthcoming in their condemnation of poor HIV/AIDS work. Indeed, the development of activist identities seems to follow the patterns outlined in Chapter III amongst World Social Forum activists. Catalytic events have indeed motivated and driven many to activism and/or activist identities. These respondents were the most likely to have arrived overseas with a pre-existing activist self-conception. Furthermore, less active, more “professionalized”, respondents often move along the continua towards activist self-conceptions to the extent that they adopt transnational collective identities. In other words, despite strong institutional and structural pressures against activism, those who “connect” to Zambians, those who develop (subjective) transnational collective identities are more likely to be more active. Put simply, they begin to care about the “Other” who is no longer an “Other” in their self-conception.

Activist-leaning foreigners were often passionately critical of poor HIV/AIDS work. Often these were organizations or entities with which they worked or cooperated. The condemnation of PEPFAR, USAID (US Agency for International Development) and the American response in general was often scathing.495 One

495 For this reason and to protect the identity of the respondents who provided these very sensitive details, I am withholding any identifying marker (ex. pseudonyms, dates of interviews, etc.) for many of these responses.
respondent attacked the arrogance of the American approach, “USAID has this hubris that every five years they need to develop a new strategy to change the whole world.”\textsuperscript{496} Another charged that USAID was a “horrible organization… [a] horrendous system… and none of them went to Public Health School.”\textsuperscript{497} The inference was clear that perhaps hiring decisions are made with at least dual purposes in mind. Another American healthworker was told that a particular position was unavailable “without White House connections”.\textsuperscript{498} This was certainly driven home in a very direct way with the Presidential appointment of a major pharmaceutical executive to the post of Global AIDS Coordinator.\textsuperscript{499} When that very executive, in charge of a program seen by many to be pushing an irrational, ineffective and arrogant moral message (“abstinence only” and “be faithful”) on Africa, resigned in disgrace after soliciting prostitution, activist-minded foreigners were dumbfounded.\textsuperscript{500}

Some of the healthworkers objected to the corrupted nature of development itself. “Doing good” seemed to come with too much politics. One remarked that organizations were in a constant scramble to get “certain” organizations as partners because it would increase your chance of funding. It’s “like horse-trading sometimes”. Success seemed entirely too dependent on “sweet talking” and “ass kissing”. “You have to schmooze,” he concluded.\textsuperscript{501} Another lamented the jaded nature of so many

\textsuperscript{496}Withheld
\textsuperscript{497}Withheld
\textsuperscript{498}Withheld
\textsuperscript{499}Lobe, Jim, “Bush’s ‘surreal’ choice for AIDS czar”, Asia Times, July 4, 2003
\textsuperscript{500}Ross, Brian and Rood, Justin, “Senior Official linked to Escort Service Resigns”, ABC news (online), April 27, 2007. Moreover, one Zambian respondent was upset that some foreign healthworkers moralize about abstinence and faithfulness quite a bit, but in the evenings they “explore a lot”. R.M. interview, June 22, 2007
\textsuperscript{501}Withheld
development workers. “There are a lot of whiny, bitchy people in the development world. I can’t stand those whiny, bitchy people…”

The US president’s PEPFAR funding provoked particularly harsh condemnation. Some charged that it they had seen that much of the money dedicated for saving lives “in Zambia” made its way to back to US citizens and companies. One said she had seen funding “siphoned” at every step of the process. Another commented on the irony of so much money being “available” for HIV/AIDS work when 8-10 positions at the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council went unfunded. Yet another remarked that PEPFAR was now the “bully” in Zambian HIV/AIDS work and numerous respondents commented on the arrogance of an American government circumventing NAC and Zambian government and leadership generally.

Additionally, healthworkers who have been trained to think in terms of reducing the spread of disease, lashed out at religious agendas being presented as health responses in the midst of an AIDS crisis. Even worse, funding was being diverted for these purposes. One respondent was apoplectic when recalling a PEPFAR program that equated community leaders with religious leaders. Predictably, after funding a large HIV/AIDS training for religious leaders, the program “boomeranged” as the “leaders” began moralizing against the behaviors of HIV/AIDS victims. Similarly, respondents were horrified at programs attempting to “reform” commercial sex workers (CSWs).
Condemned most consistently were the so-called “ABC” (Abstain, Be faithful, Condoms) requirements. PEPFAR funding was attached to a series of regulations which required PEPFAR funded programs to dedicate a third of funding to programs which urged abstinence until marriage and/or faithfulness on the part of partners. Successful programs built around education about condom usage and distribution of condoms found it near impossible to secure PEPFAR funding. “People don’t think in terms of ABC” remarked one health worker who was horrified that VCT (Voluntary Counseling and Testing) counselors and their programs would be required to proceed through ABC checklists with their clients. If they refused, they risked losing funding.507 Another stated flatly that the abstinence only requirements “make me feel like a prostitute sometimes”.508

The more activist-minded respondents were more inclined to critique the challenges of HIV/AIDS work in a larger frame. Like so many Zambian respondents, these foreigners were able to see the central issues of poverty and nutrition as intimately linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, yet very little institutional resources have been dedicated to these issues. A particularly insightful respondent pointed out that the underlying cause of commercial sex work is poverty. Every other avenue is closed to them. Therefore, “HIV/AIDS work needs to have some way of addressing the underlying causes be they cultural, economic or sociological.”509

A few extremely insightful respondents placed the HIV/AIDS pandemic squarely at the feet of neoliberal globalization. Echoing activists at TAC and the WSF,
these respondents charged that though resources for AIDS are “staggering”, “they come with strings”. Furthermore, these strings create a structural dis-incentive to work with the Zambian government.\textsuperscript{510} Consequently, an enormous foreign economic, social, political and cultural intervention into a sovereign nation is carried out with little regard to the will of the duly elected sovereign officials of that state.

Numerous respondents, foreign and Zambian gradually came to the same conclusion about the sheer amount of funding involved in ART (Anti-Retroviral Therapy). Each concluded, soberly, that this level of funding could never be sustained over the number of years needed to keep people alive over the long term. The conclusion, rarely stated aloud, was that someday in the future, the US will pull their funding and hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions will begin to die. As I mentioned above, this makes Zambia incredibly vulnerable. Though authors have argued that the “independence” of former colonies has always been a sham independence\textsuperscript{511}, the massive PEPFAR “carrot” may soon explicitly turn countries like Zambia into client states.

Many Zambians seem to have discerned this reality as did a few of the foreigners I interviewed. Roger Howard in particular connected the health effects of neoliberal institutions explicitly.

\textsuperscript{510} Withheld
Again, there’s no simple answer. The only answer that’s gonna get any of these countries to where they want, or need to be is for government to be able to pay these people a reasonable wage and benefit package. And until they can do that, you’re gonna have doctors leaving for Botswana and South Africa, you’re gonna have midwives leaving for Australia and the U.K. and you’re gonna have government staff leaving for NGO positions... and you’ve got competing interests... World Bank and IMF influences that make it challenging... basic economic resources and decisions about where to put those resources.\(^{512}\)

Specifically, he bristled at IMF and World Bank pressure to streamline government expenditures leading to a massive dismissal of trained midwives. “They needed ‘em, but they let them go because there were a lot of healthworkers on the public books.... So [there is] pressure to streamline government and reduce spending on a sort of a Western capitalist model for ‘good governance’.\(^{513}\)

Many foreign respondents certainly felt uncomfortable in the midst of the myriad institutional pressures. William Price tries to remember what he was “about” when he was in the Peace Corps and tries “not to go over to the dark side”.\(^{514}\) Another responded to a question about quality HIV/AIDS work, “Do you want the slogans or what I think?”\(^{515}\)

Others found ways to flatly resist. One respondent detailed an experience with the USAID officials outlining the restrictive and offensive guidelines for PEPFAR funding. After detailing the new requirements, the official nevertheless told her, “but don’t ignore your population”.\(^{516}\) The assumption was that there was “a wink and a nod” to distribute condoms when appropriate. Another respondent detailed that her

\(^{512}\) R.H. interview, June 20, 2008  
\(^{513}\) R.H. interview, June 20, 2008  
\(^{514}\) W.P. interview, May 10, 2007  
\(^{515}\) E.S. interview, June 15, 2007  
\(^{516}\) Withheld
organization took PEPFAR funding, but rather than altering the organization’s focus, they found “other” funding for condom distribution.\textsuperscript{517} Yet another explained that their organization essentially spoke for thirty seconds about abstinence and “faithfulness” and then moved rapidly onto the programmatic imperatives they knew were necessary. They could accurately report to funders that they had conducted educational programming on abstinence and “faithfulness” to an audience of a certain number of Zambians while clearly subverting the intention of the requirements.\textsuperscript{518} Still others simply defied the regulations. Clearly, some foreign healthworkers were willing to risk loss of employment and often significant side benefits in pursuit of a cause. The question is why.

In this regard, the healthworker responses to a single question are particularly instructive. “What,” I asked, “are the characteristics of quality HIV/AIDS work”.

Many of the responses echoed organizational mantras, public health lingo and “buzzwords”. However, collectively, the more activist-minded respondents followed a line not taught in public health school. For instance, the Nigerian doctor mentioned above poetically juxtaposed the problems of donor country arrogance in HIV/AIDS work using a parable of adopting an orphan.

\begin{quote}
Just like a child that you picked from the road, an abandoned child, you probably come with some funding. With an orphan from the streets, do you expect him, because you adopted him to change his values… overnight? No! You need to love him for the values to change. You need to accept for the values to change. You need to nurture him. You need to mentor him.\textsuperscript{519}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{517} Withheld  
\textsuperscript{518} Withheld  
\textsuperscript{519} M.G. interview, June 24, 2008
Though his parable was a clear critique of the pitfalls of an arrogant mindset, the solutions, for him, were interpersonal (acceptance, mentorship and love).

Indeed the most active and most transnational respondents did continually argue that the most important aspect of quality HIV/AIDS healthwork is “personal relationships”. To do good work, “you really have to establish friendship with people… I’m not giving them things, so I have to establish friendships… otherwise, why would they listen to a 26 year old white woman… we wouldn’t do that for a 26 year old African”\(^{520}\) For others, good HIV/AIDS work requires “empowerment” of people which can only emerge from trust.

Where does such trust come from? Said one, “I do a lot of hanging out and a lot of BS-ing.” Furthermore, “I make them laugh [by using blunt/direct words regarding sex]”\(^{521}\) In the words of the young Irishman mentioned earlier, the key to transnational understanding and social change is “to create an atmosphere” of comfort and community. It’s “a bit patronizing”, says he, to say something to people one has never met. In his view, genuine change is slow, filled with creativity and “grassroots”.

Successful work can only come after meeting people and coming to understand them. People can’t be “indoctrinated…. Or else it’s not honest and it won’t be lasting… Human beings don’t do what they’re told… they need to have a realization.”\(^{522}\) In other words, a “connection” and a sense of transnational collective identification with Zambians is not only a critical component of transnationalism, it is a critical component of good healthwork.

\(^{520}\) A.T. interview, May 31, 2007
\(^{521}\) A.T. interview, May 31, 2007
\(^{522}\) A.M. interview, May 8, 2007
Echoing the sentiments of the most transnational respondents detailed above, he also ardently objected to the division and subdivision of humanity. You can’t “categorize people as refugees, street kids, etc.”, he said, “they’re not orphans, they’re children”. Later, “I think you can make generalizations about humanity”. In his opinion, the media has “over portrayed the differences between people… People are people… the conditions are different, but suffering is suffering.”

The emotion-laden “connection” with Zambians was a common theme amongst healthworkers. One respondent who once worked as a homeless program director and asserts he works seventy hours a week, finds himself rallying his Zambian staff to do extra work with “I don’t know how many Zambians might die tonight from the work we don’t do.” Another broke down in her interview. Chokingly, she stammered out “I get very emotional… I care about them”. Yet another told me that her Zambian counterpart is her “best friend in the whole world right now”.

Perhaps the richest example of the transformation of a foreign national was detailed by the Zambian respondent above who had extensive extended family obligations. He noted a dramatic change in his workmate over time in Zambia and was shocked that he had decided to buy a Zambian coworker a house.

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523 A.M. interview, May 8, 2007
524 W.P. interview, May 10, 2007
525 A.T. interview, May 31, 2007
526 K.K. interview, June 29, 2007
I said to him, ‘you know when you first came; I think we debated and argued about ‘why are you spending all of your money on your relatives? You are planning on buying a house for this lady?! You paid her! You paid her a salary throughout your time, but you’re buying her a house!’ [laughing] He says, ‘Well, I identify with her, she worked well.’ I said, ‘Well, that’s what we mean by extended family… you’re becoming more… more like one of us than an American.’ [laughing] So that was amazing… It’s that closeness, it’s that… you know when you begin to… maybe get into another person’s culture and understand that and actually live with them that perhaps your own way of thinking begins to change.527

In the interviews I conducted a growing sense of transnationalism tended to map on to levels of increased activism or activist self-conceptions. As “they” became “we”, many healthworkers became impassioned about, and personally connected to, their work. They were intolerant of delays, bureaucracy, wasted funds and geopolitical528 or religious agendas. As one respondent put it, “You become more of a world citizen… You take it more personally when a truck goes off the road… When there’s a plane crash… you may know someone.”529 This could be expanded to other spheres as well. When someone needlessly dies because of lack of access to ARVs that are widely available in your country, you take it personally. Or, when neoliberal policies are enacted to paralyze healthcare delivery in the places that need it, you take

527 B.B. interview, May 21, 2008
528 One Zambian respondent in casual conversation, commented at length about what he felt might be occurring. He sensed that much of the “aid” to Zambia was essentially a propaganda campaign. What was his proof? He stated that USAID has added a line to its “brand”. (USAID, as opposed to almost every other development agency places stickers or printed signs on every piece of equipment, including desks and computers with a logo “USAID”. It is a surreal experience to appeal for a visa extension in a Zambian immigration office that is full of desks and computers marked with “USAID”.) According to this informant, the line that was added after 9/11 was “from the American people”. This informant suggests that the timing was not accidental. The implication is that the “people” of the USA were used as the effective propaganda wing of the US government once the government of the USA had been seen as violent, unilateral and unreasonable. “The people”, he suggested, are now used as the moral/ethical/good propaganda wing of US foreign policy, even when the government of the USA adopts a categorically different approach.
529 C.T. interview, May 18, 2007
it personally. Or, when market logic demands that millions of dollars flow from the “developing” world to the developing world in the form of “debt” payments despite an AIDS epidemic that is responsible for more deaths than Hitler and Stalin combined, you take it personally. In a word, as “they” became “we” respondents slowly moved from “Professionals” and “Missionaries” towards Transnational Activists (TNAs). However, this was not the only path.

“Catalytic experiences”

Some had adopted activist self-conceptions before ever boarding a plane to Zambia. Some may have even considered themselves transnational activists. Though fewer healthworkers reported significant “catalytic experiences” than the WSF activists I study in Chapter III, three of the most activist minded foreigners did. One recalled a year-long travel to Israel. Here, she conducted volunteer work amongst poorer communities in what she called a critical “empowering experience” that helped shape her sense of herself as an activist.530 Another was on a vacation in Vietnam and spontaneously decided to visit a nearby orphanage. There he felt a profound sense of “injustice” alongside a realization that he had skills and talents that could and should be used to improve lives.531 Lastly, another woman was transformed through an empowering activist-oriented experience seeing the exploitation and oppression of commercial sex workers in Cambodia.

530 A.B. interview, May, 2007
531 A.M. interview, May 8, 2007
Though it was much less common, some Zambians were also motivated by catalytic events in their lives. Eve Zumba became passionate about the plight of orphans and vulnerable children after her father died. When her father’s relatives took property away from the remaining family, she watched her mother’s struggles helplessly. Coming from a middle class background, this made her think about how much more difficult this must be for poor Zambians. Almost immediately, she chose to study Social Work at the University and has dedicated the nine years since to helping orphans and vulnerable children.\footnote{E.Z. interview, June 27, 2007}
A Public Sociology for HIV/AIDS Work

As a self-styled public sociologist, one of my explicit intentions of this dissertation is to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of HIV/AIDS work as presently structured and to propose a roadmap for improving the important work that these healthcare workers are engaged in. The strengths of HIV/AIDS work from the perspective of this author and nearly all of the respondents I encountered are the following. First, the cross cultural nature of this work, while fraught with difficulty and complication, is seen by all as essential. This work will quite simply fail on every level without the Zambians who act as cross cultural “translators” and provide the context and local expertise that is essential to success. However, Zambians also consistently praised what foreigners could bring to the HIV/AIDS context if they were able to “empty themselves first”. The expertise that they bring from diverse contexts can be beneficial. Their removal from domestic Zambian politics, for example, or their disconnection from certain cultural barriers to effective HIV/AIDS work can also be useful. Cross-cultural, transnational collaboration offers the best hope for comprehensive, effective responses to this global pandemic. As one Zambian respondent noted above, there is just a “need to harmonize a few things.”

Second, one theme of this dissertation has been to show that emotion-laden action is not irrational. In the context of HIV/AIDS work, dispassionate, technical
healthwork, a hallmark of the Western medical tradition, can sometimes be a weakness. An emotional connection to the work that healthworkers do is important in myriad ways. As we have detailed above, HIV/AIDS work is profoundly social and cultural. To urge people to change their sexual behaviors, stereotypes or cultural beliefs is an extremely difficult task in itself. Without trust, a sense of “connection” with the victims or potential victims of this disease, technical and dispassionate healthwork can also be ineffective healthwork. Healthworkers, perceived as self-interested, detached, “foreign” (even amongst Zambians) and fundamentally different, will not inspire change. However, many of the healthworkers I interviewed are very “connected” to the work they do and this seems a clear strength.

However, there are also a number of weaknesses. First, in the effort to “scale up” programs that have been effective outside of Zambia (or even within a particular region of Zambia), a great deal of cultural specificity is lost. This tendency, while understandable, is an inevitable problem of profoundly cultural HIV/AIDS work. Rather than expanding their payrolls with MBA graduates, Public Relations experts and “bean-counting” M&E (Monitoring & Evaluation) specialists, the HIV/AIDS NGO sector as a whole needs an influx of cultural anthropologists and sociologists.

Next, salary discrepancies between foreigners and Zambians should be equalized as far as possible. The logic that HIV/AIDS workers will only engage in international HIV/AIDS work when offered enormous salaries with lavish benefits should be questioned. Constant meetings, trainings, and planning sessions in luxurious
getaways are just one consequence of this faulty logic. Quality healthworkers come to this work for more than lavish salaries. Indeed, many of the respondents numbered above have suggested that unpaid, volunteer work done in communities is often the most effective. Professionalization and institutionalization may actually limit the effectiveness of well-intentioned healthwork.

There are many reasons for this very specific policy prescription. It will reduce a great deal of hidden tension between foreigners and Zambians. This tension is not only a barrier to socializing, it also affects the emotion-laden nature of the work. Foreign salaries could be reduced and Zambian salaries increased with little or no “cost”. A variety of side benefits might also emerge including the ability to socialize together. As Fantine Nkanza said, “I can’t go to a country and not know a country through people. Wherever I go, I have friends that are from that country. That’s how I know a place. How can you know a place when you don’t know anybody from it?” In other words, the salary discrepancy is an unnecessary barrier to a thoroughgoing transnationalism which is an essential hallmark of quality HIV/AIDS work.

Third, the practice of foreign donors circumventing Zambian coordination and leadership seems unjustifiable. It is a more or less overt indicator of neo-colonialism and should be abolished immediately. It insults notions of “independence” and “autonomy” when foreigners engage in public health work of such dire importance.

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534 We could indeed add this as another policy proscription. Conference, planning and “meeting” expenditures should be severely limited and those resources re-invested in actual program delivery.
535 Indeed the notion of “quality” seems married to high salaries in development orthodoxy. Higher salaries are assumed to mean the recruitment of more “skilled” healthworkers. The emphasis I place on the importance of emotion and the barriers that can emerge from excessive professionalization should make it clear that I do not subscribe to such a logic. Indeed, many of the foreign nationals themselves have said that they were hired even though they were not qualified or had “no experience”. In general, then, I am arguing for nurturing a “social movement” approach to healthwork.
536 F.N. interview, June 23, 2007
whenever, however, and wherever they see fit within a sovereign nation. As noted above, this practice has led to duplication of programs in easy to access areas along the “line of rail” and neglect of most other areas of the country.

What this practice highlights is the need for a series of international reforms as well. Educated Zambians flee Zambia for the West and the best government officials flee government in pursuit of greener pastures as a result of the myriad pressures of poverty. The clearest indicator of HIV/AIDS is that of poverty. Much effort has been dedicated to addressing this disease, but almost no effort has been directed at remedying the single most important cause of its spread; poverty. Zambia’s poverty, however, is not a domestic issue. It is the result of a series of policies associated with neoliberalism that have impoverished Zambia and countries like it for generations. This type of economic warfare is not new. Wherever imperial powers could extract tribute from their neighbors, they usually did. However, in a time of plague, a focus of profits ahead of people is unconscionable. Consequently, the fourth specific policy recommendation is to forgive all foreign debt.537

Though this may seem a radical prescription, it already has a measure of acceptance in the international economic community. Creditors know well that these countries are paying old debt with new debt and that the scale of the debt is unpayable. From a global economic point of view, the fear is not forgiveness of the debt (in an orderly, planned fashion) but rather the fear of a massive default and the global financial instability that would result. Consequently, civil society activists found

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537 In passing, I should note that I am indeed aligned with those who suggest that, in economic terms, the developed world actually owes reparations to the developing world. In the short term, however, I do not expect this to be a realistic political possibility.
surprising allies in the IMF and World Bank in their fight to forgive foreign debt.\textsuperscript{538}

When nations are paying twelve times as much to service foreign debt as for healthcare\textsuperscript{539} in the midst of an AIDS pandemic, debt forgiveness is an essential moral imperative.

Similarly, neoliberal pressures to restructure internal economies should cease. Nations like Zambia must have the autonomy to employ all economic means at their disposal to be able to provide for their people. They should be free to tax foreign corporations, increase minimum wages, provide universal healthcare and education, nationalize crucial industries, demand environmental regulations and the like.\textsuperscript{540} Until nations like Zambia are able to structure and organize their economies according to domestic priorities, no “debt” will ever be just and no conception of “independence” will have meaning.

Lastly, as World Social Forum activists have loudly and correctly pointed out, the international financial institutions of the world (WTO, IMF and World Bank) are thoroughly undemocratic and, as such, are unjust. These entities enact policies that largely determine levels of poverty and prosperity, health, education, employment, life expectancies and more. They affect the lives of people throughout the world, yet no single person in any of these organizations is elected by those same people. Rather,

\textsuperscript{538} Certainly the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiative is poor substitute for complete debt forgiveness. At this juncture, I am merely illustrating that the international financial institutions also recognize the potentially enormous tidal wave that Third World debt represents to global financial stability.

\textsuperscript{539} Davis, Mike, \textit{Planet of Slums}, 2006, p. 153

\textsuperscript{540} I align myself with earlier Non-Aligned Movement and Pan-African movement activists that urged economic coordination of countries in the developing world as a central aspect of resisting the “monocrop” legacy of colonialism. Indeed, many “developing” nations are still incredibly vulnerable as a result monocrop oriented infrastructures. Perhaps none is more constrained than Zambia and its copper mining infrastructure. Economic union would reduce the volatility that occurs to these nations when the international price of copper, for example, plummets.
each of these enormously powerful entities is dominated by appointees from the wealthiest states in the world. These organizations should be democratized, abolished or ignored. Until this happens, they will continue to enact policies that benefit a narrow group of people and impoverish a great many. HIV/AIDS and a great many other global ills will persist as long as these institutions remain unchanged.

**Theoretical Contributions**

One of the central obstacles to the ability of global social justice activists to respond to the global challenges of our age is the question of the “Other”. In this respect, Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” thesis mirrors Benjamin Barber’s concern with “Jihad vs. McWorld”. The fear for both theorists is that as globalization increases exposure to the cultural, religious, ethnic, tribal, linguistic, racial or national “Other”, anxiety and conflict will inevitably occur. On its face, there seems to be some validity to the argument. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 are just the latest in a long line of violent acts that seem motivated by an objection to diversity. The twentieth century gave birth to racial, ethnic and/or religious-based violence in Rwanda, Germany, South Africa and the US South, just to name a few. Indeed, postcolonial scholars from Fanon onwards have also been concerned with the challenges of the “Other” implicated in post-colonial relations. However, globalization

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541 There is a rich debate about which is most feasible or most desirable, but this is outside of the scope of the present study. What is irrefutable is that their present organization is untenable.  
542 Huntington, Samuel, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996  
543 Barber, Benjamin, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism’s Challenge to Democracy*, 1995
does not merely reproduce difference in intensified forms. Arjun Appadurai\textsuperscript{544}, Ulf Hannerz\textsuperscript{545}, Ulrich Beck\textsuperscript{546} and others have also shown that new hybridized relationships may emerge as well. Differential power relationships, historical legacies and persistent inequalities continue to complicate these “encounters”, but they do not always produce aversion, even less do they necessarily produce violence.

For a global social justice movement to be successful, it must negotiate this complicated morass of the “incalculable”. It must find a way to bridge the innumerable barriers of historical and present discrimination, linguistic, cultural and national division. In a word, for transnational social movements to be successful, they must find a way to develop transnational collective identities. Social movement theorists of collective identity, notably the New Social Movement theorists, have generally focused on the increasingly parsimonious nature of identity. These movements have even been accused of being retreatist or self-indulgent. Though they acknowledge a degree of flexibility in shifting conceptions of identity, they sometimes over-estimate the persistence of “essential” identities. This conception of collective identity has hampered social movement scholarship in terms of comprehending global social justice movements.

As Melucci has said, though environmental factors and other people centrally impact the cost-benefit analysis of individual choices, identity remains “what people


choose to be, the incalculable”.

Consequently, in order to understand global social movements, social movement scholars must turn their attention to the dynamics of transnational activist collective identity formation. Partially for this reason, it is a relatively uninteresting question to understand why incredibly diverse people refuse to organize and work together in transnational collective action. The more interesting question is why they do. What motivates this decision? What sustains this work? How do they sustain solidarity across incredibly diverse barriers? That has been the task of this dissertation. Accordingly, let us now turn to a summary of what we have shown.

On Transnationalism

Our investigations have uncovered more transnationalism in Zambia than is commonly believed. Zambia’s rich history of transnationalism begins with a full understanding of Zambia itself as a multi-national state. Zambians are adept at cross-cultural communication and proficient in learning new cultural competencies. They are skilled cultural “translators” and this seems to be at least part of the explanation for why this multi-national country has had little inter-ethnic conflict to speak of.

I have suggested that narrow nationalism must be reproduced generation after generation. Through educational systems, media production, national myths and often, demagogy, nationalism persists in this world. However, in the absence of diligent “difference-making” mechanisms, I argue transnationalism emerges without much difficulty. Hate, narrow provincialism and notions of superiority and inferiority, I argue, must be taught and nurtured. They require a great deal of effort to sustain.

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Indeed, Zambia seems to be a prime example. Early Zambian independence leaders seem to have allowed for a space for an easygoing transnationalism to emerge within Zambia. Moreover, Zambia has been intimately involved in supporting African liberation movements throughout the continent and assisted in brokering numerous peace agreements. The Zambian example offers a great deal of optimism for those that imagine globalization must inevitably lead to terrorism, internecine violence and hate.

On Activism

Activism, like nationalism, must be sustained. Activists respond to changes in their circumstances and political opportunities. Activist energy waxes and wanes. Moreover, activist cultures must be nurtured or fade. For a variety of reasons, Zambian activism seems to have declined in the last two decades. AIDS, feelings of powerlessness, shrinking resources and diverse obligations are just some of the factors that diminish the probability of Zambian activism.

Nonetheless, there are signs that Zambia’s activist culture has not disappeared, but rather has been in abeyance. In this context, social movement scholars must look in new spaces to discern activism in abeyance. In Zambia, local communities are engaged in a wide variety of self-help projects. Zambians have been innovators in the development of “home based care” projects to empower local communities in health care delivery. Zambians have expanded to their limit extended family networks in an effort to cope with the death and devastation they encounter daily. These are all (hidden) forms of activism that many Zambians themselves do not even discern as such. Recent surges in civil society organization (in the form of regional and national
Social Forums) and surprising election results also suggest that Zambian activism is re-emerging. In the context of the myriad challenges to activism in the Zambian context, this mobilization is significant.

Two Paths to Transnational Activist Identity Formation

Using four ideal types (Professional, Localist, Missionary and TNA) I have attempted to trace the movement from less active (“Professional” and “Missionary”) and less transnational (“Professional” and “Localist”) identities to more active (“Localist” and “TNA”) and more transnational (“Missionary” and “TNA”) identities. This framework has allowed me to sketch two broad paths to Transnational Activist (TNA) collective identities that would be important for sustaining global social justice movement solidarity, cohesion, coordination and commitment.

The first path seems to be the most frequent among the foreign HIV/AIDS healthworkers I studied. Specifically, these healthworkers generally moved from “professional” conceptions of self to a more transnational (“missionary”) sense of self first. Though there are undoubtedly a wide range of reasons for this shift, the predominant and consistent explanation was an early and positive exposure to “the international”. Whether through international parentage, international travel or profound cross-cultural experiences, these respondents came to care, to identify, with people from other cultures, races, religions, nations, regions or ethnicities at a relatively early age. As this transnational passion grew, through different paths, they found their way to more international experiences. They sought out study abroad
opportunities or volunteer opportunities overseas, for example. Ultimately, this led nearly all of them to careers in international health.

In this crucible of day to day interactions they began to see “the other” more and more as “we”. Invariably, suffering became more personalized, less technical and more emotional. They became “connected” to lives of “the Other” in powerfully emotional ways. This has led some of them down a path towards more activism (from “missionary” to “TNA”). To illustrate this first path graphically:

**Path 1: Professional (+ early exposure to “the international”) → Missionary → TNA**

**Path 2: Professional (+ “catalytic event”) → Localist → TNA**

Figure 7.1: Two Paths to Transnational Activist Identity Formation

The second path was more often a path taken by World Social Forum activists and those Zambian healthworkers on a journey towards Transnational Activist (TNA) identities. These activists generally began their path to activism first. Though certainly there are a wide variety of factors that impel people to activism, my research has highlighted an under-theorized aspect of this journey, what I call a “catalytic event”. Activist after activist at the World Social Forums recalled a decisive moment that shook them from their roots. Most of them could give details about the specific moment(s) that led them down the activist path (from “professional” to “localist”). For them, activism became one of their central identities. Similarly, the Zambian
healthworkers who most approximated the ideal typical Transnational Activist (TNA) usually began their journey through an emotional experience of loss as a result of AIDS. These losses mirror in important ways the “catalytic events” of the WSF activists leading them to want to “do something” about the plight of AIDS in Zambia (from “professional” to “localist”).

However, in each case, transnationalism for the “localist” was not a given. However, one factor that has aided those that have journeyed from localist identities to more TNA identities is day to day interactions. Amongst WSF activists, they may initially build an alliance with strange “Others” for tactical purposes only. The so-called “boomerang” theory\textsuperscript{548} is the now classic standard. Domestic local NGOs are seen as strategically partnering with international NGOs that, through a “boomerang” effect, are able to exert political international leverage on domestic governments that local NGOs are unable to muster.

Unfortunately, this rich literature has distorted the dynamics of transnational social movements by neglecting the study of transnational collective identities and their formation. Transnational social movements are assumed to be strategic collections of localists, cooperating in “advocacy networks” for generally narrow localist goals. Identity is studied in an extremely superficial fashion; race, nation,

organizational membership, etc. Consequently, they cannot explain much
transnational action and cooperation that does not seem to be in the “interest” of one
or another parsimonious collectivity. The misstep should now be clear. It is because
“interest” is misunderstood.

When transnational collective identities are properly understood, genuine,
long-lasting, collective action is possible on behalf of the interest of “global peoples”.
It is often in the crucible of transnational action that these activists develop what has
been (coldly) referred to a “relational ties”. Again, they begin to care about other
indigenous people, other people struggling against dam projects, other people
struggling against privatization of water, etc. In short, these coalition-based ties often
do move from narrowly localist and strategic to genuine friendships and relationships.
These emotion-laden shifts, movements, journeys of transnational activists have been
generally neglected in social movement scholarship. Similarly, HIV/AIDS
healthworkers who have lived and worked together begin to develop “relational”
emotional ties that can become quite firm. Perhaps the richest example of the
transformation of a foreign national was detailed by the Zambian respondent above
who had extensive extended family obligations. He noted a dramatic change in his
workmate over his time in Zambia and was shocked that he had decided to buy a
Zambian coworker a house.

See, for instance, Alvarez, Rebecca, Gutierrez, Erika, Kim, Linda, Petit, Christine and Reese,
Ellen “The Contours of Color at the World Social Forum: Reflections on Racialized Politics,
McAdam, Doug and Rucht, Dieter, “The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas”, Annals of
the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 528, Citizens, Protest and Democracy (July
1993), 56-74
This example illustrates an important pattern. Through day to day interactions with the “Other”, emotion-laden “relational” ties may develop leading to TNA identities. On the other hand, those who socialize in insular circles find it difficult to “connect” with the “Other”. Their “lived experience” reinforces a sense of difference and division. However, those that create a different “atmosphere” and open themselves to the possibility of “closeness” and cross cultural exchange may find an “Other” quite willing to do the same.

Theorizing Emotion

A major theme of this dissertation has been the underappreciated role of emotion to a wide variety of sociological phenomenon. At one level, this is understandable. Since Durkheim, sociologists have been concerned with the identification of “social facts” and with demonstrating that Sociology is as “scientific” as the natural sciences, economics or political “science”. In this effort, the sociological attention to the study of emotions has been approached with intrepidation.

Early collective behavior scholars were rightly lambasted for implying that social movement activists were somehow “irrational”. Emotion-laden protest was studied alongside panics and even fashion. However, as I detail in Chapter II, something was lost in the “turn” to rationality. Sociology began to copy the logic of economics and imagine men and women (protesting, outraged men and women, no less) as utility maximizers, self-interestedly pursuing dispassionate rational choices. Emotion was stripped from social movement theory as if there was no such thing as rational outrage. This has led to an enormous oversight of the basic fact that the
grievances of social movement actors are emotional. Relative anger, outrage, compassion and heartache can influence nearly every other component of social movement theory. In other words, emotion-laden grievances are indispensable to understanding any social movements, but particularly those of the subaltern.

Similarly, understandings of identity have generally downplayed its profoundly emotional nature. Arguably, there can be no more emotional dimension of sociology than the study of one’s sense of self. Nonetheless, racial and ethnic identities have too often been studied as bounded ascriptive categories that conform to some “natural” configuration in social space. In reality, the categories vary over time, by country and amongst people. Similarly, the notion that one’s sense of self conforms to nation-state boundaries has probably always been dubious, but in an increasingly globalizing world it is more and more untenable. Identities shift, one’s sense of self evolves and journeys. It is clear that we have multiple identities that we articulate situationally. Yet, they are not employed as instrumental “tools”.

I have argued that what separates the transnationalist from the more localist or professional subject is collective identity or identities. Beyond a strategic and instrumental “presentation of self”\textsuperscript{551}, transnationalists genuinely acquire a new sense of self. Rather than selectively borrowing from instrumental “toolkits”\textsuperscript{552}, transnationalists enjoy learning, exploring and understanding difference. As I have remarked repeatedly, their sense of “we”, of “community”, of “home”, has changed, or more correctly, is changing. This journey is emotion-laden. Joy, pain, sadness,

\textsuperscript{551} Goffman, Erving, \textit{The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life}, 1959. Similarly, a thin “cosmopolitanism”, for example, is also entirely too intentional and strategic.

\textsuperscript{552} Swidler, Ann, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies”, \textit{American Sociological Review}, Volume 51 (April 1986)
grief, embarrassment, fascination and love all play important roles. Actors’ sense of self is a result of emotion-laden struggles between our internal sense of self and totalizing identities articulated by others (the social self). We invest emotional capital, if you will, in those identities. To be sure, they are awash in a field of power relations that limit our ability to freely choose in all times and places. Nonetheless, they are not stagnant or primordial. Accordingly, an understanding of transnational identities must focus on the emotion-laden, often distressing, processes of matching ones sense of self to the external (often totalizing) social self.

*Cultures of Activism*

In Chapter III, I argued that WSF activists have crafted in the space of the World Social Forums a series of cultural “binding practices” which help to forge and reinforce a sense of TNA collective identity in the space of the Forum. Though it is outside of the scope of this dissertation, I want to suggest that cultural “binding practices” will become absolutely critical in the success or failure of global social justice movements. As I have noted above, activists cultures must be reproduced to avoid decline. How can this be accomplished?

The Forum movement itself does seem to serve as a central piece in this equation. Certainly activists gather from all over the world to share information, tactics and strategies, but there is another, equally important, purpose. In these spaces, activists renew “relational” ties. They nurture collective identities as transnational activists (TNAs), “global environmentalists”, “indigenous peoples rights activists”, “international women’s rights activists” or “global social justice activists”. In these
spaces, they bolster their internalized self-conceptions that have often been battered by broader social conceptions. In the words of Foucault,

> Maybe the most certain of all philosophical problems is the problem of the present time, and of what we are, in this very moment. Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political ‘double bind,’ which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures.  

At the World Social Forum and the myriad regional and issue based fora that have emerged, activists are re-energized by the notion that they are just and, importantly, not alone. Here they build, create and articulate a vision of the world, its people and our place in it. Through art, symbolism, music, “the lived experience” and informal socializing activities, they build up a sense of what could be called global social justice “culture” or the “beloved community”.

Moreover, nations with particularly activist histories or “cultures of activism” have taken leading roles in the Forum movement. Activists from India, South Korea, France, Brazil, Palestine and South Africa are arguably the most influential forces. South American activists generally have also taken a leading role. This lends credence not only to the central importance of reproducing cultures of activism; it also highlights the importance of subjective feelings of power or powerlessness. The activists of these nations, perhaps more than others, have a sense of their power and efficacy which must be amplified if the global social justice movement wishes to expand.

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Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1980, p. 216 (emphasis added)
My research has led me to the conclusion that these global social justice movements may be nurturing a new kind of collective identity; one that does not retrench into the narrowly local and provincial, one that embraces diversity as a central aspect of identity itself. These new identities are not rooted in the particular or narrowly national, officially sanctioned, passport sanctified, constellations with which we have become so familiar. “Global people” are emerging whose cultures, nations, sense of self and space can no longer be boxed into the socially constructed nation state. In the recent past, such identities were rare and isolating. Such people did not fit or have a “place-in-the-world”. I suggest, however, that in the present, these “global people” are finding each other. They are developing a sense of “we”. They are embracing collective identities that “reject what we are” and embrace wider collectivities. Gradually, sheepishly at first, they are moving from a “tragic” community to a proud constellation of identities. They are beginning to embrace a “universalism of difference” as a value worthy of emulating. If this is the case, understanding how these identities are built, sustained and reproduced may be one of the most important areas of study for sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and activists alike in the coming years.

554 As I mentioned above, it is not difficult to imagine, indeed to observe, that these transnationalist communities, or interconnected networks, are growing in number. As their numbers grow, their “tragic” nature is likely to fade. The once shameful and tragic “in-between” identity will gradually acquire more pride, more confidence and more members.
Appendix: A Note on Methodological Approach

Early sociologists have rightly taken oppression and suffering as their arena of study. How are people exploited? How is inequality perpetuated? How is race used to divide, rule and oppress? How are gender and sexuality constructed to dis-empower and delimit great swaths of humanity? How does power in its various forms limit and constrain us?

These are important and worthwhile questions and fields of investigation. However, the assumption of depravity and greed leads to methodological blind spots. These assumptions lead scholars to search for the greed and self interest in any question and not to stop searching until they have found it (or divined it). They likewise assume the depravity of man. These scholars need to find the depravity of man and, like hypochondriacs searching for plausible illnesses, they usually find it.

I have set for myself the task of following an alternative method.

Uncontroversially, I assume racism, sexism, nationalism and heterosexism to be forms of discrimination based on social constructs. To this list, I wish to add the innate greed and depravity of humanity. A myriad of historical, political, social and economic processes (thoroughly documented elsewhere) have hardened these constructs and imbued them with terrifying power. They define people’s lives and livelihoods. In this sense, they are “real”.

But they remain constructs. At the risk of appearing condescending to the reader, they are NOT natural. As such, they are variables and not constants. Their existence must be explained, not taken for granted. Their “permanence” and
consistency must be justified, not assumed. When such a methodological approach is adopted a range of questions become available to the researcher.

For example, we might ask what mechanisms perpetuate the continuing salience of race in the absence of many of the factors (slave mode of production, papal proclamations that Africans have no souls, etc.) which brought it into prominence. Here, the salience of race is not assumed and consequently, the researcher is able to investigate the *modern mechanisms* which perpetuate racism without a) assuming those mechanisms have remained constant over 500 years and/or b) without assuming racism is a “natural” or “permanent” factor of modern life.

This has the added benefit of producing a more useful and activist scholarship. By focusing explanations of racism on proximal causes, activists seeking to eradicate racism will be armed with the ability to a) avoid wasted effort trying to respond to distal causes which are no longer determinative and b) avoid reifying divisions of humanity as permanent or natural.

To take two examples more central to this dissertation, we might ask what accounts for the persistence of the notion of the nation state and national identities as primordial, natural or innate in a world in which many of the factors that brought these social constructs into prominence have vanished or are on the decline. Our methodological approach will enable us to narrow our field to those proximal mechanisms which perpetuate and inculcate nationalistic values and sentiments rather than taking them as a constant.

Lastly, what of that innately greedy and depraved human race? How are they to be studied? With this new approach, we are able to ask a series of questions
generally ignored by historians, economists, political and social scientists alike. In our investigation into transnationalism, we will not ask; what depraved goal do you have in working with the “Other”? What self-interested benefit? What “graft”? Instead, our approach enables the researcher to invert the field and ask, what are the proximal mechanisms by which division, exploitation, greed, persecution and oppression continue to influence so many fellow human beings?

Social scientists in the Hobbesian tradition will look at cross-national, cross-racial collaboration and cross-cultural collaboration until they stumble upon a “marker” or “indication” of greed, depravity or narrow self-interest. They will be methodologically forced, in the last instance, to see, observe, measure and conclude that they have once again found their tired trope; their innately greedy, depraved fellow human being.

The approach I propose will enable us to look at the absence of cross-national, cross-racial collaboration and cross-cultural collaboration and ask why? Rather than a method that demands that the researcher observe unity (the innately greedy, depraved fellow human being), our method will enable the researcher to see, observe and measure variation. This method will enable the researcher to study the various microlevel pushes and pulls in which subjects begin to construct themselves as greedy and depraved.

In other words, our method will help us to contrast those who have been able to resist the weight of dominant, totalizing identities against those who have been less successful.
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