SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSNATIONALIZATION: TOWARDS A FEMINIST AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

This paper draws on a doctoral project in anthropology for which the field research is still being conducted at the time of writing. It is a research note contrasting the principal sociological approaches to social movements with those of feminists and anthropologists reflecting on social relations of power and their transformation.

The research project to which this paper is contributing examines social movements, in particular the "transnational" social movements, as *products and producers* of processes of change connected with the broader dynamics of globalization. In particular, I am concerned with movements that, owing to the construction and transformation of complex inter-organizational and interpersonal networks, are acting simultaneously at local, national, regional and global scales. I am examining social movements' strategies to transform the social practices that cause, reinforce or perpetuate social inequalities. The movement I have chosen to study is the World March of Women. Two important reasons led me to this choice. First, is my intimate knowledge of this movement; I have been personally active in it since 1999. Second, it is exceptionally relevant as an object of study, both as an example of a transnational social movement and because of the existence within its ranks of numerous feminist experiments in transforming social practices; in particular, experiments involving the creation and political articulation of grass-roots groups.

The paper begins with a short presentation of the World March of Women to give readers a glimpse of the empirical object that the theories subsequently discussed will serve to illuminate. Following this is a review of the principal proposed conceptualizations of social movements and transnational social movements, *from the standpoint of their utility in understanding movements as products and producers of social change processes.* Subsequent sections contain theoretical and methodological proposals inspired by the critical contributions of feminism and anthropology. I proceed from the hypothesis that to understand some of the dimensions and meanings of the changes reflected and produced by transnational social movements, we have to go back to the conceptualizations of social movements per se, and rework them to better understand why and how social movements construct and enact strategies to effect change. Elements of the anthropological significance of transnational social movements might then be made visible and subjected to analysis and interpretation.

The World March of Women: A Brief Presentation

The World March of Women (WMW) is a "movement of movements," to paraphrase the anti-globalization movement's description of itself in its World Social Forum articulation. But contrary to the World Social Forum, which insists on its identity as a process that does not deliberate or seek common positions and declarations, the World March of Women is a "more unitary undertaking" which does produce collective statements, common actions, deliberative and democratic processes and thus relations of representation (Conway, forthcoming). Indeed, over the years the March has constructed its political identity through the collective writing of a series of texts.[1] The deliberative processes that led to the writing and strategic uses of these texts

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[1] These texts include, among others: the 17 world demands, agreed to by the first International Meeting in Montréal in 1998 and used for the world actions in 2000; a Declaration of Values and the Constitution and By-laws, agreed to

are closely interrelated with the organizing processes that resulted in the creation and political/logistical articulation of a number of feminist groups, movements and networks based in different parts of the world. The story of the construction of the WMW, briefly outlined here, is thus the story of a transnationalization process.

The idea for the WMW originated in Québec in 1995, when women were organizing a national women's action against poverty, *La marche du pain et des roses* (Bread and Roses March). The *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (FFQ) coordinated the action, uniting 850 women from every region of Québec in a 10-day walk, from starting points in Montréal and Rivière du Loup, to Québec City, the seat of the provincial government. About 20 international guests participated in the march. As they were preparing the 1995 march, the organizers had the idea of staging a similar action, only at the world level. They took advantage of the presence of international participants to test the idea, and it was well received. A small group of women then proposed the idea to the FFQ in 1996 and the project was eventually adopted by the general meeting in 1997.

As early as 1996 the call had gone out, using all the available interpersonal and inter-organizational networks, to a vast array of feminist groups and networks. In 1998, the first International Meeting was organized and held in Montreal and 145 women from 65 countries and territories on every continent took part. During this meeting the March adopted the two themes that are still at the heart of the March's identity and actions today: the elimination of poverty throughout the world and the elimination of violence against women. The women also adopted a global platform and decided that the actions of the March would begin on March 8 (International Women's Day), 2000, and end on October 17 (International Day for the Eradication of Poverty) in the same year. (Today, these two dates are still the references for March actions at various scales throughout the world). In the same year a coordinating committee was formed, composed of women from Québec, to help coordinate the organization and make day-to-day political decisions concerning international mobilization. It worked jointly with an international liaison committee composed of women loosely representing mobilized groups by world region.[2]

On March 8, 2000, the first world actions against poverty and violence against women were launched. Approximately 5500 groups from 159 countries and territories responded to the call and mobilized, including common actions and mobilizing at the global scale[3] and a multitude of local and national actions that took place between March 8 and October 17. During this time, feminist movements in 114 countries set up coordinating bodies and/or national

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by the International Meeting in New Delhi in 2003; and the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, collectively written in a process involving the direct participation of more than 200 groups from 33 countries and territories, and adopted by the International Meeting in Kigali in 2004. In 2005, the Charter was the object of a World Relay through 53 countries in every continent, constituting the March's second campaign of global actions. In the most recent International Meeting, held in Lima in July 2006, 51 delegates from 31 countries and territories adopted a formulation of the purpose, objectives and organizational values of the WMW.

[2] For this purpose, women of the March divided the world into 14 sub-regions.
[3] The world actions included a street protest in Washington, DC (USA) on October 15 and a meeting the next day with the presidents of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund; a street protest of 10,000 women from the across the world in New York City on October 17 to support an international delegation of 100 women that was received in the UN to denounce the situation of women in their respective countries and present the 17 world demands. On the same occasion, the women delivered to the UN the 5 million signatures supporting the world demands that had been gathered (in the form of postcards) between March 8 and October 17.

coalitions to draft national platforms, independent from the global platform, with demands adapted to their various situations and struggles. The spirit of the World March of Women has always been to reinforce existing struggles led by grass-roots movements by linking them to a global, unified (negotiated) struggle. Although to be considered part of the WMW they must ideologically adhere to the platforms and texts adopted at the international meetings, the autonomy of national and local groups and movements is nevertheless maintained.

After this first experience of globally coordinated actions, an International Meeting was held and the women decided that the WMW should continue as an ongoing movement. The March had succeeded massively mobilizing women; in many countries the analytical and political articulation of poverty and violence against women fostered alliances and collaboration between feminist groups that had never before worked together. At this point, the March entered into a phase of internal consolidation (Dufour and Giraud 2005) and confirmation of its presence and growing importance in the alternative globalization movement.

The March's stance in relation to the alternative globalization movement in general is exemplified by its participation in the World Social Forum process. The WMW has been a member of the International Council of the World Social Forum since its first meeting in 2000 and is a founding member of the Social Movements Network, which has played an increasingly important role in the Forum's processes. The March has also been consistently present in the European, African and Latin-American regional forums and several local forums. It is noteworthy that the WMW had already begun to build and organize itself *after* the 1994 Zapatista rebellion and *before* the 1999 Seattle protest against the WTO—two historical landmarks of the antiglobalization movement. It was thus on an independent basis that the March channeled the energy and the organizing power of thousands of grass-roots groups to denounce patriarchy and neoliberal globalization on a world scale. Its participation in the alternative globalization movement, as we will discuss in more detail later, should probably be considered as a strategic undertaking, separate from the WMW's initial construction process prior to 2000, and more closely related to the consolidation process that began in 2001 according to Dufour and Giraud (2005).

Parallel to this, during the International Meetings of 2001 (Montréal) and 2003 (New Delhi), the March further developed its internal democratic process and structure, with the movement being coordinated by an International Committee composed of representatives from all the world regions[4] and accountable to the International Meeting of delegates from the national coordinating bodies. Starting in 2001, the work team, which had served as the core organizing group for the global mobilizing of 2000, separated from the FFQ, and was independently constituted as the International Secretariat, reporting primarily to the International Committee. After 2001, then, the March launched itself on an increasingly "transnationally democratic" process, a process which continues today. A new stage was reached when the March's International Secretariat, until then located in Montréal with Québécoise workers, closed its doors to enable the construction of a new International Secretariat in Brazil, in the Global South, after their candidacy was approved by the International Meeting in Lima in July 2006.

How does such a movement produce social change? Do the internal organizational practices themselves constitute social, cultural and political innovations and alternatives? In

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[4] For this purpose, the world was divided up into five major regions: Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East/Arab World.

what ways does the WMW contribute to the imagining and constructing of alternative societies? What difference does it make for a grass-roots group to be part of a transnational feminist movement of this type? It is with these questions in mind that I will review some of the main approaches to social movements in order to evaluate their usefulness to the study of social practices and social change.

Social Change in Social Movement Theories

For Buechler (2000), social movements and sociology have been linked since the beginnings of the discipline: first, because both are products of fundamental historical changes in 18th century European society, and second, because they both rest on the presupposition that the social world is a social construction demanding transformation (in the first case) and explanation (in the second case). Paradoxically, according to Buechler, before the end of the 1960s social movements did not receive the systematic attention they deserved—probably because up to that time sociologists had been studying them either through the lens of very general theories of social change that marginalized human agency or from the perspective of collective behaviour theories that marginalized the role of social movements in society. During the 1970s and 1980s, social movements were studied from the frameworks of two distinct intellectual currents, known as resource mobilization theory[5] (RMT) and new social movement theory[6] (NSMT), which have very different postures with respect to the study of social change.

In Touraine's work, here representative of NSMT, post-industrial society self-produces through the conflicts opposing different organized social actors; at stake is the control of historicity, attained through mobilizing and controlling the principal cultural and material resources (Touraine 2004). This framework, which typically places strong emphasis on the constitution and transformation of collective identities, is aligned with a general sociology that classifies social movements as agents of social change (Rocher 1992 [1969], Sztompka 1993), and for which change itself is generally posed as being at the origin of movements, to explain their emergence or particular form. In a similar vein, Melucci (1996: 14) frames the question of change in terms of the relation between the actor and the system, a posture reflected in his definition of social movements:

> A movement is the mobilization of a collective actor (i) defined by a specific solidarity, (ii) engaged in conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both, (iii) whose actions imply a rupture with the limits of compatibility of the system in which action takes place (Melucci 1996: 30).

Even if this definition is problematic in various ways, I find it important because it gives analytical importance to the specific goals pursued by any given movement. This is useful, in my opinion, in terms of theoretically linking the study of social movements, social conflicts and social change. Movements' goals are given analytical visibility through the concepts of *specific*

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[5] The main founders of RMT are Mayer Zald and John McCarthy for the "entrepreneurial" version, and Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow for the "political process" version. These two versions of the theory are notably different, the political process version differentiating itself from the entrepreneurial version with a more structural and historical approach.

[6] The authors generally considered as founders of the different strands of this theory are Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, Jurgen Habermas, Claus Offe and Ronald Inglehart.

solidarity and *orientation of a movement* (the third element of his definition)—subjects to which I will return later. Both of these concepts refer to the targeted system of social relations, in which the action in question takes place. In other words, social movements should be analyzed in terms of how and why they intend to change the society of which they are members. I think it is methodologically and theoretically unsatisfying to characterize the orientation (or radicalism) of a movement based solely on the movement's discourses, which is basically what Melucci (ibid) and Buechler (1990) have proposed. Orientation in the form of discourse (and assumed intention) cannot alone account for the effects and complexity of what goes on in the mess of social/political battle. This is especially evident with the strategic use of discourse as a weapon, where actors pursuing opposite goals often end up using the same words in their quest for legitimacy. But I do think that the type of change sought by a movement, the discourse and practice it adopts to effect this change, *in addition to their achieved results or impact* should form the crux of the analysis if we are to contribute to the understanding of social power relations, how they are played out and how they change.

Contrastingly, until the 1990s the nature of what constitutes the goals and demands of a movement played very little or no analytical role in RMT. Although there are debates and some alternative formulations within this current of thought, one of the original premises of RMT was that the presence and particular content of grievances has no value in explaining the emergence and growth of movements since the presence of grievances and demands is a characteristic shared by all movements. As for the question of social movement outcomes, it was in general reduced to the positive or negative response of the State to particular demands or campaigns. This attitude towards goals and outcomes radically differs from that of NSMT. One way of understanding the significance of this contrasting stance toward movements' goals and outcomes, which I think is important for the study of social change, is to examine one of the greatest differences between these two currents of thought that are rooted in very different, if not opposing, traditions:[7] the scientific project itself, or the definition of what must be explained. While NSMT consists mostly of macrosocial theories that seek to understand and explain the major structural shifts in societies by studying their most significant social conflicts and contradictions, RMT is a middle-range body of theory that seems to assume a political environment similar to that of the United States: a liberal society governed by powerful elites (Guirdy et al. 2000). RMT maintains a narrow analytical focus on the instrumental strategies of individuals and organizations and the identification of variables that would explain the emergence, growth and decline of movements, all the while rooted in methodological individualism and rational actor theory (Buechler 2000; Crossley 2002). The conception of change implicit in this model is fundamentally linked to the State's response to demands formulated in terms that are amenable to the reproduction of the specific social, economic and political system implied in its premise. The obvious consequence is that the processes aiming to transform this very system of social relations are rendered invisible.

Unfortunately, NSMT also has important limitations: some elements of Touraine's theory have proved to be rigid and inadequate when it comes to accounting for what has been variously called the multiplicity, intersectionality or cosubstantiality of identities and social power relations—the object of much fruitful theorization by feminists since the end of the 1980s. For example, Touraine insisted for a long time on establishing a hierarchy of conflicts and

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[7] NSMT is rooted in Marxist and functionalist traditions while RMT combines organizational and economic theories within in a liberal conception of society.

identifying the central conflict in postindustrial society, thereby disqualifying many important movements, including feminism (for a discussion of Touraine's theory from a feminist point of view, see Kergoat 1992). These theories also failed to accord sufficient analytical importance to the concrete organizational practices of movements, which RMT has done (Alvarez and Escobar 1992), albeit in a narrow and limited way.

In the 1990s, however, came challenges of RMT's narrow focus—particularly from NSMT, symbolic interactionism and those advocating cultural approaches. Some authors then claimed they had synthesized the various approaches, notably in a book by McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996). These authors asserted they had incorporated the contributions of NSMT by including culture as one of three variables (political opportunities, mobilizing structures and cultural framings).[8] In this proposal, the framing theories developed at the end of the 1980s by Snow, Benford and colleagues (Snow et al. 1986, Snow and Benford 1988) came to represent "culture." Some authors rightly stress that this new synthesis was in fact a reformulation of RMT complemented by symbolic interactionism, which hardly represents the contributions of NSMT (Buechler 2000), let alone culture. As we shall see later, the content and analytical status of the concept of culture is an important aspect of the approaches I will propose for the study of social movements as agents of social change.

Another significant point about this book is that it called for a narrowing of the definition of these three variables, in particular the political opportunity structure (which, according to the authors should be defined strictly in relation to the State), to avoid depriving them of their explicative power. In contrast, other scholars, including feminists, have called for a broadening of the scope and concepts of social movement research. Feminists have denounced both the lack of visibility of feminist and women's movements and their practices in social movement research, due to an excessively narrow conception of the political (West and Blumberg 1990), and the failure to include gender as an analytical category (Ferree and Roth 1998; Taylor and Whittier 1998, 1999; Reger and Taylor 2002). As I have already discussed, and shall discuss further, the content and analytical status of the concept of the political is another important element of the approaches I will propose.

By the end of the 1990s, what was perceived as a new cycle of mobilization at a global scale had emerged, and many scholars felt that RMT (including its political process version) needed serious rethinking. Many authors contributed critiques and suggestions: an improved conceptualization of power and resistance (Guirdy et al. 2000); the correction of an Occidental and/or nationalist bias (Buechler 2000; Eschle 2001; Moghadam 2000, 2005; Roseneil 2001); and the outright replacement of methodological individualism and rational actor theory by an improved general theory that more ably conceptualizes structure and agency (Crossley 2002, 2003) and sociohistorical structures (Buechler 2000); and finally, a better account of gender inequalities (Buechler 2000; Desai 2002; Einower et al. 2000; Eschle 2001; Ferree and Roth 1998; Moghadam 1999, 2000, 2005; Naples 2002; Naples and Desai 2002; Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; Taylor 1999; Taylor and Whittier 1998, 1999).

Moreover, the re-examination of social movement theories advocated and developed by Guirdy et al. (2000) to situate the study of social movements in the framework of what they call

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[8] The book claimed to represent a synthesis of both versions of RMT and NSMT: the entrepreneurial version of RMT was represented by the mobilizing structures variable; the political process approach by the political opportunity structure variable; and the NSMT by the framing variable. Furthermore, these three variables were also supposed to account for the micro (framing), meso (mobilizing structures) and macro (political opportunity structure) sociological levels.

the local/global nexus helps to show that the current global transformations and the interest they generate should force RMT proponents to question and reformulate their basic premises, and even rework the circumscription of their object of study (Seidman 2000). This does not mean that the considerable quantity of accumulated data and empirical studies fostered by this current of thought is no longer useful. Rather, in my opinion, it means that, taking into account what has been learned, further studies should try to contribute to a broader empirical reach and alternative theorization of social movements, geared to a deeper understanding of social transformations, power, and the dialectical relationship between social structures and human agency.

A broadening of both empirical and analytical categories seems to have taken place, at least to a certain extent, as one can see in the *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* published in 2004 by Snow, Soule and Kriesi. The chapters of this book reflect a diversity of focuses of study, and it is organized in sections that evoke a broader and more inclusive view of social movements, their contexts, practices and outcomes than that of either RMT or political process approaches.[9] Their definition of social movement reflects their intention to broaden what gets counted and analyzed as a social movement:

> collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are part (Snow et al., 2004b: 11).

This definition (and the book's chapter headings) has the merit of giving analytical visibility to a wider range of movements' transformative practices at various levels of social organization and in the face of structures and power relations extending well beyond the State—certainly an appreciable improvement. The book fails, however, to make significant inroads toward a more integrated sociological view of movements that would, at least potentially, situate them in the context of social reorganization processes that could be associated with globalization. Nor is there a theoretical proposal that would enable us to understand the interrelation of movements' micro, meso and macro sociological processes. It should also be noted that solidarity and collective identity, which NSMT considers of macro-sociological significance, have been excluded from the definition proposed by the editors and were categorized as micro-structural or social-psychological dimensions. In my view, such categorization is the result of the persisting influence of methodological individualism in the editors' approach and reveals a weak conceptualization of social power relations.

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[9] Another example of broadening the object of study was proposed by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), known for their work on the political process version of RMT (see note 5). These authors, keeping a narrow concept of what is to be considered *political*, shifted their focus of study from individual movements to whole episodes of contention, including revolutions, nationalism and democratization, "and the way various actors, from crowds, movements, polity members to governments, are here involved and connected in mutual interaction and struggle" (Karpantschof 2006: 116).

Transnational Social Movements

The theoretical debates of social movement theories have only partially permeated the emerging field of transnational movement studies, partly because those who have produced research on transnational social movements come from a variety of backgrounds, including international relations scholars who tend to incorporate elements of social movement theories in a piecemeal fashion. According to Khagram et al. (2002), the debate in social science is formulated in terms of transnational relations between various types of non-governmental actors, with advocacy networks, NGOs and transnational social movements occupying centre stage. A body of work produced within the disciplines of sociology and international relations focusing on non-governmental actors and postulating a "global civil society" and a "transnational public sphere" came to be widely recognized as a reference in the study of transnational collective action and/or transnational social movements (for example, Keck and Sikkink 1998a, 1998b; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997). One of the important contributions of this body of work is to have shown that non-governmental actors are increasingly important in world politics, with growing influence on the creation of new international norms.

However, the conceptualization of transnational social movements generally offered in international relations literature is not always entirely convincing and raises some issues worth discussing here. For example, for Khagram et al. (2002 intro), transnational social movements are transnational (as opposed to international) because they go beyond nationalist orientations. This is somewhat vague. These authors attempt to better circumscribe their objects of study by identifying four modalities of transnational collective action: NGOs and INGOs, advocacy networks, transnational coalitions and transnational social movements. The last is the most dense and complex, potentially including the three others, as well as having the capacity, in three countries or more, to coordinate and sustain social mobilizations with the goal of making social change. At first glance, their proposed four modalities of transnational collective action identify the elements differentiating transnational social movements from other types of transnational collective action rather successfully. However, the categories are presented as empirical givens rather than analytical constructs and remain under-theorized from the point of view of social movement scholarship. The analytical criteria for the differentiation of the four categories remain unclear and resemble gradations in a scale of complexity, spatial scope, quantity of actors aggregated, degree of coordination, quantity of shared political content and capacity to sustain social mobilization.

One of the problems with this conceptualization (and with other studies on transnational social movements) is that it is strictly limited to the transnational scale, leaving untouched the relation between the notions of transnational social movement and social movement per se, therefore providing no analytical visibility for the relation between scales within social movements and between movements at different scales. Although this is understandable coming from international relations scholars, it is a major weakness given that the few studies that have explored this dimension have shown the continuing importance of national movements and mobilizing to the processes of construction of transnational collective action. (See, for example, Agrikolianski, Filleule and Mayer 2005; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Lemay 2005; Tarrow 2005). For Olesen,

> The missing link between globalization and transnational mobilization is a process of social construction that seeks to link the local, the national and the global.

Globalization, in this perspective, is both an objective process involving certain structural transformations and a subjective process intimately related to the way social actors interpret these changes and give them meaning (2005: 49).

Thus, to understand the way movements influence and are influenced by the processes of globalization, it does not suffice to study what goes on in the so-called transnational public sphere. We must also seek to understand the way actors construct and reconfigure spatial scales and how these are interconnected. To that end, Masson (2006) and Conway (forthcoming) have shown how new geographical works on scale, rescaling, and transnationalization of collective action, using a social constructivist approach to space and scale, can fruitfully contribute to feminist and critical thought on contemporary social movements.

Another problem concerns the methodology used by Khagram and colleagues (2002) and Smith and Sikkink (2002) to study the growing importance of transnational collective action and social movements: the data that these authors use is in fact drawn from NGOs (addressing international targets) and INGOs, that, according to their official mission statements, are seeking social change. The reason invoked for this choice is data accessibility (Khagram et al. 2002: 6-7, 9). Certainly, it is a methodological challenge to count the number of existing transnational social movements worldwide and evaluate their increase or decrease over time. Nevertheless, I think there are several reasons for avoiding the methodological strategy chosen by these authors. The implicit hypothesis these authors seem to be making is: since these NGOs and INGOs seeking social change must be connected with social movements, the study of their proliferation and increasing importance should teach us something about transnational social movements. This assumption is problematic, given that the actual content of the NGO category is highly heterogeneous and that the "politics and antipolitics of NGO practices" (to use Fisher's expression, 1997) are highly complex and very often contradictory. Furthermore, according to some authors, one of the specificities of recent forms of collective action, due to the intensification of globalization processes and the unprecedented degree of institutionalization of social movements, is a high degree of ambivalence towards institutions and the State (Hamel and Maheu 2001; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). The nature of the relationships and power dynamics between more or less institutionalized movements and various parts of the State and development apparatus must be carefully studied in their respective historical contexts; it should not be assumed that all transnational organizations claiming social change as one of their aims can automatically be considered as part of the movements' "infrastructure for change" (Sikkink and Smith 2002).

Other authors or other works have presented more satisfactory accounts of transnational social movements. For example, Jackie Smith (2004), in her contribution to the *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (*op. cit.*), offers a nuanced and comprehensive account of the dynamics and stakes in play for social movements in the global arena. This piece has the merit of discussing some of the main emerging contradictions with respect to power differentials in the world system and the complex institutional settings in which movements are often enmeshed at these levels. On the theoretical side, her paper does not offer innovation; on the contrary, she evaluates that

global political processes are in many ways a continuation or reiteration of the same kind of contentious dynamics that contributed to the formation of the modern national state . . . [and] transnational movement strategies and processes parallel developments of

national social movements, and indeed they may be seen as a continuation of the same processes of contention between popular groups and state authorities (2004: 329).

Smith continues: "We can thus draw from the rich body of theoretical work on national social movements to understand transnational political processes and movements" (ibid.). Della Porta and colleagues (2006) would certainly agree, hence the approach they have chosen for the study of alternative globalization movements. They extensively researched two transnational protest actions (the July 2001 G8 protest in Genoa and the November 2002 European Social Forum in Florence) to determine whether a single global social movement is emerging, as opposed to a collection of separate movements (ibid.: 18). They do it by investigating the same conceptual categories they would for a national movement (collective identity, non-conventional action repertoires, organizational networks) using a barely modified definition of social movements:

> Conceptually, social movements are mainly informal networks based on common beliefs and solidarity that mobilize on conflicting issues by frequent recurrence of various forms of protest. . . . Accordingly, global social movements are supranational networks of actors that define their causes as global and organize protest campaigns that involve more than one state (ibid.)

For these authors, there is indeed an emerging global movement for global justice, and their research suggests that it presents the typical characteristics of national movements as conceptualized previously. They conclude that the newness of this movement should be apprehended "in terms not so much of the definition of the new class actor of post-industrial society (Touraine 1978) but more of the presence of emerging characteristics in organizational structures, action repertoires, and identity discourses" (ibid.: 233). For them, changes in organizational structure are what account for "the complex interaction between local and supranational activism" (ibid.: 234-5). Although the focus of his book is not the same, Tarrow (2005) seems to share this viewpoint: after describing various processes and mechanisms of transnational protest (internalization, externalization, diffusion and scale shift, amongst others) he concludes that what is distinctly new about contemporary transnational activism can be summed up "in new 'global' attitudes, in new forms of organization, and in the shifting campaigns and composite forms of transnational activism" (2005: 209).

With the accumulating research on transnational activism, we now have a growing body of findings regarding: the most common organizational forms; the continuing importance of national movements; the evolution of the repertoire of contention; movement identities; resources; and how local, national and global political opportunities influence each other (della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Despite all this information, research on transnational social movements presents the same problems that were identified in research on social movements in general: researchers' concepts and methods provide little insight into the sociological significance of these movements' characteristics in terms of the multiple and complex dynamics involved in producing social change. Also to be noted is a continuing neglect of women's movements and movements from the Global South. A contribution to the conceptualization of the general significance of social movements for social change would therefore be a useful step in the study of transnational social movements. To this end, I will turn to what I consider are useful anthropological and feminist works.

Feminist and Anthropological Contributions to the Conceptualization of Social Movements as Products and Producers of Social Change

The study of social movements is still somewhat marginal within anthropology (Gibb 2001; Edelman 2001; Burdick 1995) but it is an expanding and promising research field, as shown by the recent publication of the first book on social movements produced entirely by anthropologists (Nash 2005b) and of an issue of the journal *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, dedicated to the study of movements for alternative globalization (Boulianne 2005). Among the elements proposed by Escobar in 1992 (cited in Gibb 2001) to explain the relative marginality of social movement studies in anthropology, two seem particularly relevant to the challenges to social movement theories outlined above. The first is a narrow conception of the political caused in part by the literary turn in anthropology and an emphasis on the study of power and domination in terms of textuality (according to Escobar). Added to this, according to Gibb, is the unpopularity of political anthropology, which, from Evans-Prichard to Bailey, would have been constructed on a radical division of the cultural from the political (Gibb 2001: 244). The second factor identified by Escobar is an inadequate conceptualization of practice, which is centred excessively on individual dimensions, and which would have rendered invisible the actors' roles in the production of social life. We will now see how Escobar and others, both anthropologists and feminist scholars, have contributed to conceptualizations that enable us to surmount these difficulties.

The first problem identified by Escobar and Gibb, the separation of the cultural from the political, was resolved within an anthropology of social movements, in conceptualizations proposed in the 1990s by Alvarez, Escobar, and colleagues. One of their central concepts is that of cultural politics (Alvarez et al. 1998). In this conceptualization, culture is seen not as a separate sphere (or variable), but rather as a dimension of all institutions—economic, social and political. Thus, culture is an ensemble of material practices constituting significations, values and subjectivities (Weedon 1995 cited in Alvarez et al. 1998: 3). Culture is political because significations are constitutive of the processes which, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power. When movements propose alternative conceptions of women, nature, race, economy, democracy and citizenship that destabilize the dominant cultural significations, they are engaging in cultural politics (Alvarez et al. 1998: 7). This concept is complemented by that of political culture, defined as the social construction, specific to each society, of what is considered political (ibid.: 8). This approach to culture and of politics renders visible and recognizes the political nature of a great variety of practices, meeting the conceptual needs identified by many feminist scholars who considered that women's movement practices tended to be made invisible by the dominant social movement theories (Reger and Taylor 2002; Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; West and Blumberg 1990).

The advantage of this approach, rooted in the Latin-American tradition of social movement studies, over that proposed by Snow et al. (2004, op. cit.), is that it also proposes a way to conceptualize the relations between social movement practices and their historical and macro-sociological context. In the 1980s, the Latin-American tradition of social movement studies was mainly inspired by European NSMT and produced very rich accounts of social change that linked an analysis of social, economic and political changes (mainly in terms of democratization processes) with changes in the political culture and practices of social movements (Alvarez 1989, 1990; Canel 1992; Chinchilla 1992; Cardoso 1992; Fals Borda 1992,

1994; Jacquette 1989, 1994; Jelin 1990, 1998; Schneider 1992). Since the early 1990s, however, there has been a growing tendency to integrate elements of RMT (Alvarez and Escobar 1992; Foweraker 1995). This bridging, proposed by Escobar, Alvarez and their colleagues, is not a "synthesis". It advocates the integration of some of the empirical preoccupations of RMT (mainly, attention to resources, mobilization and concrete organizational processes, which tended to be neglected by NSM approaches) *into a framework whose goal is to study the articulation of agency and structure, and identity and strategy* in movements whose struggles concerning signification and material conditions are viewed as inseparable, i.e., as *cultural* struggles (Escobar 1992: 69). This approach, which I see as an anthropologization of social movement research in a critical framework, allows us to shed light on conceptual and empirical relations between social movements, development and globalization.

For example, in adapting the NSMT framework, Escobar replaces Touraine's concept of social totality by the concept of historical conjuncture.[10] The Latin-American social movements of the 1990s are seen as emerging in response to a particular historical conjuncture—the failure of development—that must not be viewed merely as an economic or political project, but as a global cultural discourse which has had a profound impact on the social fabric of the Third World (Escobar 1992: 63-64). This author has thus conceptualized Latin-American social movements of the 1990s as enacting a re-signification of development and of citizenship.[11]

Still, this is not to say that the emergence of the anti- or alternative globalization movements should be attributed univocally to the negative impacts of neoliberal capitalism or modernity. Despite any criticisms we might have of social movement theories coming out of the U.S., they are convincing in their demonstration that injustice, discontent and even revolt are not in themselves sufficient conditions for the emergence of movements and mobilization (Zald 1992; della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Saying, as do anthropologists like Escobar (op.cit.) and Nash (2005a), that these movements arise as a challenge and response to situations connected with globalization and development must not limit us to a simplistic explanatory framework. The scientific project of these anthropologists, as I conceive it, is related to that of Agrikoliansky et al. (2005) and consists in *examining the complex mediations whereby actors are subjected to and comply with structural constraints, and understanding the means (symbolic, relational, material and institutional) by which they manage to seize upon or create action opportunities and produce/orient (or not) processes of change.* This formulation, which is the one I am proposing, is original in that it combines the question of movements' emergence with that of the results of their historical actions under the overall heading of a more general concern: the study of the transformation of social relations of power (*rapports sociaux*). The idea here is to establish unequal social relations of power (*rapports sociaux*), at the different scales where they are in play, as the matrix on and against which movements are constructed. This way of presenting social movements as an object of study reflects both the traditions of feminist thinking (which has always been nourished by reflexive dialogue between theory and movements' practices) and that of political economy in anthropology (see Labrecque 2001); it also takes into account the central issue upon

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[10] The term historical conjuncture, in Escobar, refers to complex structural factors (economic, political and cultural) that affect society as a whole. By comparison, the "structural level" of the synthesis proposed by Adam et al. (1996) is the concept of political opportunity structure, used in the narrow sense of the State's attitude towards social movements.

[11] Since then Escobar has built on these conceptualizations, identifying, for example, three distinct re-signification projects pursued by contemporary movements: alternative development, alternative modernities and alternatives *to* modernity. See Escobar and Boulianne (2005).

which sociological research on social movements has been based for the past 30 years (all approaches)—the study of the conditions of emergence of social movements (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002).

By addressing the second problem Escobar has identified with respect to the anthropological study of social movements—the conceptualization of practice—I will specify the conceptual approach I intend to use to study change, referring to the expression used in the introduction to this article that describes social movements as both products and producers of processes of change. For Ortner (1996), the issue underlying theories about practice (the two principal proponents of which are Bourdieu and Giddens) is to discover how power relations and inequalities get reproduced and how they can be transformed through practice (the formulation I propose above is a variation of this, applied to social movements). Again, according to Ortner (ibid.), emphasis, however, has mostly been placed—by both Bourdieu and Giddens—on social reproduction, leaving the question of transformation relatively under-theorized.

We must turn to feminist thinking to find the elements required for this undertaking. For example, R.W. Connell gives a definition of practice that shows structures in the process of being constituted—as they are constituted and reconstituted through social practices—but without situating these practices in the overly rigid context of social reproduction (as would Bourdieu) or of the structure's internal logic (as would Giddens). Rather, he suggests that practices

> . . . are always a response to a *situation*. The practice is the transformation of said situation in a specific direction. Describing the structure consists in specifying that which in a situation serves to limit the scope of the practice. Since the consequence of the practice is a transformed situation that is the subject of a new practice, the "structure" determines the manner in which the practice, in time, comes to limit the practice (1987: 95). [*Translation of a French translation*]

Following this, Connell defines the concept of structure by referring to the idea of constraint and limitations on freedom, combined with the idea that a structure may also result in a capacity to act (in the direction traced by the structure) that is superior to that of an individual existing in isolation. Social structure expresses the idea of constraint with respect to a specific form of social organization; constraints are exercised on social practices through the interaction of powers and a set of social institutions (ibid.: 92) and may in return be changed by the social actors. For Connell, then, gender is a social structure in the full sense of the term.

Still, in my view, this conceptualization by itself is insufficient to account for the matrix of power relationships and political manoeuvrings in which practices, especially those contesting social inequalities, come into play at a given moment in time. It is for this reason that I refer to the concept of *rapport social* (above, I suggest the English equivalent "social relations of power") as proposed by Danièle Kergoat:

> The *rapport social* may be treated as a *tension* that cuts across society; this tension gradually crystallizes into *issues* with which human beings are permanently confronted, whether they are in the process of producing society, reproducing it or inventing new ways of thinking and acting. These *issues* are what determine social groups. The groups are not givens; they are created in response to issues generated by the dynamics of *rapports sociaux*. Finally, there is a multiplicity of *rapports sociaux* and none of them determines entirely the field it structures (Kergoat 2001: 87). [*Translation*]

According to Kergoat, the issue emerging from social relations of power based on sex (also called gender relations) is the sexual division of labour.[12] Thus, it could be said that the sexual division of labour can be conceptualized both as a "practice which, in time, limits practice," in other words a structure (Connell's concept), and as an issue of social relations of power based on sex (*rapports sociaux de sexe*), constituting social groups according to the male/female sexual division (Kergoat's concept). I believe that together, these two conceptualizations enable us, to paraphrase Ortner (1996), to image a conceptualization model for practice with agents or actors (individual and collective) possessing intentionality but whose agency is embedded within broader cultural and social systems that are not a direct result of the intentions of the actors in question. Therefore, in response to a situation deemed to be unacceptable, social movements adopt strategies that can be in themselves alternative practices (logic of foreshadowing) and historical actions designed to provoke the adoption of new social practices, thereby contributing, in time, to the institution of new social structures. The movements discussed here are therefore those whose action directly or indirectly addresses social relations of power (*rapports sociaux*) and their related core issues. It is the dialectical logic of this conception of the relation between social structures and actors' agency that allows us to cast social movements as products and producers of processes of change, including changes associated with globalization.

Thoughts on Knowledge, Goals, and Practices

Various reasons, beyond the ones already mentioned in the first part of this paper, could be invoked to explain what I see as the need for closer scrutiny of movements' goals, their concrete practices and strategies for social change, and the impacts, both of their internal organizing practices and their more public actions. We need to do this, not merely to determine the existence of a collective identity, one of the criteria, according to della Porta and her colleagues (2006), for determining if a collective action corresponds to their definition of a social movement. We must also consider them as examples of movements' practices of knowledge production—about themselves and about the world—knowledge that is then used to construct strategies to effect change.

What does it mean to ask, as do della Porta et al. (2006), if there is one global movement as opposed to separate movements, when researchers are concentrating mainly on what they consider to be the definition of social movement, and while the groups themselves, as collective actors, are working hard to define themselves and produce knowledge with a view to establishing their boundaries, however porous and flexible these may have to be for mobilization and recruiting purposes? For example, in its 2006 International Meeting held in Peru, the WMW adopted a definition of its purpose, objectives and organizational values. In the same year, women of the WMW are conducting a worldwide effort to update the lists of mobilized groups and identify which groups play an active role in the organizing process and which groups are sympathizers who want to receive information and may participate in actions,

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[12] "This assertion requires clarification: social relationships based on sex are embodied in a social materiality through the categories, forms and periodization of social practices. The sexual division of labour is the empirical support enabling the mediation between social relations of power (abstract) and social practices (concrete) . . . The sexual division of labour is at the heart of the power men exercise over women." [*Translation*] (Hirata and Kergoat 1998: 95).

protests and campaigns. Should not researchers be creating forms of hermeneutical dialogue between the movement practices of knowledge construction and boundary establishment and their own analytical categories?

The most important reason for this posture is connected with feminist epistemology and consists of taking seriously the knowledge produced by the social actors we study. Both social science researchers and social actors participate in the construction of society; both participate in the construction of knowledge, and this dialectical process, fraught with power relations, must be acknowledged and analyzed as a constituent element of the dynamics under study. Feminist thought has been constructed in close intersubjectivity between intellectuals and activists (many of them members of both categories); even—and perhaps even more so—when this meant debate or conflict. The analysis and critical evaluation of the impacts and contradictions of feminist transformative strategies has been used with great success for decades in the construction of knowledge about society in general and the functioning of power relations in particular. Today, social movements seem to be using the concepts and theories developed by social scientists even more than ever (see Cunningham 1999). In return, this demands of scientists studying social movements, that they become deeply involved in a complex hermeneutical process.

From this perspective, it would seem unjustified to construct theories about social movements that deliberately neglect the actors' subjectivity, grievances, understanding of the world, and their own explanation for the emergence of their movements.[13] Conversely, activists who have high ideals about the way power relations should be transformed do not always walk their talk. There are inherent contradictions in wanting to be and act differently, while for the most part inescapably remaining a product of the social order one is fighting. Therefore, while we should take seriously what activists and movements publicly do and say about themselves (repertoires of action and discourses), we should also look at their practices (both "officially deliberate"—which in movement jargon is often called methodology—and the practices on which no particular discourse is elaborated) and seek to identify and understand the contradictions. This has everything to do with *political culture* and with expanding our definition of what is political, as Alvarez and Escobar (1998), West and Blumberg (1990), Reger and Taylor (2002), and many more feminists have exhorted us to do.

RMT has neglected both these dimensions, concentrating solely in the instrumental ways discontent is supposed to be turned into public intervention. NSM theorists have been at the other extreme, concentrating on what *they* thought new movements and subjectivities revealed about the transformation of central conflicts in post-industrial society. Della Porta et al. suggest that both sides should go back to the drawing board: "The movement on globalization challenges researchers to reopen the academic debate on the structural nature of the conflicts in a society that can no longer be simply defined as post-industrial" (2006: 243-244). I propose to go a step further and to incorporate in social movement studies what feminism, social work and development studies have extensively done: analyze the *way* actors (movements) intervene to bring about change and the *results* of these interventions, to learn about social structures of power and how they might, or might not, change.

Approaching this subject in the more limited context of exploratory reflections on a specific movement, I will take as a starting point some very interesting remarks that Dufour and

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[13] In the perspective I propose here, the concept of strategic framing of movement discourse (mentioned above) is considered useful, but cannot account in itself for the entire meaning creation process.

Giraud (2005) have made about the World March of Women. According to these authors, the concept of political opportunity structure, one of the most widely used concepts explaining the emergence of collective action, which one might expect could explain transnational collective action, is inadequate to explain the emergence and continuation of the WMW. According to Dufour and Giraud, the WMW did not originally react to a particular decision-making process affecting women or window of opportunity created by the UN or the IMF. The concept of political opportunity structure, therefore, does not explain the emergence of the WMW before the year 2000. The "boomerang effect", another important concept widely used to explain transnational or international collective action (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith 2004), refers to a situation where a national movement seeks international attention or mobilization to pressure a national government otherwise unresponsive to their demands. Again, according to Dufour and Giraud (ibid.), this process cannot explain the continuation and the consolidation of the WMW, given the weakness of governmental and institutional responses to the demands of the world actions in 2000. Consequently, these authors suggest that we should not consider the transnationalization of struggles as an instrument or as the result of some external phenomenon, but rather as a process of solidarity building which exists by and for itself. I agree with these authors about the insufficiencies of the concepts of political opportunity and boomerang effect, but I would not say that the process of solidarity building exists by and for itself. I will unfold my argument in two different ways.

Firstly, I suggest that the instrumental strategies of the actors be investigated, but beyond the narrow concepts of conventional social movement studies. Following the global actions of 2000, WMW activists surely had good reasons when they concluded that the difficult and costly process of transnational organization and action should be maintained and developed further. In my opinion, the logic motivating the continued construction of the WMW after 2000 was clearly expressed in discussions of the WMW International Committee during strategic planning sessions that I had the privilege of attending as an activist and ethnographer. This logic, as I understand it, is twofold. First, in a context where the renewed strength of some strands of conservatism exists in a potent mix with neoliberalism (both highly antidemocratic) in the global—and, in many cases, national—political arenas, the strategy of the WMW is to continue building its movement and alliances, its bargaining power, and the legitimacy of its demands, at all scales simultaneously. In other words, keep fighting. Second, in a context where other alternative globalization movements are doing the same thing, the WMW must keep up the pressure on allied movements to make sure that the liberation of women is an integral part of the alternatives being constructed by all those attempting to create those alternatives. To that end, it is necessary to build a worldwide, strong, autonomous and grass-roots feminist movement.

The movements themselves, even though they try to evaluate as systematically as possible the results of their strategies and impacts of their actions, are limited in their capacity to do so. This is due not only to lack of resources (although this is part of the problem), but also to the time it takes for the impacts to become tangible. For example, on March 31, 2006, the International Committee met with the national coordinating body of the WMW in Québec to share their evaluations of the concrete impacts of the WMW on local struggles since 2000. Most of these impacts have only become evident in the course of several years of continued struggle and organizing. Thus, there are indeed instrumental strategies directed at achieving goals in the WMW, but these goals are more numerous, complex, diversified, and long term than what conventional political concepts allow us to perceive. The WMW, as a feminist and alternative

globalization movement, should be viewed more generally as engaging in cultural politics. It does not simply target the State. It targets the entire society.

Secondly, I would suggest that feminists are constructing and maintaining these transnational solidarities (often at great costs to themselves and their organizations) because in some feminist traditions, to which the WMW belongs, solidarities are in themselves strategies to effect change. The question then becomes: why do they believe this (what are their conceptualizations of the world they are trying to change) and how do they intend to make it happen (what are their strategies of intervention). Movements do not just have repertoires for public action, they also have methodologies, sometimes very explicit and systematized, for their internal processes—and the little or no attention these methodologies have received from the most recognized social movement scholars is certainly noteworthy. These internal processes, at least in the case of many feminist movements, the WMW included, are an integral part of the strategies deployed to effect social change.

The WMW could probably be characterized as a contemporary reinterpretation and re-articulation of certain feminist currents, originating mostly in the 1970s, advocating the organization of grass-roots women's movements in which the most severely oppressed women (those suffering the added burden of poverty, racism, sexist violence, multiple forms of oppression, etc.) would be the leading voices. The awareness-raising and organizing processes themselves become the ground in which women who have been denied the status of subject can take part in a collective process whose goal is to make them into such subjects, individually and politically—processes with profound individual and collective consequences. According to this philosophy, a great deal of effort should be made within the movement to identify and re-work the relations of power among women themselves, who may be from different social backgrounds and, in society in general, may have social identities linked to different power positions. The general idea is to deconstruct these power differentials and invent new and more egalitarian ways of thinking, being and acting together. Thus, women who have been objectified and seldom heard or recognized (in a myriad of complex and intricate ways) have a *social, collective, intersubjective* space in which to reconstruct themselves as subjects of their own lives and as political subjects of the society they live in.[14] There is also the idea that patriarchal strategies of domination include the creation of contexts in which women are isolated from each other and are deprived of the solidarity that could help them gain more autonomy and bargaining power. Building concrete solidarity then becomes a direct way of transforming the very conditions that enable men to dominate women, hence the conditions that enable the gendered relations of domination to reproduce themselves over time as a social structure. One could say that the feminist movements (and other movements constructed *by and for* oppressed peoples) have to *produce* the subjects that will fight the visible (and less visible) battles. Incidentally, participating in more visible collective public action (protests, demonstrations, speeches, civil disobedience, direct action, politicized artistic expression) *also* serves the purpose of subject production.

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[14] The body of feminist literature and the history of practice exploring these questions in great depth is too extensive and diverse to be cited here. In contemporary Western feminist thought and practice, the voices of radical, socialist as well as African-American and Third World feminists experiencing exclusion and discrimination within the feminist movements have been of tremendous importance in raising these issues and contributing to a deepening of the understanding of power processes and of possible transformative strategies. The continuous exchange of ideas and experiences between intellectuals and activists has also been fundamental to the construction of this knowledge and practice.

A very interesting contribution made in the field of social movement studies that could be useful in conceptualizing such subject formation processes within the movements, and that might prove compatible with the feminist conceptualizations of practice and structure of Ortner and Connell presented above, is that of Nick Crossley (2002, 2003, 2005). This author proposed a reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory of practice and concept of *habitus* to account for some of the ways social movements effect change in the individual lives of activists, and how social movements sustain mobilization over time. His detailed discussion and reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory is well beyond the scope of this paper, so I will only briefly sketch the main points that are useful in setting the stage for the working hypotheses I will propose below. According to Crossley, Bourdieu's theorizations of social reproduction can be reworked and used against the grain to think about change and social transformation (2005). Crossley achieves this through his concept of *radical habitus* (2003) or *movement habitus* (2005). Starting with empirical findings showing that participation in protest generates sustained politicization and continued participation in protest actions over time, he goes on to suggest a conceptualization of activism in terms of a sustained disposition toward a particular type of practice that is acquired through participation in that practice. As Bourdieu says of his concept of *habitus*, movement practices are a structured and structuring structure (Crossley 2003: 51):

> The generative schemas of movement practice, the movement habitus, moves through the social body, crossing generations, through the force of the very practices it generates and the learning situations they effect. Political activity generates a habitus which generates political activity, drawing in and socializing new recruits, and so on in a circuit of reproduction. However, this does not preclude change. To the contrary. The movement habitus constantly evolves as the contexts of activism demand innovation, improvisation and intelligent adaptation (Crossley 2005: 22).

In the case of the feminist tradition discussed above, I suggest taking this idea a step further to speak of a process that not only creates a new *activist* habitus, but that also has the potential (and certainly the intention) to profoundly transform the different forms of *feminine* habitus (also rooted in class, race and other systems of hierarchical differentiation) of the women that come together in feminist movements. Thus, the feminist movement processes are, at least potentially, spaces of profound transformation of self and embodied patterns of experience. These transformations are effected (or at least initiated) within the movements and thus are collective, intersubjective, that is, *social*, and directly related to the social structure the movement intends to transform.

Taken from there, and recalling the idea presented above that movement practices intend: 1- to constitute in themselves new alternative social practices and 2- to engage in historical actions aimed at provoking the adoption of new social practices in the wider society, it follows that *a movement's internal processes are anthropologically related to their historical actions* and that these two dimensions of movement strategies should be studied together.

Some Methodological Proposals

If, as Crossley thinks, a movement habitus is constructed through movement practice, and if, as I suggest in the case of some feminist practices, these processes potentially include the transformation of women's former habitus, we should pay special attention to the concrete (and

less concrete) ways in which this happens. For this, I propose to attribute special significance to the direct study of meetings between people as a methodological hypothesis.

In most feminist movements, it has long been considered fundamentally important to bring women physically together for activities, discussions and public protests; to form collectives that would meet regularly and transform themselves as well as transform the world, through various means such as awareness-raising, politicization, self-reconstruction and confrontation of the social order. Movement meetings and activities could therefore be studied and analyzed as potential matrices of processes of deconstruction and reconstruction of habitus and embodied experience, based on the hypothesis that these are social processes that can take place where and when several people undertake them together.

In a different but complementary vein, most authors are studying the alternative globalization movement by scrutinizing its events, forums and protests (Agrikoliansky et al. 2005; Agrikoliansky and Sommier 2005; Beauzamy 2005; Bertho 2005, to name only a few). Boulianne (2005), describes these spaces as:

> . . . material (or immaterial) spaces of intensive networking around the construction and iteration of meaning creation processes . . . It has been noted that these events allow the expression and exploration of differences (based on identity, political goals and strategies) through theoretical and practical innovation . . . or the construction of distinct spatialities within a single temporality . . . (2005:12) [*Translation*].

An important dimension of these meetings and their associated processes is social power relations: they either maintain/reinforce the social order and the place occupied by each group or individual (if power relations remain unquestioned) or prepare people to contest that place and become the subjects of their struggles by transforming their embodied experiences. And as Beauzamy's analysis (2005) of the Réseau Altermondialiste et Féministe (alternative globalization and feminist network) at the Évian summit shows, *rapports sociaux* (social relations of power) and power dynamics play themselves out in multiple and complex ways throughout the organizing process—and not just during the events or meetings themselves.

One of the possible ways to study an organizing process is to "follow the people."
In his famous article, "Multi-Sited Ethnography" (1995), George Marcus proposes the following conceptualization of multi-sited ethnography:

> (…) designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit posited logic of association or connection among sites   that   in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (1995: 105)[15]

Marcus then proposes a set of ideas, of possible modes of construction: to "follow" people, things, metaphors, histories, life stories, conflicts (ibid.:106-110). The overall strategy being proposed here mainly consists in following people, both in the literal sense (in their living environments, activist work, political meetings, demonstrations and other events) and

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[15] This resembles Foucault's description of his concept of *dispositif* (apparatus): "a resolutely heterogeneous ensemble, including discourses, institutions, architectural layouts, regulatory decision, legislation, administrative measures and scientific pronouncements . . . in short, the spoken as well as the unspoken . . . The *dispositif* itself is the network that can be established among these elements." [*Translation*] (Foucault 1977: 63 quoted in St-Hilaire 1995: 12).

figuratively (by mapping personal and inter-organizational networks based on interviews and archival materials). However, unlike most analysts of social networks, who, once they have mapped a network, limit themselves to the study of its morphology by means of software programs and mathematical theories, I suggest, among other things, to observe and ethnographically reconstitute, to "follow" *from within these networks*: 1- the circulation and reinterpretation of discourses, symbols and ideas; 2- political relationships and power relations between groups and individuals, including the social and sexual division of labour; 3- power relations and dynamics between movements and institutions, including the provenance and distribution of material resources; and 4- power relations within and around the social transformation strategies created by the actors. Also, each of these dimensions should be examined in close connection with the social context in and against which the movement is acting and constructing itself.

Finally, another important aspect to problematize (more than space allows me here), that requires specific methodological strategies, is the conceptualization and analysis of transnational movements as multi-scalar. To follow up on Masson (2006, this volume) and Conway's (forthcoming) suggestions, the "spatial practices" (ibid.) of movements should be studied and conceptualized as processes of social construction of space (and scale). The WMW, for example, is organized at the local, national, regional and global scales, with groups/movements in each geographical location and scale constructing specific relations and processes, specific ways of organizing, articulating their struggles, and situating (and spatializing) themselves within society/ies. I strongly suspect that these spatial and scalar processes involve, in important ways, the re-configuration of power relations and the zones of influence of different actors or groups of actors within and between movements. In keeping with the methodological proposals I have presented above, then, I would suggest that a promising path to take would be to "follow the people" in their collective construction (most likely fraught with power struggles) of these scales. More specifically still, as I myself intend to do in my present research, follow the organizing processes in their vertical constructions, from different spaces constructed as "local" within the movement, to other spaces constructed as "national" and "transnational"—and back again.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a brief review of the main theoretical approaches of social movement and transnational social movement studies, seeking to identify their respective stances, contributions and weaknesses with respect to the study of social movements as products and producers of processes of social change. Several conceptual and methodological proposals were then discussed, drawing concrete examples from an ongoing research project on the World March of Women.

I believe that the study of social movements should contribute to a more general and deeper understanding of social relations of power (*rapports sociaux*) and their potential for change; the constitution and transformation of social structures, and of human agency. In this regard, I have attempted to show that the conceptualizations of social movements and transnational movements discussed above present some important weaknesses. I hope I have also succeeded in pointing out the usefulness of the feminist and anthropological conceptualizations of cultural politics, political culture, social structure, social practice, habitus and social relations of power (*rapports sociaux*) discussed in this paper. I have argued that these

conceptualizations, as well as the critical intellectual and epistemological postures of the feminist and anthropological frameworks from which they are drawn, give empirical and analytical visibility to dimensions of social movements' transformative practices that I think are of great anthropological significance. One of these is the anthropological inter-relation of movements' internal processes and historical actions in the production of social change. I have discussed that one of the possible ways to apprehend this inter-relation is the study of the production of the social and political subjects through embodied experiences created in and by the movement practices; they then (or rather, simultaneously) take part in social, economic, political, and thus, *cultural* battles to transform the social order. Finally, I have discussed related methodological hypotheses and proposals which should be useful for research on the organizational processes by which transnational social movements produce new or transformed spatial and scalar configurations.

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