

# **Britain Re-Creates the Social Movement: Contentious (and Not-so-contentious) Networks in Glasgow\***

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This paper originates from an investigation of ‘Networks of civic organisations in Britain’, that I am currently conducting with Isobel Lindsay (University of Strathclyde in Glasgow), Satnam Virdee (University of Glasgow), and Derrick Purdue (University of West of England, Bristol). The project is part of the *Democracy and Participation Programme*, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (contract L215 25 2006), and directed by Paul Whiteley. I am grateful to Paul for his constant support and to Juliana Mackenzie for her assistance with data collection and inputting.

My relationship with Charles Tilly blossomed, if one can use this term, around definitional matters. In the early 1990s, I attempted to extract a shared definition of social movements from the writings of the leading scholars in the field, and came up with a view of movements as networks ‘of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity’ (Diani, 1992: 13). I contended that such definition would provide a common ground between otherwise different theoretical perspectives, including Tilly’s own, which sees movements as ‘sustained challenges to powerholders in the name of a disadvantaged population living under the jurisdiction or influence of those powerholders.... [and whose] ..... supporters constitute a numerous, committed, unified, worthy mass that is prepared to risk breaking with routine politics in pursuit of its program.’ (Tilly, 1995: 369).

To my surprise, one of the people whose work I had considered happened to take my effort seriously. Two years later, Chuck praised my piece for ‘almost [escaping] from the group fallacy’ that he imputed to so many social movement studies. He hastened to add, however, that this happened ‘at the cost of including an enormous range of phenomena most analysts want to distinguish from social movements: revolutions, tribal or anti-colonial rebellions, religious revivals, nationalist wars, intercommunal rivalries, and much more.’ (Tilly, 1994: 5). In the light of recent developments of his work (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001), one could find his preoccupation with limiting the boundaries of one’s objects of analysis slightly ironic. Nevertheless, I found his attention extremely encouraging for further developments of my work, and so has been the case to date.

Recognizing the nature of social movements as sets of interconnected events, stressing the impossibility of reducing movements to any specific organization – no matter how strong, emphasizing the relevance of social networks for mobilization processes, Charles Tilly has contributed as anyone in our field to redirecting the study of collective action towards more worthwhile tasks, and has provided us with more solid conceptual tools for our investigations. In this paper, I would like to revamp the discussion on the peculiarity of social movements with reference to new empirical data, which most appropriately come from the very country that ‘created the social movement’ (Tilly, 1982). Looking at networks of civic organizations in Glasgow, I try to single out social movement dynamics from a broader set of collaborative interactions and shared memberships between organizations mobilizing on environmental, ethnic and minority, and social exclusion issues. In doing so, I also draw attention to the persistent usefulness of the concept of

social movement, which recent work by Tilly (McAdam *et al.*, 2001) seems to have placed in a less central position.

## ***Organizations, actions, and networks: looking for social movements in the UK***

For those interested in social movements and political protest, Britain is an intriguing case study, for reasons pertaining to the sociology of knowledge as much as to political sociology. Despite popular, often riotous, collective action having never been in short supply there (Tilly, 1995; Rootes, 1992), the conceptual vocabulary of today's social movement analysis has only very recently started to spread in the UK. In part this may have been due to the traits of a political system which, at least after WWII, was open to the formal inclusion of those citizens' organizations who were prepared to play the rules of the game, while keen on marginalizing radical dissenters. The capacity of Labor (or Labor-related) organizations to somehow represent multiple sources of dissent may also have played a role. Coupled with the fact that so much of social movement research in the 1970s-1980s focused on so-called 'new social movements', either overlooking labor collective action or locating social movement dynamics in non-class based milieus, or both, this may have hampered development of studies of British politics from a movement perspective.

Whatever the reasons for this state of affairs, analysis of 'social movements' in the UK has mainly focused either on the individual dimension (i.e., on individual political participation, as in parkin's classic study of CND) or the organizational dimension of collective action (e.g through the use of concepts such as 'public interest group', 'external vs. internal interest groups', or even 'protest businesses' [Jordan and Maloney, 1997]). According to this view, movements were – and still are – either sets of like-minded individuals, or sets of organizations – if not specific organizations, such as CND. From the 1960s onwards, in particular, what fell in-between the individual vs. organization continuum, such as demonstrations, public protests, etc., was usually treated as a 'campaign'. Hence a view of movements as sets of campaigns.

But, movements are not campaigns, although they often, if not always, include them. They consist of innumerable exchanges between individuals and/or organizations, which involve discussing ideas, exchanging information, pooling resources, sharing emotions, engaging together in acts of defiance and social criticism. All these exchanges might as well be found in processes that many would not normally regard as movements, such as single-issue campaigns or solidarity campaigns.

What qualifies them a social movement is the fact that protagonists of exchanges and collaborations also recognize each other as members of the same collective projects, and that such recognition weaves together events and actions, which could perfectly stand on their own terms if such processes of meaning attribution did not take place (Diani 2003).

May be that the use of other concepts than social movements in the past was warranted by the peculiarities of British society (even though Tilly's work as well as others', from Thompson to Hobsbawm, clearly suggests otherwise). But after a decade in which grassroots protest in Britain has been among the most intense in Europe, and definitely at its peak in the country since the 1960s, it is even more legitimate to wonder whether one should stick to old concepts. The question is, therefore, whether there are social movement dynamics in progress in Britain. It is a timely question, because of the intensity of protest activities in the UK from the early 1990s, because of the orientations of the current Labor government undermining the assumption that Labor would represent people's grievances however defined, and because of increasing ethnic tensions in British cities, that immigration flows only make stronger.

What defines a social movement and differentiates it from cognate phenomena such as coalitions, voluntary action campaigns, radical political organizations? Fundamentally, the coupling of the following elements:

- Conflictual interactions with opponents
- Networks of informal exchanges between individuals and/or organizations
- Collective identity

First, the presence of conflict differentiates social movements from 'non-conflictual movements', i.e., forms of collective action conducted by networks of actors who share solidarity and an interpretation linking specific acts in a longer time perspective, but who do not identify any specific social actor as an opponent. We might come across instances of sustained collective action on environmental problems that imply broader identities yet do not imply any conflict. A model of environmental action as a collective effort aiming entirely at the solution of practical cases of pollution through voluntary work, or the transformation of environmental consciousness through education, would match this profile. In that case, the identity would connect people, organizations, events and initiatives in a meaningful, longer-term collective project, transcending the boundaries of any specific organization or campaign, but there would be no space for conflictual dynamics.

Second, the informal nature of the networks differentiates movements from ‘organizations’, i.e., coordinated forms of interaction with some established membership criteria and some patterned mechanisms of internal regulation. We shall often come across instances in which environmental action is mainly conducted within the boundaries of specific organizations, which are the main source of participants’ identities, whereas the loyalty to the ‘movement’ as a whole is far weaker, and so are opportunities for individuals to play any role unless their participation is mediated by specific organizations. In this case we would not have a ‘social movement dynamic’ in progress, rather, the mobilization of a set of specific organizations trying to acquire full property of an issue. In the most extreme case, we might have one single organization taking full control of the issue – as the Bolshevik party or the Nazi party to a large extent managed to do in their respective cases.

Third, the presence of an identity which transcends the boundaries of any specific event, and also enables actors to connect different episodes of collective action, qualifies social movements in relation to coalitions. Closer empirical investigation might find the expression ‘environmental movement’ to denote little more than a set of largely independent events and activities, each reflecting a specific conflict, and each supported by a specific coalition, but with little links across events and coalitions. In a coalition dynamic, the absence of collective identity would prevent the establishment of connections between activities, located at different points in time and space, and the local networks would not concatenate in broader systems of solidarities and mutual obligations.

In a ‘social movement dynamic’ proper, individuals and organizations, engaged in innumerable initiatives to protect the environment against its socially identifiable ‘enemies’, would share a broad identity and would be able to link their specific actions into a broader narrative and into a broader collective ‘we’, without renouncing their own peculiarity. Events, which could otherwise be the result of ad hoc coalitions, and expressions of NIMBY orientations, would then acquire a new meaning and be perceived as part of a larger, and longer term, collective effort (see also Diani, 2003: 301-303).

In other words, we may have sustained collective efforts, carried on through networks of collaboration, which do not challenge specific authorities nor adversary social groups; or social and political challenges mainly conducted by organizations, with little space for loose networking and participation outside the opportunities provided by the organizations themselves; or network alliances which neither rely on, nor generate, collective identity and thus take up a largely instrumental role. Or we may have an intersection of conflictual orientations, informal networking

as the main organizing principle, and identity, which brings us closer to a social movement dynamic.

There is little doubt that in the UK we have plenty of organizations mobilizing on a broad range of worthy – and sometimes, unworthy – causes, and innumerable instances of protest events or campaigns on specific issues. Whether this translates into social movement dynamics is another matter. We can assess this – limited, for the time being, to the Glasgow scene - by going through the following steps:

1. explore the structure of collaborations between organizations at a given point in time;
2. look for indicators of continuity of collaboration over time (e.g. through joint participation in past public events);
3. check for evidence that organizations involved in network exchanges also share some identity (e.g. as reflected in overlapping memberships)
4. assess the conflictual nature of the interactions taking place in the network.

Having identified social movement dynamics within a given organizational population, we'll then be able to check to which extent a relational view of movements corresponds to more conventional views of movements as sets of organizations/activities/events, characterized by specific traits (e.g., loose organizational structure, propensity to protest, etc.), and to which extent the two accounts differ.

### ***Are there social movements in 2000s Glasgow? A relational answer***

As an object of study, Glasgow is particularly interesting because of its social and political history, the strength of the 'Red Clyde' tradition of leftwing labor politics, the persisting impact of religious sectarianism, the role of ethnic minorities – especially the Pakistanis – in the Labor political machine, as well as, more recently, the impact of devolution and the reshaping of center-periphery relations this has been prompting. This study focuses on organizations mobilizing on environmental, ethnic and minority, community, and social exclusion issues. While an investigation of the whole range of voluntary organizations operating in Glasgow would have been desirable, practical constraints made this impossible. The rationale behind choosing that particular set of organizations lies with the fact that they are distinct enough to work independently, yet have

enough potential areas of convergence to render cross-sector alliances a feasible option (e.g., on issues such as North-South relations, peace, refugees, urban decay, racism, etc.).

Between 2001 and 2002, we interviewed 124 representatives of organizations in Glasgow. These included both local branches of Scotland-wide and UK-wide organizations, and independent local groups, with a varying degree of formalization and bureaucratisation. We have reason to believe that all the most central organizations in Glasgow civic networks were contacted: while many other organizations, which were not among the interviewees, were mentioned, none received more than one or two nominations. The main focus of our unit of analysis was as follows:

Environmental organizations (20)

Ethnic and minority organisations (34)

Local community action groups (25, of which 19 in South Glasgow)

Social inclusion & political organisations (45)

## **Networks of alliances**

In the last few years, Glaswegians have taken to the streets on a variety of issues, ranging from the privatization of council houses to the closure of council-run swimming pools, from the police's and judiciary's ineptness at handling racist violence to the threats posed by nuclear submarines in nearby Faslane. They have also heavily engaged in pressurizing local and national authorities through more conventional means, and in delivering public goods, often in partnership with other public and private actors. These activities have all involved substantial inter-organizational networking. Here we look at data based on each organization identifying up to five most important partners in alliances. References to umbrella bodies like the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector-GCVS or the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organizations-SCVO were excluded from the analysis due to the peculiar role of such organizations, whose task is providing services to the sector rather than promoting change on substantive issues.

Making sense of interorganizational networks in Glasgow civil society is no easy task. Even though only 2.3% of the total number of possible ties between the 124 organizations involved is activated, the resulting picture appears extremely complex. Through a blockmodelling procedure (Breiger, Boorman, & Arabie, 1975) we can simplify the structure and bring it down to three blocks of

organizations with a structurally equivalent position: namely, engaged in patterns of alliances to the same actors.

Organizations from each of the four types are present in any of the structural positions. However, community action groups are over-represented in block 1, social exclusion organizations in block 2, and environmental groups in block 3. Ethnic and minority groups (which also includes refugee associations) are evenly distributed cross the network. Among the organizations in block 1 are the Poverty Alliance, who coordinates anti-poverty initiatives by many community groups, Positive Action in Housing, the Scottish Refugee Council, Meridian, a service provider for women from ethnic minorities, and a variety of community groups mainly active in Glasgow Southside. Block 2 includes both established organizations with a high public profile such as Amnesty International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, or children welfare charity Barnardo's, and more grassroots, campaigning actors such as Southside Against Closure and Campaign Against Housing Stock Transfer. In block 3 are several of the best known campaigning – and often radical – organizations, including CND, Trident Ploughshares, Friends of the Earth, along with single-issue campaigns (JAM74, Defend Council Housing, Justice Not War), 'new' parties such as the Greens or Scottish Socialists, the unions, and also charities with a long-standing interest in both local and global inequalities, such as Oxfam.

In order to assess the patterns of ties both within and between these three blocks we'll use a very simple concept, *density*, measuring the proportion of ties found in a given network out of the total number of possible ties which might link network members to each other.<sup>1</sup> The overall density of the 124 actors network is 0.023, corresponding to 2.3% of the total possible ties. In average, members of the network identified 2.8 other members as one of their most important partners. If this figure may appear modest, one should consider, apart from limitations on the number of partners respondents could name, that a) alliance building is a costly exercise; and b) the average involvement of organizations in exchanges matches previous findings on other inter-organizational networks, like Milanese environmentalism (Diani, 1995, p. 102).

Normally, comparing densities of different networks is not appropriate, as density scores are strongly dependent on the size of the network (Friedkin, 1981).<sup>2</sup> Here, however, the size of the three

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<sup>11</sup> In a network with  $N$  actors and  $n$  ties between them, density  $D = n/N \times (N-1)$ . When assessing the density of ties between two disjointed sets of actors  $N$  and  $M$ , the density will be computed as  $D = n/N \times M$ .

<sup>2</sup> For example, two network of size 10 and 20 but whose members are similarly inclined to establish links to other actors – e.g., are involved in 3 ties each – will have very different densities (0.33 with 10 actors, 0.16 with 20 actors).



blocks is very similar (45, 38, and 41 respectively), which renders a comparison less problematic. Table 1 below reports the distribution of density scores within and across the three structurally equivalent blocks. Interactions between organizations in blocks 1 and 3 emerge as particularly dense. But for a few exceptions of dyads disconnected from other organizations, both networks appear to be well connected (see also figures 1 and 3). In both cases, organizations not only share similar patterns of ties to third parties, they are also linked to each other with some intensity. The density of ties among incumbents of block 3 is particularly strong. By contrast, block 2 is basically a set of organizations, who share the same structural position because of the ties sent to, and received from, other organizations, without any specific link between them (figure 2).

Blocks	1	2	3
1	0.02339181304 (1.01)	0.03383838385 (1.25)	0.01788617857 (0.73)
2	0.00213371264 (0.09)	0.00467836252 (0.17)	0.00385109126 (0.15)
3	0.02246469818 (0.99)	0.02384823933 (1.15)	0.07073170692 (2.8)

Table 1. Densities in the interorganizational alliances network (figures in brackets indicate average number of ties per organization)

The peculiar position of organizations in block 2 becomes even more evident if we look at ties across blocks. Its members are important allies to other organizations ('receive' ties, in the language of network analysis) much more frequently than they identify other civic organizations as important partners. Their ties are mainly to umbrella bodies like GCVS or SCVO, established political parties, or other organizations, than to those who are central in the Glasgow civic network. They may be an important reference for many civic organizations, although it is more disputable (and the subject of future investigations) whether this translates into leadership. By contrast, groups in blocks 1 and 3 send ties to each other, and of course to block 2, with a frequency around the average.

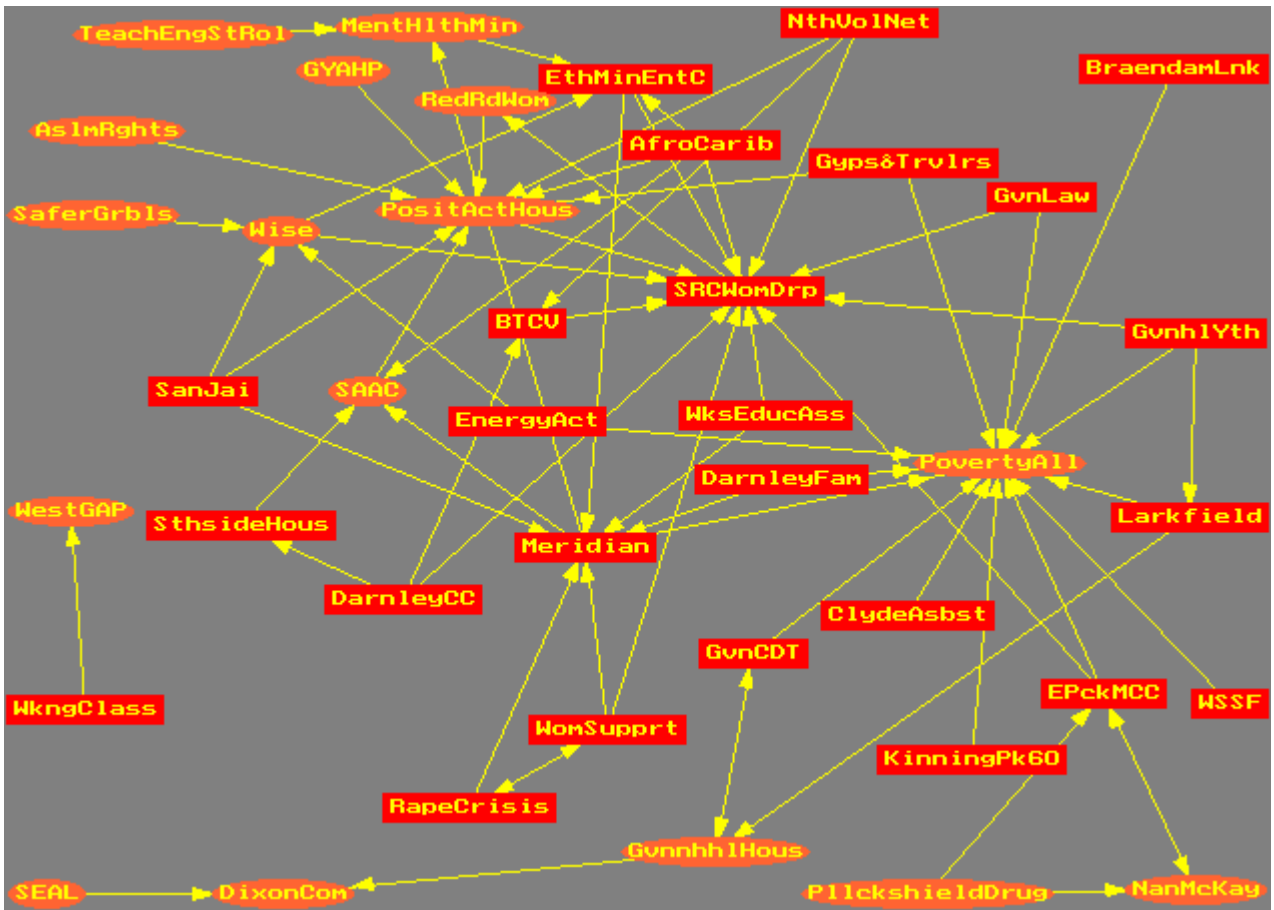


Figure 1. Inter-organizational alliances in block 1 in the Glasgow civic network

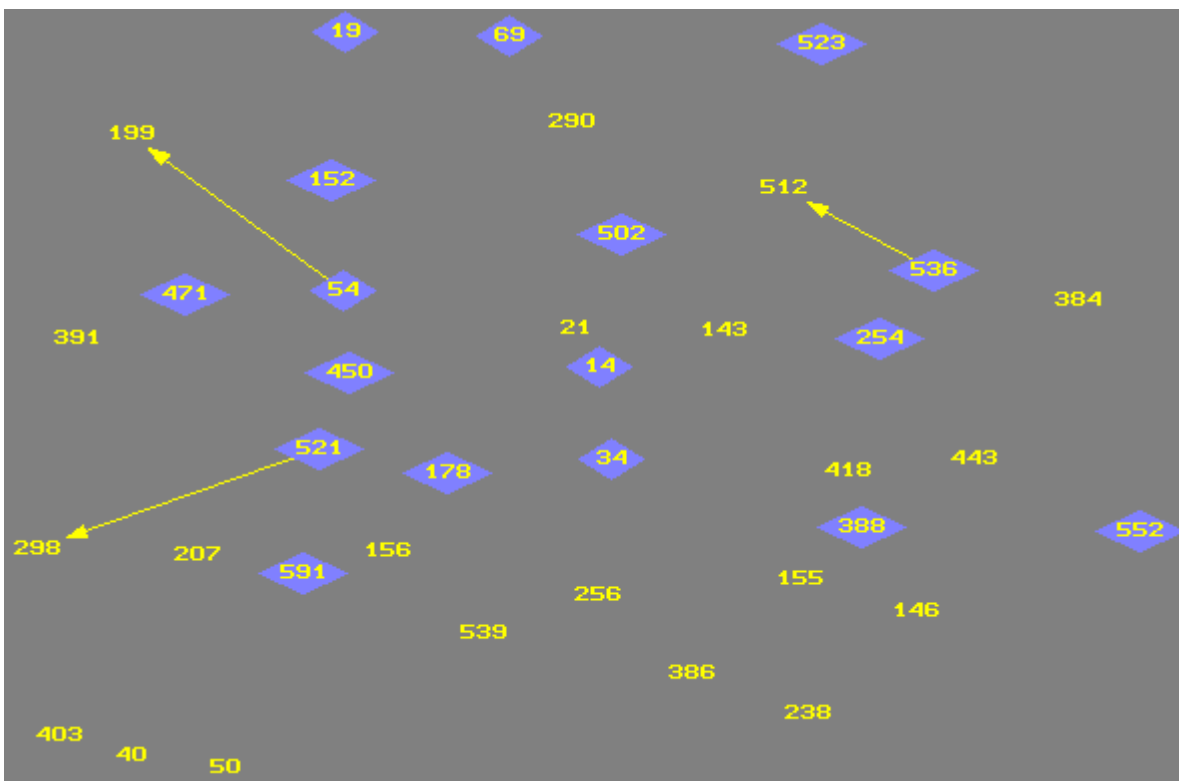


Figure 2. Inter-organizational alliances in block 2 in the Glasgow civic network

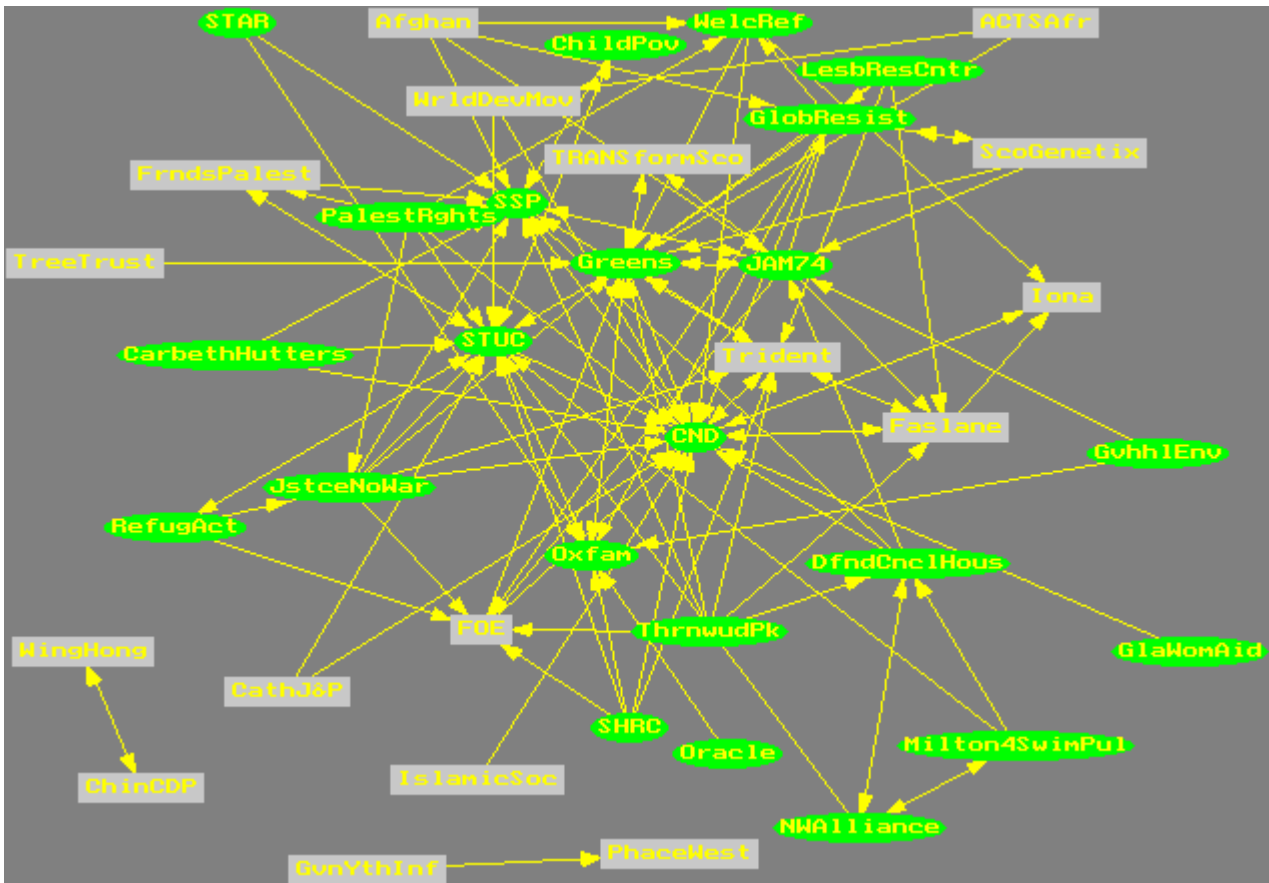


Figure 3. Inter-organizational alliances in block 3 in the Glasgow civic network

The traits of the inter-organizational alliance network in Glasgow suggest the following features of collective action in the city:

- a strongly imbalanced distribution of ties within the sector;
- a set of organizations (those in block 3) strongly connected within, and with substantial links to the other two blocks;
- another set of organizations (those in block 1) with significant links both among themselves and to other blocks;
- a third set of organizations (corresponding to block 2) mainly acting on their own, or regarded as important partners by others, but not directly involved in the network, at least as far as the perceived importance of ties goes.

We have, on the one hand, coalition dynamics with a varying degree of strength; on the other hand, a style of action which seems to place the emphasis on the role of individual organizations, including their capacity to act as a reference point for others. By network criteria, social movement dynamics are more likely to be found among incumbents of blocks 1 and 3, than of block 2. To this purpose, however, we must bring other variables into the equation.

## Networks of events

To which extent are the data collected in Glasgow in 2001-2002 a reflection of time- and issue-specific, contingent coalitions, likely to disband after the particular concern behind them fades away? And to which extent may they be regarded as part of sustained collaborations? One possible reply comes from an exploration of the network, where ties between organizations consist of their involvement in up to 26 major public events, of the contentious as well as of the non contentious type, which have taken place in the previous years – or, in some cases, do recur every year, like the May 1<sup>st</sup> Parade or the Glasgow Mela, a festival of ethnic minorities in the city.

In the analysis, I assume that two organizations will be linked if they participated in at least three of the 26 events listed. The density of the network is obviously higher than in the interorganizational alliances, going up to 0.66. What matters, however, in order to compare the two structures, is the ratio between densities within and across blocks in the two networks. In the inter-organizational network, the internal density of block 3 was 3.04 times that of block 1 and 15 times that of block 2; that of block 1 exceeded that of block 2 by 5 times. In the events based network, density of block 3 is 5 times that of block 1 and 33 times that of block 2; density of block 1 is 6.6 times that of block 2.

What do these differences suggest? First and foremost, that organizations which were already internally connected more strongly than others in terms of coalition (those in block 3), turn out to be even more strongly connected when we introduce a measure of continuity of joint activism over time. This regardless of the fact that the issues addressed are by no means restricted to protest events. Rather, it is the propensity to become involved in a broad range of public events which seems to matter. If social movement dynamics are to be found in Glasgow, network properties suggest block 3 to be the most obvious candidate. Interactions in block 1 seem to be largely restricted to coalition dynamics; as for organizations in block 2, their substantial isolation seems even more pronounced than in the alliance network.

Blocks	1	2	3
1	0.0464646481	0.02456140332	0.08130080998
2		0.007112375461	0.04043645784
3			0.2341463417

Table 2. Densities in the events-based network (symmetric network; figures in brackets indicate average number of ties per organization)

### Identity networks

The third trait characterizing social movement networks is identity. Do organizations in Glasgow feel as part of broader and longer term projects? While asking people if they feel part of some kind of social movements is not impossible (and we'll look at that later), it is more complicated to translate it into a network matrix, based on dyadic mutual recognition. As a proxy, we can try and assess whether interorganizational alliances also reflect that sharing of a common project and deeper solidarity. In the Glasgow project we asked groups whether they also felt a solidarity bond to the organizations they had identified as their main allies. The resulting matrix is reported below. Again, what matters is the ratio between the different densities rather than their absolute value.<sup>3</sup>

Blocks	1	2	3
1	0.007575757802	0.003508772003	0.00216802163
2	0.001754386001	0.001422475092	0.0006418485427
3	0.00379403797	0.007060333621	0.02073170803

Table 3. Densities in the solidarity network

In this particular case, there are no significant differences to the inter-organizational network. Here, density of block 3 is 2.7 times that of block 1 (it was 3.04 in the alliance network) and 14 times that of block 2 (it was 15 in the other network). The distribution of solidarity bonds seems to reflect

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<sup>3</sup> Alas, we cannot check whether there were groups for which respondents felt solidarity, yet had no alliances with. It follows that differences between blocks at a ratio, similar to that found in the interorganizational network, may simply be a reflection of differences in densities in that network. It is differences in the ratios from one network to the other which deserve most attention.

exactly that of inter-organizational alliances. If organizations in block 3 are more frequently linked by ties of this kind, that is largely because they are also more densely connected on the latter.

The profile is different, however, if we look at overlapping memberships. These provide an indicator, no matter how rough, of whether core activists perceive two organizations as compatible and close to the point of sharing their individual commitments between them. On this ground, organizations in block 3 are much more frequently related to each other than organizations in other blocks, far more than the distribution of alliances would lead one to expect: the density of block 3 is 9 times that of block 1, and 26 times that of block 2.

Blocks	1	2	3
1	0.002020202111	0.002339181257	0.001084010815
2	0.002339181257	0.0007112375461	0.0006418485427
3	0.002710027155	0.001925545628	0.01829268225

Table 4. Densities in the overlapping memberships network

## Multiple networks

Finally, let us look at the network based on multiple ties, where two organizations are connected only if they are at the same time involved in alliances, sharing mutual solidarity and joint core activists. The ratio between densities is once again consistent with the previous pattern, the density of block 3 being 6 times that of block 1, and 26 times that of block 2.

Blocks	1	2	3
1	0.003030302934	0.001169590629	0.001626016223
2	0.001754386001	0.0007112375461	0.0006418485427
3	0.00216802163	0.001925545628	0.01829268225

Table 5. Densities in the multiple ties network

The overall message from these data is pretty clear: patterns of inter-organizational alliances do not tell the whole story when it comes to networks of civic organizations. The distribution of other types of ties, measuring long-term involvement in the same public events, solidarity feelings, overlapping memberships, multiple links does not necessarily follow the same pattern as collaborations between organizations. In the Glasgow case, the only network in which densities are distributed similarly to the alliance network is that based on feelings of solidarity. About 30 per cent of organizations, who identify another organization as a major alliance partner, also express feelings of solidarity towards it. On other indicators, however, links between organizations in block 3 are twice to three times more dense than those in the other structural positions.

Type of network	Block 2	Block 1
Alliances	15	3.04
Past events	33	5
Solidarity	14	2.7
Joint members	26	9
Multiple ties	26	6

Table 6. Ratio of density of ties in block 3 to density of ties in other blocks

### **Contentious networks?**

The last element of my definition of social movements emphasizes the conflictual nature of movement networks. Movements are forms of network organizations where ties are functional to challenges to authorities and/or other social groups. The structure of the civic network in Glasgow reflects deep differences within the sector. When asked about their two most important initiatives in the last few years, organizations were also invited to indicate whether such actions targeted specific authorities or social groups. Responses show organizations in block 3 to be far more inclined to identify specific opponents, than organizations in blocks 1 and 2.

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Total
Public authorities	17.8%	5.3%	48.8%	24.2%
Specific social groups	11.1%	5.3%	24.4%	13.7%

Table 7. Percentage of groups identifying public authorities and/or other social groups as opponents in their main initiatives

Comparison between the density of exchanges in different networks, and an estimate of the level of contentiousness of those networks, suggests three very different styles of networking in Glasgow:

- organizations located in block 2 operate mainly as independent actors, who are a relevant contact for other civic groups, yet do not focus their alliance building strategies on the civic sector. They are also the most reluctant to identify specific opponents for their actions. Both the relational and the contentious dimensions of action are distinctly absent here. From a relational point of view, they may be represented as *public interest groups* rather than as social movement organizations (Diani, 2001);
- organizations located in block 1 act mainly as partners of coalitions. Their inter-organizational exchanges are not frequently backed by shared, long-term involvement in protest activities, nor by overlapping memberships. The multiple ties, encompassing both the organizational and the individual dimension, characteristic of social movements are hardly there. The relational dimension is restricted to inter-organizational alliances and does not seem to be supported by other level of interaction. Block 1 provides an example of a *non-conflictual coalition*, where networking seems limited to collaboration on specific issues;
- organizations in block 3 are engaged in a pattern of exchanges which comes closest to the social movement dynamic. Not only their network is the densest: they also engage more frequently with other civic organizations (table 1), and inter-organizational ties much more frequently coincide with links, created by participation in past events, or by joint activists. The relational dimension stretches beyond the level of exchanges between organizations, which might in themselves be purely instrumental, and suggests the persistence of bonds and shared identities, which secure continuity to the network. The more pronounced



conflictual orientations also make this network closer to a *social movement* than to a non-conflictual movement, oriented mainly to altruistic, non contentious action.

### ***Relations vs. categorical traits***

In the previous section I have demonstrated that one of the structural position within Glasgow civic network presents the relational features defining in my view a social movement to a much more pronounced extent than others. But do incumbents of block 3 – henceforth referred to as ‘social movement organizations’ - actually display, and to which extent, the traits traditionally associated with social movements? If the homophily principle leads us to expect structural positions to overlap with actors’ categorical traits to some extent (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), a total overlap would render the whole exercise purely academic – if not deprived of some confirmatory value. Our data suggest a picture which confirms some widely held assumptions about social movements, yet qualifies others significantly.

### **Self-representations**

Half of the incumbents in block 3 define their groups as political organizations, while only one fourth of the overall sector does; on the other hand, groups in block 1 and 2 regard themselves as charities significantly more frequently than those in block 3 (over 50% vs. 24%).

Organizational identities also match movement identities. When asked whether they feel part of broader movements, transcending the boundaries of their organizations, three quarters of organizations in block 3 respond affirmatively, while only one third in the other blocks does. However, identification with movements mobilizing on ‘social equality’ – which in this case would range from anti-poverty campaigns to explicit class action – spreads fairly evenly across blocks, while the difference is made by organizations identifying with ‘new social movements’, concentrated in block 3.

While the joint memberships discussed in the previous section measure mutual recognition among organizations, self-identification as part of a social movement reflects the subjective dimension of identity. The overall picture suggests strong correspondence

between relations and self-representations: actors involved in a social movement network dynamic are also more likely to regard themselves as movement members.

## **Confirmed and disconfirmed stereotypes**

Conventional assumptions about social movement which are confirmed in Glasgow include recurrent participation in protest events and propensity to engage in both political and cultural protest. Organizations in block 3:

1. have a much stronger record of involvement in protest events on both environmental justice and anti-racism than organizations in other blocks;<sup>4</sup>
2. are also more inclined to adopt the whole range of protest tactics, from street marches to site occupations, as well as more symbolic and cultural forms of contestation, from cultural performances to boycotts of products, etc. (see Appendix 1 for details).

At the same time, however, differences do not emerge on a number of dimensions where it would be reasonable to expect them. In particular, social movement organizations in block 3 do not differ – or do not differ according to expectations - from others in terms of:

- organizational traits. Memberships size, amount of paid staff, overall degree of formalization of the organizational structure do not show significant differences across blocks. Organizations in block 3 are significantly below groups in block 1 in terms of budget size, but this condition is shared with incumbents of block 2, the farthest away from a relational model of movement network;
- relationship to public authorities. Movement and non-movement organizations do not differ either in the intensity nor in the quality of their collaboration with their city council. They do differ, however, when it comes to dependence on public funds, which is related to differences in charity status;

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<sup>4</sup> Factor analysis of past participation in 26 public events, both contentious and not-contentious, identified three factors: environmental justice events, including actions on environmental and social exclusion issues; multicultural issues, including ethnic minority festivals and council-backed initiatives on race relations issues; militant anti-racism, including anti-racist protest activities and militant initiatives (see Appendix 2).

- attitudes on several issues of interest to the civic sector, from the new consultative experiences (in particular, Public-Private Partnerships) set up by the Labor government, to the role of Labor as a partner, to the risks faced by civic organizations when they become too much integrated within the system, and too much dependent on public money for survival, to the desirability of joint campaigning. On these grounds, there are no differences as the radicalism vs. moderatism distinction might suggest (see Appendix 3 for details);
- inclination to adopt classic pressure and lobbying tactics. Social movement organizations turn out to be significantly more prepared to engage even with these tactics than organizations in other blocks, as if the distinction run between political representation and service delivery rather than between pressure group action and social movement action.

It should be noted that the distribution of differences across blocks does not suggest a linear relationship between network properties and substantive properties of the organizations, as if the most strongly networked block (the social movements) lay at the extreme of a pole which had at the other extreme the least networked block, and this overlapped with organizations' greater or lesser proximity to a 'social movement organization' model. As it were, incumbents in block 1, which is significantly connected at the coalition level, seem to differ as much – and occasionally more – from block 3 than incumbents in the most disconnected block, namely, block 2.

### **Was it worth the effort?**

Embarking on a conceptual and methodological approach, that many still find awkward and cumbersome, paid off for two reasons at least:

- First, this approach highlighted the substantial differences, running behind coalition work which on face value could all be brought under the same, vague, heading of 'movement networking'. We do have significant coalition work in both block 1 and block 3, but only the latter presents the multiplicity of networks which may be most properly associated with

social movement dynamics. Social movements are not mere networks without further qualifications, they are a particular type of network with distinctive features;

- Second, this approach enables us to associate the movement with relational properties rather than with specific characteristics of the actors involved. One should not take the presence of some differences (e.g., in the use of protest) and the absence of others (e.g., in degree of organizational formalization) to simply reformulate the list of the ‘truly’ distinctive traits of social movements. In another context, the list of persisting differences might well be different. Rather, one should move away from looking at movements as aggregates of organizations with distinctive characters of their own – however defined – and look instead at movements as distinctive systems of interaction.

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## Appendix 1. Repertoires of action

We asked respondents whether they had used or would use several pressure tools and/or protest techniques. We came up with four factors having an eigenvalue above 1.5: Protest, Pressure, Electoral support, and Cultural action.

	Have done or would do	Protest	Pressure	Elections	Cultural Action
Contact a local politician	93%		.755		
Contact a national politician	83%		.797		
Contact a public official	81%		.683		
Contact the local media	90%		.541		
Contact the national (UK) media	66%		.696		
Contact a solicitor or judicial body	66%		.562		
Promote/support a petition	72%		.543		
Promote/support a public demonstration	58%	.506	.477		
Promote/support a strike	27%	.616			
Promote/support blockades/sit-ins	26%	.831			
Promote/support occupations of buildings/sites	22%	.898			
Promote/support illegal billboarding/graffiti	10%	.639			
Promote/support attacks on property/land	17%	.797			
Promote/support a boycott of certain products	36%				.755
Promote/support ethical trade/investment	40%				.794
Promote/support cultural performances	65%				.694
Support candidates in local/regional elections	10%			.915	
Support candidates in national elections	9%			.941	
Explained variance		20%	19%	11%	11%

## Appendix 2. Previous participation in public events

	Environmental justice	Militant anti- racism	Multi- culturalism
Chokhar Family Justice Campaign		.768	
Annual Anti-racist Demonstration		.780	
Imran Khan's campaign		.592	
Asylum seekers campaigns		.592	
Kick Racism out of Football		.544	
Mothers Against Drugs		.503	
Glasgow Mela			.623
Asian Youth Festival			.698
City Council Cultural Diversity Meeting			.715
Open Space Event on Fighting Police Racism			.720
Open Space Event on Council's Equality Policy			.778
Opposition to extension of the M74	.762		
Opposition to extension of the M77	.756		
Initiatives against mobile phone masts	.634		
Siting of (hospital) waste incinerators	.572		
Faslane Peace Camp Activities	.669		
Global Resistance Campaigns	.741		
Trident Ploughshares	.641		
Gap demonstration March 2001	.693		
Campaigns against school closures	.505		
Save our Hospitals campaign	.587		
Explained variance	21%	17%	15%

### Appendix 3. Opinions on the situation of the civic sector in the UK

	Third Way	Crisis	Michels	Coalition- building
Public-private partnerships and consultative forums give citizens' organisations access to useful information about grant opportunities	.755			
The 1997-2001 Labour government was more open to citizens' organisations' demands than its predecessors	.564			
Participation in public-private partnerships and consultative forums facilitates networking between citizens' organisations	.826			
Public-private partnerships and consultative forums are exercises in public relations without any value to citizens' organisations	-.656			
Professional staff play a very positive role in citizens' organisations	.524			.482
Citizens' organisations are more effective if they manage to promote collaboration and joint campaigns				.737
Citizens organisations usually occupy marginal positions within partnerships & consultative forums				.590
Most voluntary organisations are more interested in their survival than in their ultimate goals			.662	
Citizens' organisations have become too dependent on public money for their survival			.851	
Citizens' organisations increasingly tend to work on their own rather than in coalition with other groups		.669		
Less and less people are willing to participate in protest activities		.768		
Less and less people are willing to devote themselves to unpaid work to voluntary organisations		.770		
Explained variance	21%	16%	11%	11%

## Appendix 4. Main features of structural positions in the Glasgow network

Block	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<b>Identity</b>			
Identity as political org.	weak	weak	strong
Identity as charity	strong	strong	weak
Movement identity	weak	weak	strong
Social equality movement	medium	medium	medium
NSM identity	weak	weak	strong
<b>Organizational properties</b>			
Occasional members/participants	low	high	low
Size of paid staff	medium	medium	medium
Membership size	medium	medium	medium
Budget	high	low	low
Degree of formalization	medium	medium	medium
<b>Issue interests</b>			
No-global	low	low	high
<b>Glasgow protest events</b>			
Environmental justice events	low	low	high
Militant anti-racism events	low	low	high
<b>Repertoire</b>			
Protest	low	low	high
Pressure	low	low	high
Ethical (boycotts, cultural)	low	low	high
<b>Relationship to public authorities</b>			
Dependence on public funding	high	medium	low
Volume of ties to city council	medium	medium	medium
Satisfaction with ties to city council	medium	medium	medium
<b>Belief measures</b> (no differences)			



## Appendix 5. Issue interest structures

The main issue interests of the Glasgow organizations were assessed by submitting respondents a list of 49 issues and asking whether they would ‘likely’ or ‘possibly’ promote initiatives on any of them. Factor analysis generated six factors with eigenvalue above 1.5, which I designated as Social Exclusion, Ethnicity and Migration, Globalization, Environment, Housing, and Conservation. Interestingly, animal rights and hunting issues are perceived as closer to globalization issues than to environmental ones, both a reflection of the long-established separation between environmental and animal rights activism in the UK (Rootes, 2000), and of the new radical orientations among some animal rights campaigners, which make them open to engage with technocratic powers and global commerce (at least since the protests against live calf export in the mid-1990s).

	Social exclusion	Ethnicity and Migration	Global	Environment	Housing	Conservation
Environmental education						.577
Building conservation						.627
Nature conservation				.514		.638
Pollution				.556		.528
Farming, forestry, fishing				.522		
Energy				.613		
Waste				.629		
Tourism				.657		
Food				.611		
Transport				.682		
Science and technology				.682		
Genetically modified food			.759			
Animal welfare			.578			
Hunting			.551			
Third world			.707			

poverty		
Globalization		.762
Third World debt		.759
Promoting multiculturalism	.620	
Independent education for minorities	.635	
Racial harassment	.752	
Promoting minority entrepreneurship	.590	
Minorities' access to public office	.695	
Citizenship rights for minorities	.514	
Asylum seekers	.623	
Housing developments		.656
Tenants' rights		.732
Housing quality		.725
Privatization of housing		.729
Gender equality issues	.578	
Quality of basic education	.517	
Unemployment issues	.648	
Minimum wage issues	.518	
Community services	.555	
Poverty	.690	
Homelessness	.675	
Disability	.514	
Welfare rights	.747	
Lone parents	.744	
Health	.681	

Elderly people

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Children's services .638

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Crime in local neighborhoods .573

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Drugs .653

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HIV-related issues .638

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Explained variance      26%                  12%                  7%                  5%                  4%                  3%