Scales of Activism: New Media and Transnational Connections in Anti-War Movements

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Introduction

Reinvigorated by the 9/11 attacks in the USA, large-scale anti-war movements emerged in many countries. By February 2003 an American-dominated ‘coalition of the willing’ was poised to launch a military assault on Iraq. In response co-ordinated demonstrations against the war took place around the world on February 15th in over 600 cities. So striking was this protest that Tyler (2003) of the *New York Times* was moved to describe what he saw as ‘two superpowers’ set against one another, the United States of America and ‘world public opinion’ as represented by the marchers.

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The anti-war movement in Britain was broad and heterogeneous. Its defining feature was that it incorporated and encompassed so many seemingly different issues and groups who had not previously worked together. As an activist in Britain herself noted, ‘the anti-war movement has forced some bizarre coalitions’ (Yvonne Ridley interview, Respect, London). Participant groups included those committed to ideological pacifism (Society of Friends), feminism (Code Pink), anti-globalisation (Wombles), political parties (Respect), artistic performance (Rhythms of Resistance), and faith (Muslim Association of Britain) (Figure 1). These anti-war groups and organizations have adopted and adapted Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in very different ways. Email, internet, and mobile technologies are now integral to current campaigning (Atton 2003; Pickerill, 2003; Gillan 2008).

Figure 1: London anti-war rally, March 2006 (Jenny Pickerill)

This chapter is concerned with exploring how use of multiple media by this diverse anti-war movement helps us understand the processes and meanings of transnational protest. It maps the different ways in which transnational protest has been constituted – as both material and
practical connections (through co-ordinated protest and meetings) and symbolic expressions of solidarity (through visual symbols and the sharing of news). These different forms use ICTs in contrasting, but complimentary, ways to make anti-war activists feel global and interconnected into a transnational anti-war movement. The limitations of these different transnational forms (identified as practical problems, dominant concerns with national priorities and the importance of local connections) are not necessarily overcome by the use of ICTs and as such while new media facilitates transnational protest it is no panacea for the problems of operating at this scale. Moreover, we argue that in exploring transnational protest we need to rethink scale as not simply linear (and thus scaled-up from the local to global) but as relational and mutually-constituted. This involves understanding the organisational forms and values of activists in their construction of scale. It requires valuing the ways in which transnational protest have been constituted over time, across difference, and in sometimes subtle and symbolic ways.

This analysis is based on five case studies of British anti-war and peace organizations; Stop the War Coalition (StWC), Faslane 365, the Society of Friends (Quakers), Justice Not Vengeance, and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). In addition a number of explicitly Muslim anti-war organizations and networks were examined, including The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), The Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPACUK), and Cage Prisoner. In total 60 interviews were conducted with a range of activists, anti-war demonstrations and vigils were observed, and literature from the movement was analysed.

**Material connections**

Transnational activism is likely to include material or ideological linkages made between groups at national and local levels as well as informal ties between grassroots groups. Tarrow
claims that transnational collective action is formed by ‘rooted cosmopolitans’, ‘who grow
out of local settings and draw on domestic resources’; they engage in transnational activism
through ‘intertwined networks of a complex international society ... accelerated by increasing
connections across borders’ (2005b, 1). This description highlights the importance of
communications such as ICTs but it also demonstrates the key connection with international
institutions and the focus on globalisation that appears central to the development of recent
transnational contention.

Groups and activities implicated in this process are diverse. On the one hand, we see
the development of truly transnational organizations targeting the international policy-making
context. Both Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have garnered enough respect in policy
circles to serve as representatives on various countries’ delegations to important UN summits
such as the ‘Earth Summits’ in Rio in 1992 and Johannesburg a decade later (Willets 1996).
The number of movement organizations with such competencies has increased dramatically,
along with the increasing opportunities for influencing policy at the international level (Smith
and Bandy 2004).

On the other hand, the summit hopping demonstrations of the late 1990s included a
wide range of groups involved in the ‘global days of action’, often called by the international
have involved protesters travelling internationally to bring pressure to bear at the location of
major international policy meetings. These examples demonstrate the possibility for taking
advantage of a political opportunity structure that has been created at the international level.
They also offer a point of comparison, against which we may evaluate the transnational nature
of contemporary anti-war movements.
Co-ordinated transnational protest

National governments may be considered ‘international actors’ inasmuch as they are clearly acting on the world stage. With worldwide media attention, the mass internationally-coordinated demonstrations occurring regularly between October 2002 and March 2003 demonstrate the movement’s ability to act internationally. These demonstrations did echo the ‘global days of action’ against economic globalisation. PGA’s calls for global days of action aimed to ‘make resistance as transnational as capital’ (PGA 1998). While some participants in such demonstrations had travelled internationally, there were additional, simultaneous protests elsewhere. These allowed those who could not travel to participate, which ensured that the ‘global’ action was brought to a large number of local contexts and encouraged wider media coverage.

The mass anti-war demonstrations of early 2003 were ‘global days of action’ in this latter sense. While international travel was not the norm, and there was no equivalent network to PGA to act as a central decision-making space, participants and the media were well aware that individual demonstrations were part of a much larger protest. Without a unifying international anti-war organization, the coordination of these international demonstrations required networking among a large number of organizations with national bases. The date for the biggest protest of all – 15 February 2003 – was set in meetings at the first European Social Forum, in Florence in November 2002 (Waterman 2004, 58). With hundreds of protests organised on every continent this was the most global protest in history.

Of course such political participation is enhanced by ICTs through, for example: faster interaction, sharing of strategies and tactics across large distances, low cost dissemination of information and interactive creation of news and commentary (Bennett, 2003; Bimber, 2003; Chadwick, 2006). The Internet is by no means a panacea for the problems activists’ face.
Activists have shown concern about uneven accessibility, surveillance, unknowable and diffuse audiences, a lack of personal engagement and difficulties in building trust online (Pickerill, 2003).

There is evidence that participation in the latest anti-war movements has been boosted by activists’ Internet practices (Nah, Veenstra and Shah 2006). Internet technologies have become central to protesters’ daily activity. The more central the Internet has come to political activism, the more it has become the route through which individuals first experience key collective actors. At least in the US, those most central to the anti-war movement are ‘disproportionately likely to rely on digital communications media’ and those with close movement affiliations ‘overwhelmingly received their information about the Iraq crisis through e-media’ (Bennett and Givens 2006, 1, 17). The Internet has also helped the anti-war movement cross borders;

The US and British lefts are historically quite separated... [they] don’t communicate much, two lefts separated by a common language. With the Internet, all that’s changed. (Mike Marqusee interview, writer and activist, London)

From the UK perspective, both CND and StWC have been actively involved in international coordination. For instance, Kate Hudson, Chair of CND described working with the French Mouvement de la Paix to organise events at some of the social forums. She added that ‘we’ve participated in the last three World Social Forums, although we’re not going this year because... there’s a chance to concentrate our efforts on Trident replacement, so it doesn’t seem an appropriate use of our resources at the moment to go there’ (Kate Hudson, interview). The second half of that quotation refers to the domestic political context, where a debate on the renewal of the British nuclear weapons system was going through Parliament. So, even while
Kate Hudson considers international links to be ‘extremely important’ for CND’s goals, it is clear that domestic priorities may override such considerations.

**International meetings**

Attempts have been made to extend the impact of international coordination beyond the setting of dates for demonstrations. A typical activity of international meetings is the production of declarations. CND was represented at a conference in Hiroshima in 2003, organised by the Japanese peace group Gensuikyo (Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs). Recognition of these ‘new’ movements is captured in the declaration’s expression of ‘solidarity with diverse campaigns against growing military spending, to eradicate hunger, poverty, evils of globalization led by big powers, destruction of the environment, discrimination against women and social injustice’ (Gensuikyo 2003).

Similarly, StWC has been involved in a series of three meetings of anti-war organizations. The meetings took place in Cairo in December 2002, Tokyo in May 2003, and Cairo in December 2003. The second Cairo declaration, expressed the need for anti-war movements to ‘continue solidarity with the Iraqi people and its resistance against the occupation forces with all legitimate means including military struggle and helping the Iraqi people in sabotaging the American plan’ (StWC, 2003). However, while international discussions may have given a transnational character to anti-war activism, this is hardly generalisable across the UK movements as a whole. Indeed, the only UK signatories to the Tokyo declaration of 2003 are StWC and Just Peace. Even while attempting to present a united front in the domestic sphere these organizations appeared to be carrying out distinct (and potentially divisive) activities at the transnational level.
The lived experience of the vast majority of activists seems markedly disconnected from such meetings. In national-level organization, international coordination is one task of typically overworked officers with limited resources, and is easily dropped as domestic pressures and opportunities occur. In local groups the drives for action rarely come from the kinds of meetings that the movement’s elite may attend.

**Weak transnational ties**

Two sets of constraints reduce potential for transnational anti-war activism. First, despite use of ICTs, attempts at continuous cooperation across borders face considerable practical and organizational difficulties. Second, the (perceived) domestic political context, in combination with movement organizations’ defined roles and histories, tends to focus their activities at the national level.

**Practical difficulties**

Any ongoing coalition work between movement organizations that goes beyond the sharing of information must cope with political and strategic differences and must successfully build trust among participants. Activists recognise that incorporating political differences can serve to diffuse and complicate a campaign: ‘whenever movements grow… their composition becomes more diverse and more politically uneven, people come with a variety of political consciousnesses, assumptions and experiences, and confusions’ (Mike Marqusee interview).

Notably, Tarrow argues that ‘all shifting and reticular movements reduce ideological cohesion, but the internet may be extreme in its centrifugal effects’ (2005a, 138).

Typically, in those countries that have seen stable, national-level anti-war coalitions there is evidence that member organizations share resources and have some regular, structured interaction through which conflict may be resolved (Levi and Murphy 2006). While it is
conceivable that internet communications could offer the possibility of having detailed, regular meetings across borders without long-distance travel, this is not something currently utilised to any great extent within anti-war activism.

There is no necessary reason why international coordination must involve the kinds of resource sharing seen within stable, national coalitions. But such resource sharing would provide evidence of strong common ground and would probably encourage further participation in coalition activities. Bandy and Smith express ambivalence about the power of the Internet to provide the basis for coalition building, arguing that face-to-face meetings are more conducive to the creation of trusting relationships (2004, 234). Without regular meetings it seems impossible to build coalitions that share resources beyond those that are effectively free to exchange - i.e. informational resources. Indeed initial responses to questions regarding the value of the Internet in campaigning frequently referred to the easy availability of informational resources. Some groups, such as Justice Not Vengeance, define their primary purpose as exactly to provide such resources for other campaigners (Milan Rai interview, Hastings).

The differences between groups were more divisive than the potential unity of sharing common goals. Thus, for example, formal alliances with the British StWC and the US were not possible because of political differences: ‘[StWC] wouldn’t have done what some parts of the anti-war movement in America has recently done which is ... they met representatives from what we regard as a puppet government in Iraq’ (StWC informant, interview, London). Such divisions were evident between many groups, but were more acute transnationally where the possibility of personal networks and face-to-face meetings through which to build trust were dramatically reduced.
National priorities

The actions of the ‘coalition of the willing’ in invading Afghanistan and Iraq can be understood as a reassertion of power by particular nations, notably the United States of America. Those who subsequently opposed the protagonists of the ‘War on Terror’ have, to some extent, shifted their focus back from the global level to the national. The strength of national boundaries is further highlighted by a consideration of the interaction of movement organizations’ relationships with domestic political structures. When asked about whether CND’s work should be focused on international activities, Richard Johnson explained:

There’s always a discussion about which to prioritise, and there’ll always be people who stand up and say ‘but our aim is to get rid of Trident – it’s a British issue – if our government moves that will affect the international situation, but that’s what we should be focusing on’. And that’s right of course at the moment … at the centre there’s a very clear sense of priorities (CND Leicester, interview)

Indeed, for most groups with their organizational roots in the UK it can be difficult to overcome the barriers created by organizational demands. For instance, David Gee noted that ‘the idea of working internationally together, all the Quaker agencies doing international campaigns is a good one, but the opportunities for that aren’t very big, because of the way that decisions are made at a national level ... so it actually makes more sense to have a national campaign’ (interview, Quakers). Other groups included within the broad anti-war and peace movements are nationally focused by definition, with Faslane 365 set up purely to mobilise in relation to one particular British policy decision.
Since the leadership of the StWC saw the ‘War on Terror’ as a consequence of the imperialist policies of particular nation states, and given that the StWC was the primary source of strategic planning for the anti-war movement in the UK, the anti-war movement was bound to be oriented to changing the behaviour of individual nation states. Locating the power to make war at this level, the movement sought to stop war at this level, despite understanding war as part of broader capitalist processes (Figure 2).

Figure 2: London anti-war rally, August 2007 (Kevin Gillan)

Using a large dataset drawn from interviews with participants of demonstrations on 15 February 2003 in six countries Walgrave and Verhulst (2003) demonstrate the importance of the national government’s stance on the war to the mobilization processes in those countries. Superficially, this was the pre-eminent example of transnational opposition to the ‘War on Terror’. The identical timing of protests in all countries and joint coordination among mobilizing groups even meant that very similar slogans and images were being used in the mobilization effort: ‘Triggering event, protest timing, issues, claims and goals were the same in all protest countries’ (7). The level of mobilization, measured as a percentage of the
population participating, varied with averages of 1.3 per cent for initiating countries (US, UK), 2.6 per cent for supporting countries (Italy, Spain) and 0.7 per cent for countries opposed to the war (France, Germany). These findings establish the importance of domestic context in the mobilization of the most apparently transnational of demonstrations. It is clear that in those countries that initiated the war, participation against it took roots far beyond the ‘usual suspects’ of the far left. Participants in these contexts did not necessarily march because of a pacifist ideology, or to oppose one further instantiation of unjust globalisation, but to oppose the particular actions of their particular governments.

Local connections

Additionally, the context may be even more local. From our qualitative dataset, it is clear that many activists see the power of anti-war movements located in grounded, locally contextualised activities and networks, such as meetings (Figure 3). This is typically related to the potential for mobilizing action at the local level. For instance, in describing a meeting with a Pakistani government minister, Yvonne Ridley (of Respect and StWC) described the UK anti-war movement in such terms. She explained,

He was wanting to know, ‘so this anti-war movement, how is it funded, which businessmen are promoting it?’ And I said ‘oh it’s funded through buckets and pennies. Yes, village halls, church halls, community centres, you know, the buckets passed round, you might get twenty-three pounds and fifty pence. Just out of people’s pockets.’ And he said … ‘so the two million people who came to London, who told them to go to London?’ And I said ‘well, what we do is we go round all these little halls and towns and gather the movement’, and I said, ‘it really is people power’.
When Yvonne Ridley describes ‘gathering the movement’, practicalities mean that it is local organisers who bring local people together. When it came to the massed national demonstrations, these were essential in making arrangements to transport thousands of protesters to the capital: ‘Usually our local mosques just organise coaches to go down, so we went down a couple of times with them, or once I remember me and my uncle went with Peterborough CND branch’ (Arif Sayeed interview, University of Leicester Islamic Society).

**Figure 3: Anti-war meeting, Highfields, Leicester, July 2006 (Jenny Pickerill)**

*Symbolic solidarities*

Although there are limitations in the material and practical connections made in transnational activism we need to consider how transnational protest was expressed and experienced in other ways (Pickerill, 2009). Many respondents referred to morale-boosting benefits of connecting to other anti-war groups online and the desire to find and express solidarity. Following Bayat (2005), we might term this ‘imagined solidarity’. Bayat draws on Anderson’s work defining the nation as an imagined community ‘because the members of
even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members … yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (Anderson 1991, 5).

Online anti-war networks are particularly suited to sharing symbolic expressions of solidarity. Visual symbols and simple slogans translate easily into different contexts and the Internet certainly provides a plausible avenue for the sharing of symbols (O’Neill 2004) (Figure 4). Imagined solidarity may be achieved through projecting locally grounded actions into the global arena, thereby increasing the significance of a campaign for participants. Interviewees highlighted their ability to communicate their participation in protest:

a lot of the big demonstrations have coincided with demonstrations internationally … if nothing else – if we don’t stop the wars – at least you can hope that word about our actions gets out around the world.

(Chris Goodwin interview, Leicester Campaign to Stop the War)

Figure 4: The ubiquitous disarmament and CND symbol in New York and on a London anti-war demonstration (source: Jenny Pickerill)
This need to show solidarity was felt most keenly amongst activists who closely identified with those being persecuted in the Iraq war. In the UK this was most obviously represented by Muslim communities and reflects the Islamic concept of one *umma*; ‘the unity, the brotherhood, the sisterhood, of all Muslims, wherever you are, whatever colour your skin is, wherever you live’ (Arif Sayeed interview, Islamic Students Society [ISS], Leicester). For some, this extended to a concern for justice for all: ‘You stand up for an injustice wherever it is – it doesn’t matter whether they’re Muslim or not’ (Naazish Azaim interview, ISS, Leicester) (see also Phillips, 2009) (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: London anti-war rally, March 2006 (Jenny Pickerill)**

In other instances ICTs were crucial in solidifying activists’ experience of acting at the transnational scale. A key interchange of expressions of solidarity is in the sharing of news. Interviewees utilised a broad range of alternative media sources to locate local struggles in the transnational context. Sites such as Indymedia have become a core medium for interchange
between anti-war groups. Again, we see the possibility of imagining solidarity online since the structure of Indymedia is designed to prioritise place-rooted action while offering communication at a transnational scale (Pickerill, 2007).

Thus for activists ‘being global’ is less about building formal connections between international groups and far more about re-scaling the meaning of local actions to a global audience. This is achieved primarily by articulating a form of imagined solidarity, while simultaneously maintaining the importance of domestic issues. An StWC informant explained that while he used the Internet to scour global sites for information to put on the StWC website – itself examined by Internet users around the world – he considered that ‘it’s what you do at home that counts’ (interview, London).

This importance of being grounded in place, despite the possibilities the Internet offers, reflects the notion of ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’ (Tarrow 2005a, 2005b). So, while concrete action remains predominantly affixed to place and to the political context of the nation, ICTs help activists locate their action within much broader movements. The value of informational linkages does not, therefore, lie in their potential for enabling more formal alliances between organisations (pace Diani 2001). Rather, because the sharing of information across borders allows activists to gain a sense of solidarity, Internet networks help the rooted cosmopolitan to feel global.

**Rethinking transnational relations**

The transnational should not be thought of as in binary opposition to the local (McFarlane, 2009). Instead we need to take a relational approach to place and networks which identifies the international geographies of political activism as being constituted in historical connections, co-production, and multiple spatialities (Featherstone, 2008). As different
networks of protest overlap during particular campaigns changes occur in the political identities and political imaginaries that they express. Thus political identities are not established before they interact on the international scale, and international activism is not simply local activism ‘scaled-up’.

Featherstone is able to illustrate that transnational linkages and activism have long existed and the contemporary anti-capitalist networks are built upon historical international spatial practices – even if these were partial, situated and contested. This approach critiques the notion that protest used to be bounded and local, and that ICTs have facilitated a transnationalism unlike ever before. Featherstone argues that we need to understand the historical tenets of activism before we can fully comprehend its contemporary transnational character. This requires us to critically rethink how we understand transnational activism in two key ways.

First, it is often assumed that international solidarities are based on commonalities between activists. Featherstone has illustrated, however, that a productive transnational network need not be based on a shared common understanding of an issue, but simply an agreement on practices and tactics. This opens up possibilities for unlike actors to work together across difference more easily and this is supported by the ways in which the diverse and heterogeneous anti-war movement operated in the UK.

Second, is the need to understand place and scale in more complex and nuanced ways. All too often scale is perceived in a linear and hierarchical fashion; with the local opposed to the larger more powerful transnational scale. Using this approach the transnational becomes the more important - the scale at which activists aspire to act and influence. This misunderstands much about how scale and place are constructed; place is relational and mutually-constituted. Thus we cannot define, or understand, the local without seeing its
construction in relation to national and transnational acts. These are not separate scales, they are intimately interwoven. No place is simply bounded and local – it is formed in its relation to all other places (Castree, 2004). Thus a focus on how activism becomes transnational, or jumps-scales from the local up, ignores the messy realities that local protest is always, and will always be, part of international connections, and that local resistance or place-based projects are solid building blocks for activism.

Moreover, the idea that transnational activism is superior to local ignores the very real tensions in organisational forms. For those who value horizontal prefigurative politics local (or micro) political actions can have transnational effects. Others are committed to hierarchical organising around a centre and bureaucracy which results in very different spatial formations. Thus we can distinguish these different kinds of relationships by their tendencies to use vertical linkages, on the one hand, and horizontal on the other.

Vertical linkages between levels imply a flow of information or resources from local, to national, to (potentially) transnational levels. This is the image Yvonne Ridley conjures in her description of bucket collections in town halls. For some affiliated, local Stop the War groups this was the primary mode of operation. National events gave local groups a reason to mobilise, and they took their lead, politically, from StWC.

By following plans made at the national level, a local group can hope to have a broader impact. This makes sense particularly for those who see the national government as the relevant point of decision making:

The main target is the Government, because obviously … they’re the ones who want to go to war every single week. So that’s why we’ve always pushed for national demonstrations. We think local
demonstrations are important, but national demonstrations – when you get everybody together marching past the Houses of Parliament – that’s when you’re going to make a big impact. (Sadia Jabeen interview, District Organiser for Socialist Workers Party, based in Leicester)

For those who see the national level as being crucial to political contestation, it is important for them to have a platform that reaches out to the nation. For instance, Anas Altikriti, of British Muslim Initiative and formerly MAB, said of arguments concerning Muslim public engagement, that ‘before MAB [voices] expressing those particular views were quite faint. They weren’t as powerful and as forceful as, I think, the context needed’ (interview). Hence the mass mobilization strategy may ultimately depend on the effectiveness of the high profile organizations at the centre (and their presence was obvious on demonstrations, Figure 6).

Essentially, what we see is the channelling of broad-based opposition to war through to a single point of pressure targeted at the national government. Under this strategy, transnational contention would require an international organization to achieve the kind of stability that some authors see as essential to developing individual protests into a coherent movement (Tarrow 1998, 176-96). In its vertical linkages, therefore, contemporary anti-war activism seems better understood as a number of national movements with occasional and temporary connections in the transnational realm.

Figure 6: London anti-war rally, March 2006 (Jenny Pickerill)
In addition to these vertical linkages we see horizontal connections on, and across, a number of levels. Activists endeavour to reach out across borders to provide mutual support. Perhaps the most obvious of horizontal linkages occur through ICTs. Informational connection can create a belief in being ‘part of something bigger’. This may give some individuals the confidence to become participants. Tom Shelton, of CND, described the potential power in, ‘the way you can connect with someone on the other side of the world who has the same views as you’ (interview).

Online interaction goes beyond the simple sharing of information to concrete planning of protest. David Webb, of Yorkshire CND, for instance, describes his connection with the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

We’ve got contacts now through networks in Europe, in the States and in Australia, around the world really, and it’s helped I think an incredible amount in terms of awareness and feeling that you’re not on
your own ... You don’t read about them in the newspapers. You wouldn’t know they were there unless you actually had those contacts.

Other horizontal connections appear less systematic. An example here is the Faslane Academics Blockade (FAB) including, in addition to around thirty academics from UK universities, international participants and the organizational driving force of an academic in Sweden. This was enabled, on the one hand, by the ready accessibility of modern ICTs to all academics and, on the other, by the existence of an efficient and experienced coordinating committee in Scotland.

The Faslane 365 campaign has grown out of what we might call the grassroots peace movement. This helps to explain why F365 has, across a range of blockades, shown a propensity to utilising horizontal cross-border linkages. The grassroots peace movement may be understood as a long-standing, developing network of those for whom peace is always the pre-eminent political cause, no matter what the current political context. Characteristic of this action is the attempt to connect with and support those facing a war situation. Groups have made efforts to share resources with Iraq with Voices in the Wilderness UK breaking the sanctions imposed on the country by delivering medical equipment and supplies during the 1990s. As the build up to the recent war progressed, ‘human shields’ peace caravans set out, driving from London to Baghdad in a mission of solidarity and practical aid.

Among the largest networks that rest on this philosophy is Women in Black. Women in Black represents ways in which a particular political perspective influence a decision to use horizontal, rather than vertical, linkages. They offer an analysis of militarism that links it squarely with patriarchy (Cockburn 2003). Since patriarchy highlights the domination of institutionalised structures of power by men, appropriate action circumvents those structures.
There is, therefore, evidence of orientations to two kinds of linkages between levels of anti-war movement activity. On the one hand, organizations seek to move information and resources vertically, as seems to have been particularly effective in mobilizing large, national demonstrations. However, the lack of a single organizational centre, and abundance of political difference, at the international level makes it hard for such organization to operate transnationally. On the other hand, over a longer time frame grassroots peace groups, and particularly women’s peace groups, have developed substantial cross border connections. Information and resources flow with little respect for territorial boundaries but a great respect for human well-being. Some links were made internationally between disparate grassroots groups and some activists sought to build a decentralised transnationalism but such links remained reliant upon personal ties and rarely crossed ideological differences.

Thus an attendance to the complexity of scale helps us understand that transnational protest is not simply a matter of acting, or interacting via ICTs, at a particular scale. It is not simply about material connections across national borders. Rather it concerns an articulation, narratives and inspirations, which assertively link local conditions and acts to transnational perspectives. Thus, as Katz (2001) argues, we need to build counter-topographies:

I want to imagine a politics that maintains the distinctness of a place while recognizing that it is connected analytically to other places along contour lines that represent not elevation but particular relations to a process (e.g., globalizing capitalist relations of production)

These narratives of connection are often woven by particular activists. For example, during the early anti-capitalist protests of the 1990’s there was a heavy presence of such transnational narrators who grounded an active internationalist imaginary within local activism. They were able to make relational connections between the injustices of one locality and broader
institutional factors. Making these relational connections should have been relatively easy for an anti-war movement objecting to an invasion on foreign soil, but perhaps because of the predominance of vertical linkages, a lack of transnational narrators, or the national political context, few chose to articulate the links between local activism and transnational spaces in this way.

**Conclusions**

The anti-war movement may be understood as symbolically oriented to the transnational level, while simultaneously being politically and organizationally focused at the national level. There were internationally coordinated demonstrations and concrete examples of attempts at international agreement making at a few meetings, at all of which ICTs were invaluable.

We have highlighted the importance of mobilization within more local contexts as vital to the possibility for significant action. Indeed, we find it impossible to consider transnational, national and local anti-war activity in isolation. A series of high-profile international, national and regional events drawing many thousands of participants punctuated the local efforts to state the case against war. They offered a reason to mobilise and a timetable for action. The national demonstrations also offered activists the knowledge that their locality was not alone. Comparing ‘scores’ (‘how many coaches from Birmingham?’, ‘how many from Manchester?’) positioned the local organisers within a national movement. Online activities create the appearance of diversity of anti-war movements and therefore affect the experience of the movement for those who encounter it on the Internet. However, our interviewees noted the lack of face-to-face interaction necessary to enhance trust and offered only limited evidence of the sharing of non-informational resources. Consequently,
activists’ ability to build transnational ties for action was limited. There was no international decision making centre for anti-war activists and overall a lack of a transnational imaginary. We also need to rethink how we consider scale and the mutual constitution of scales in relation to each other.

We hope that we have illustrated in this chapter that transnational protest can mean anything from symbolic expressions of solidarity to very grounded entwined collaborations. The anti-war movement is both internally differentiated and operating at multiple levels of power. These distinctions interact such that the relationship between the local and the global is influenced by the structures of meaning by which actors make sense of their context and their behaviour, and ICTs facilitate such processes but are no panacea for the broader difficulties of transnational activism.

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