

# Mobilizing institutions - institutionalizing movements an introduction

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“Mobilizing institutions - institutionalizing movements”. Articles gathered for this special section of *Focaal* all question, from different angles and localities, the dichotomy between movements and institutions. The title reflects the very fluidity of the processes submitted to anthropological scrutiny. The articles all take their origins in what was to be originally two workshops, finally held jointly, for the EASA sixth Conference in Krakow in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Starting from notions such as empowerment and popular participation, civil society, citizenship and the public sphere, both workshops aimed at exploring diverse representations of politics, collective forms of organization, and potentially new forms of relationships between the state, institutions and ‘civil society’ or citizens. But while one was taking as its starting point social movements and participation, the other was set to explore institutional practices in the same field. At the fertile crossing of these two approaches lie the contributions gathered here.

Two dimensions of what is currently described as ‘a crisis of traditional politics’ (traditional here being representative democracy as much as the scale of the nation-state) seemed to us to be of particular relevance to explore such processes. The first one is the growing questioning of representative democracy as the more ‘democratic’ and/or workable system, and the emergence of a new trend (or fashion?) in favor of more participatory political processes, where individual citizens and social groups would take a larger part in influencing decision-making. Government in-

stitutions and supranational agencies endowed themselves with consultative bodies. They called upon either individuals, also called ‘representatives of civil society’ or so-called non-governmental organizations to voice their concerns as ‘citizens’. Such ‘participation’ was heralded as a means to overcome the perceived lack of interest of citizens in forms of ‘representative democracy’, or in classical forms of collective action. Less and less people seem to participate in elections and many leave political and civic associations. Media representatives and social scientists have debated to try and understand why citizens in democratic societies seem to withdraw from civic and political life. Putnam considers this decline is generational (Putnam 1996: 45-48) and linked to the arrival of television as the only leisure activity that at the expense of nearly every social activity inhibits participation outside the home. Contesting such a simplistic vision, Cohen holds that erosion in voluntary activity and political participation is not general and that the latter may well take different new forms and turn out at unexpected places (Cohen 1999: 225). Ion also considers that what is described as “the end of militant engagement” might more accurately be described as profound changes in practices of public involvement. He points to new forms of collective actions, stressing personal involvement and reluctance to delegate speech and power to representatives (Ion 1997). Such processes had already been described twenty years ago by Hirschman (1982), according to whom the political engagement of contemporary citizens

was episodic and increasingly issue-oriented. In what he termed 'shifting involvement', citizens alternate between temporary involvement in the public sphere and withdrawal into the private realm.

The second dimension of the crisis of traditional politics is the profound changes in state policies, whether they are due to the effects of new public policy practices, to globalization or to the emergence of numerous 'partners' of such policies such as international or local NGOs. Obviously, this trend is closely linked to the first one, since it is also transnational representations and practices, the development of 'global issues' and of institutions in charge of them, which question, shatter, and deeply modify more classical structures such as nation-states, political parties or social movements. The development of public policies and international forums on a large series of issues (GMOs, global warming, WTO, etc) is here instrumental. Not only do they give rise to the new forms and means of mobilization evoked earlier, they also powerfully contribute to the creation and circulation, on an unprecedented scale, of social meanings. The contemporary definitions and diffusion of notions such as 'sustainability', 'citizenship', 'the general interest' or 'participatory democracy' stand as many testimonies of such a capacity to create, modify or limit 'possible thoughts' (Douglas 1999). As demonstrated by Tilly (1986) for an earlier period in history, such long-term evolutions progressively modify the locally as well as globally available "collective action repertory", i.e. "a pre-existing palette of more or less codified forms of protest, more or less available depending on the identity of mobilized groups" (Neveu 1996: 21). Thus, today's mobilizations could be analyzed as revealing the emergence of a new generation of repertory, characterized by the international dimension of mobilizations; the growing role played by expertise; the re-emergence of a symbolic dimension; and a growing reservation towards delegation (Neveu 1996: 24).

It is precisely along such references that

mobilizations analyzed in this volume have to be read. Authors in this volume deal with social movements from the particular perspective of their complex relationships with institutions. Most of the mobilizations they analyze are local ones, emerging out of a specific and contested project. While not all of them survive and go beyond the success or failure of a specific struggle (Neveu, Müller and Kohutek), they nevertheless all pertain to wider movements and currents that irrigate European societies and that all contribute to a profoundly changing landscape in discourses and power relationships. The view adopted in these articles rejects any simplistic vision of active citizens putting passive institutions 'on the move'. On the contrary, they stress the complex interactive processes between institutional agents and citizens, scrutinizing how institutions build representations of 'the public' they are in relation with (Abram, Cruces et al.), how citizens confront and/or negotiate with institutions to make their voices heard (Neveu, Müller and Kohutek), or how both kinds of agents fight to endow global notions with different meanings (Berglund).

As shown by Catherine Neveu in her analysis of the protests of inhabitants of Rieulay, a formal procedure of public consultation can make citizens feel excluded and offended rather than included and taken into account. The environmental protests in the Czech Republic that Birgit Müller and Petr Kohutek looked at, reveal that legal frames have to be appropriated, explored and pushed to their limits to become part of the citizens' potential for action. Simone Abram explores the disciplining effects of value-laden definitions of and discourses on 'the public'. However, if mainly political and state institutions are questioned in that respect, in fact all institutions today, be they public or private ones, are confronted with the issue of their public and their relationships with it. By proposing identificatory schemes to citizens or clients, that should allow them to develop some bond of affinity with the institution through its agents, they try

to put on a 'smiling face', and often attempt to establish trust between them and their public, in order to be able to carry on working (Cruces et al., this issue).

The evidence the authors present in this volume critically examines the relationships of power behind new discourses of 'participation' and new lines for mobilization. Does 'participation' give citizens effective power of decision-making or is it simply a tool allowing them to voice their opinion without consequence for the final outcome of the decision-making process? How do citizens use the formal structures of consultative processes to exercise effective pressure? Does the direct participation of citizens effectively mobilize state institutions by opening them up to different viewpoints and perspectives? Or, on the contrary, is the energy of social movements bound up and channeled by consultative processes that confine the expression of public debate or disagreement to comfortable meeting rooms? Who are the people participating in such consultative processes? To what extent are they independent from state bodies and economic agencies? By trying to grasp the ensuing interactions between institutions on the one hand and citizens on the other, we want to contribute to contemporary debates on notions such 'trust', 'expertise', 'the general interests' or about the role played by emotions in mobilizations. We will analyze the uses they are put to and question their relevance for understanding the mobilization of institutions and the institutionalization of mobilizations.

Political science has long defined political participation in quite a restrictive way (and this was particularly the case in France), limiting it to participation in the structures of (an ideal) representative democracy (elections and political parties). More recent literature has nevertheless extended the notion, defined by Leca as "any activity organized to address government, whether it is authorized or not" (Leca 1989). But despite such an extension, political scientists maintain the central idea that only those social movements that address the state

can be described as 'political':

"A movement takes on a political dimension if it calls upon political authorities (government, local authorities, administration...) to bring an answer, through public intervention, to a claim, [that] ascribes to political authorities the responsibility for the problems on which mobilization originates" (Neveu 1996: 13).

Social movements that remain within what is traditionally described as 'civil society', even if they succeed in being debated in the public space, are thus not defined as political. Such an approach, if it is coherent with political science's reduction of politics to the State, nevertheless raises, from an anthropological point of view, a series of thorny issues: does it imply that there were no such movements in societies in which state power as such did not exist, or where politics was organized according to different 'places of politics' (Abélès 1983)? How can a clear border be traced between 'civil society' and the realm of politics? On that topic as on many others relating to politics, Buchowski remarks that: "A major discrepancy between anthropologists' and political scientists' understandings of civil society seems to turn on the range of activities which falls into this category" (1996: 80), the latter restricting it to organized interest groups and autonomous associations, while the former would consider that "another level of co-operation based upon informal networks deeply embedded in the local community (...) must be taken into account" (Hann 1992: 161). Such an approach certainly allows for more attention being paid to processes at work in networks, the informality of which makes it often difficult for political science to be aware of. But it does not answer the question: are all social interactions, notwithstanding their centrality for the maintenance and development of society, of common values and beliefs, redeemable of a qualification as 'political'?

Instead of engaging in a somehow unavail-

ing attempt to delimitate the realm of politics by defining which structures should or should not be considered as pertaining to it, we support the view that “[a]nthropology mainly considers the practices and grammars of power, underlying its expressions and display” (Abélès and Jeudy 1997: 13). We are thus less concerned with “identifying forms of political organization than [with] considering the practical and symbolic efficiency of powers” (ibid.). Such an option allows for a clearer understanding of politics and civil society as closely overlapping, and replaces the canonical distinction between the two by an in-depth exploration of the “plural inscription of powers” (ibid.).

But as stated earlier, our central interest in this volume is to explore mobilizations that create links, no matter how tensed or contested, between citizens and institutions. To that extent we are more concerned with ‘public action’, i.e. an action concerned with *res publica*, than by ‘simple’ collective action, defined as groups of agents acting together (Leca 1989, Quéré 1996). Such an option is thus in line with the vision Swartz, Turner and Tuden had of political anthropology when they defined it as “the study of processes implied by the choice and the realization of public aims, and the differential use of power by group’s members concerned by these aims” (1966: 7). What interests us here is the political dimension of mobilizations, and thus their relations with public aims. Political debates exist of course on the large range of questions that can or should be ‘publicized’ (see issues of gender, reproduction etc. for example). Instead of defining our object according to an (always) unsatisfactory classification of structures, we suggest to define it according to a relationship to a public realm, thus stressing processes instead of structures.

Contrary to political scientists who define the ‘public realm’ as pertaining exclusively to the realm of relationships with the state and its agencies, we consider that relationships and debates within society also have to be included in that public realm, if they are ‘publicized’,

i.e. considered as contributing to the ever-moving definition of the ‘Commonwealth’, or *res publica*. The public, and thus political, dimension of collective action then does not necessarily relate only to the state, but includes all practices, debates and representations that are linked to ‘the choice and the realization of public aims’.

This approach would go beyond the distinction made by Habermas when he distinguishes between the space citizens invest to voice their opinions, grievances, and analysis and the space of actual political and economic decision making (Habermas 1997: 398). Processes that are being analyzed in this volume clearly question this kind of distinction, between spaces where citizens debate, with all the unequal power positions they hold, and institutions in charge of implementing public policies or promoting private interests. Indeed, most of the contributions deal with situations in which mobilization took place to question and reverse public decision-making and in a general context where issues of democratization and the effective influence of citizens in political decision-making were high on the agenda.

Political science literature on the structure of political opportunity, especially its most recent developments, can nevertheless be useful to anthropologists trying to analyze public action and/or relationships between citizens and institutions in ordinary life. This notion, elaborated especially by Mc Adam (1982) and Tarrow (1989), allows for a measurement of the degree of openness or vulnerability of a political system to mobilizations. It is defined according to different types of elements: the degree of openness of the political system, the degree of stability of political alliances, the possible existence of relays in strategic positions, and the state’s capacity to develop public policies. The relationship between protest and political opportunity is curvilinear. Neither full access to institutions nor its absence produces the greatest degree of protest (Tarrow 1998: 77). Full access to institutions reduces the challenge of contestation, while no

access at all increases the cost of mobilization to the point of making it impracticable. It is those people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authority (Tarrow 1998: 3), whose collective action tends to become contentious. In recent years, however, as interest groups and others have increasingly engaged in contentious politics, movement leaders have become skilled at combining contention with participation in institutions. Ordinary people are often no longer the ones who perform political contention that has become both routine and carried out by professional activists (Tarrow 1998: 93). These newer, lighter externalized movements no longer have a permanent cadre of grass-roots activists (Tarrow 1998: 134). Professional activists tend to occupy the role of intermediaries between citizens and institutions, filtering the discourses on both sides, defining the strategies of mobilizations and reacting to public policies.

Recent literature on social movements has stressed the necessity to fully take into account the impact of public policies when analyzing mobilizations. Thus Kitschelt's typology of the relationships between state, social movements and public policies (Kitschelt 1986) allows for a more elaborate analysis of how mobilizations and their results are linked to the state's capacity to canalize protests, particularly by integrating them in the very definition of public policies. Such an approach includes the state as an acting protagonist and not just as the object of social mobilization. Indeed, it allows for the tools mobilized groups can rely on to be placed on the more general background of the tools the state itself has in order to canalize and to institutionalize such movements. As demonstrated by Berglund as well as by Müller and Kohutek, such an approach proves particularly fruitful for a more dynamic analysis of the relationships between institutions and their 'public'.

However, as stressed by Chazel, there is still

a fundamental dimension of mobilization to be taken into account if one is to fully understand its backgrounds, success or failure: the belief that collective action can change the world order. He thus stresses the need "to link the political dimension with a cultural dimension (...) to pay attention to the symbolic and cognitive processes underlying the creation and adjustment of structures of meaning" (Chazel 1993: 156), without which such a belief cannot even exist.

Symbolic and cognitive processes do not only occur among citizens or agents involved in movements. Institutions, as such, and through their agents, must also be scrutinized to uncover how similar processes nourish their workings. Indeed, negotiations between state agencies and social movements, and the institutionalization of the latter, are not just issues of procedural, substantial or structural gains.<sup>2</sup> What Descombes describes as "institutions of meaning" are as, if not even more, important. Institutional processes not only define a framework to manage society or a structure of political opportunity, they also organize a continuous redistribution of meaning: "Public policies all carry a certain vision of the issue they are to deal with, a certain representation of the social group(s) concerned, and a specific theory of social change. They are thus a system of beliefs. A public policy produces meaning, but it also produces power, in a circulatory relationship between meaning and power" (Muller 1995: 164).<sup>3</sup> Issues dealt with by institutions are not just management ones, they are closely linked to values and opinions.

Understanding such processes as such cannot go without exploring what can be called 'institutional semantics', i.e. the use to which such general and abstract notions as 'the public' or 'general interest', 'sustainability', 'participation' are put to: "Whether one considers words that institute, words that resist or words creating illusions, the circulation of meaning is inherent to the life of institutions" (Abélès 1999: 510). Such rhetoric serves to perpetuate established power-relationships, but it also

plays a decisive role in structuring debate and thus in framing power struggles. This volume aims at questioning how this rhetoric is put to work and at understanding contemporary changes in patterns of mobilization and of relationships between 'citizens' and institutions, be they local, national or worldwide. What do global and rather vague notions such as 'participation', 'civil society' or 'expertise', often referred to by institutions as well as by researchers involved in the study of such processes, mean in a given context? Thus, whole sectors and policies, which used to be considered as pertaining to the decision-making power of the state, can now be in the hands of private/quasi-public structures. This situation modifies the agents' representations of and practices towards the state, fellow-citizens or "civil society" at large, for instance through appeals to the 'responsibility' of citizens opposed to a continued state intervention.

In the thematic explored in this volume, questions of meaning (its creation, evolutions, circulation) are central: what and who is the public a local planning institution is supposed to discuss with? What is the general interest, how can it be defined and how can its definition vary according to time and scale? What are the effects on mobilization and protest of a growing discrepancy between, on the one hand, what used to be considered as useful for a given local society and, on the other hand, new perceptions of risk and sustainability? To try and analyze the institutionalization of mobilizations and the mobilizing of institutions thus requires a specific attention for processes through which meaning(s) are elaborated and circulated, and to their links with practices.

In this volume we have been looking at the interplay between institutions, and their customers, clients or citizens, whose life is affected by institutional structures and institutionalized decision-making. We have been looking at these relations as dynamic ones: neither are institutions immovable in their legal and organizational structures, nor are citi-

zens unchanging in their perceptions and preferences. Notions erected as central references according to which decisions should be taken are contested in their meaning, content and definition, as are the procedures implied to meet the defined aims of policies and actions. What was of interest to us here was to examine such dynamic interfaces and complex interactions in different democratic societies, such as France, Spain, Norway, the Czech Republic, and Finland, between citizens' engagement and participation and the workings of institutions.

## **Trust**

Even in their ordinary routine, issues of trust are central in the relationships between institutions and their publics. The extent to which a social capital of trust and cooperative civic relations can be encouraged, acquired and generated by institutions, through a larger participation of citizens, is today a central issue for social scientists. As Offe pointed out, institutions are by their very nature incomplete and ambiguous and they are contested (Offe 1999: 66). In order to comply with an institutional order, the citizen must be able to trust that by and large, legislators do not neglect their legislative responsibilities, administrators do not act opportunistically and fellow citizens do not effectively defect even when they can escape formal sanctioning (Offe 1999: 70). As citizens cannot supervise institutional agents individually, they need to be confident that the normative meaning the institution claims for itself is strong enough to commit its members to the virtues of truth-telling, honoring contracts, fairness and solidarity (Offe 1999: 73). The values carried by the institution are thus commanding trust.

This idealistic view of institutions as carriers of norms and values is not shared by the American liberal tradition that holds that citizens should distrust and be wary of government. A citizen has no reason to trust an insti-

tution, Hardin maintains, “as it is commonly implausible that we could trust enough individuals in the organization, each in the relevant ways, to do what they must do if the organization is to live up to our trust” (Hardin 1999: 38). He also sees it as implausible that most people could know the design of roles and their related incentives to get role holders to do what they must do. Distrust rather than trust is thus the appropriate response to institutions and their agents. Hardin welcomes the incidence of declining trust in government as making eminently good sense. If there is declining trust, he states, the reason seems most likely that there is declining trustworthiness (Hardin 1999: 39).

Neither Offe’s idealized vision of institutions nor Hardin’s skeptical one explain, however, how citizens who criticize the arbitrariness and absence of clear-cut norms and values in institutions can nevertheless develop attitudes of trust. Without idealizing institutional values and norms Herzfeld (1997) explains how relationships of trust and conviviality develop between institutional agents and citizens. In what he terms ‘cultural intimacy’, citizens and institutional agents share an intimate knowledge of institutional shortcomings and informal means of problem solving, which are specific to their shared cultural background. Only insiders can thus acquire this intimacy and take part in a shared space of meaning, that commands trust and makes communication possible.

As institutions have come to admit they could only carry on working (both in terms of legitimacy and in terms of efficiency) if they managed to include ‘the public’ in their functioning devices, they toil at getting rid of their reservations and fears about this ‘public’. If the classical vision in terms of ‘token participation’ and fake consultation still has some reality, many of the papers in this collection insist on the sheer complexity of the relationships between institutions and their public(s).

“Anchored in contractual logic and instrumen-

tal rationality, institutions cannot avoid de-personalizing; but as they become aware of the limits of this anchorage, they promote a growing recognition of the cultural and individual diversity of subjects previously excluded. The result is a blurred pattern of bonds, which seems to be a result of the double and simultaneous movement of exclusion and inclusion of the subject, the double and simultaneous movement of disregard and recognition of other cultural logics” (Cruces et al., this issue).

‘Trust’ and ‘co-operative suspicion’ then become central notions to be referred to in analysis, so as to understand the very complexities of such relationships. Exploring the multiple ways through which the public is silenced while it is at the same time being called upon to participate, understanding the diverse processes through which participation is used or denied, how participatory practices are linked to or contrasted with representative ones are central issues in the articles of this special section. Politicians in Norway found it contrary to their role to silence their political commitments in order to take part in the formalized procedures of town planning. The environmental struggle in the coal basin of France broke out partly because the public consultation procedure was not considered really democratic.

Attention will be paid in this volume to questions of translation and communication between local social actors on the one hand and governmental and non-governmental agencies on the other. How do agents at the local level make their grievances and objectives understandable to central authority? To what extent can they translate their frames of reference and worldviews into official language and be listened to and understood? Or to what extent is it not language but action, in the form of strategies of resistance and refusal, and also collaboration, that ultimately establishes communication with central authorities and sympathetic supporters? What kind of mobilizations

is, or what elements in a mobilization render it, 'institutionalizable'? How can the public seize upon technical and formal procedures and bring them to life?

## **Expertise**

A growing literature on mobilizations points to the problematic tension between the role of 'expertise' and the mobilization of citizens. The expert has become the favored interlocutor of public agencies and supranational organizations, drawing his/her legitimacy from a supposedly scientific objectivity. But citizens themselves feel compelled to resort to 'counter-expertise' to make their point and contest 'official expertise', as shown in the procedures, described by Neveu and Müller/Kohutek, and the scientific evaluations of biodiversity Finnish activists are involved in (Eeva Berglund). Citizens, who take part in planning procedures, see their participation as a civic and political act and want their personal experiences to be taken as seriously into account as supposedly objective science and expertise. They either pose their daily experience on the same level as scientific expertise or play the game of expert procedures, by using scientific arguments against the project to counter scientific arguments supporting it. At the level of their daily experience they can see a clear link between economic interests and political decision-making, between political priorities, values and expert discourses.

While expertise has become a central tool in power disputes between and within institutions and citizens, Beck, Habermas and others have pointed out that there is no scientific truth devoid of interest and independent of normative frames. The relationships between the engaged expert, working for his/her cause on a professional basis, and citizens involved in a cause on a voluntary basis, are thus complex. The idea of an expert procedure isolated from values and moral considerations and based on the knowledge of specialists is thus

demystified. As soon as specialized knowledge is used to solve "problems of regulation that are significant from a political point of view, the normative imprint of this knowledge can be felt and it provokes controversies among the experts themselves, that have a polarizing effect." (Habermas 1997: 378) Values and scientific arguments are thus de facto confused. There appears to be a multiplicity of truths that stand side by side in which to believe or disbelieve (Beck 1986: 277). If scientific arguments are thus identified as value-laden, where is then the limit of objectivity? What distinguishes an expert procedure from a political struggle?

The growing historicity of contemporary societies, and the new requirements it implies, make for a very important growth of the 'quantity of expertise' in public policies. It is all the more complex to determine that issues to be dealt with are in systemic causality, and that there is 'hyper-choice', i.e. a choice to be made between multiple constraints that refer to incompatible universes of meaning. Paradoxically though, this makes for a rehabilitation of the political function at the very heart of the scientisation process of public action: "The more complex a decision to take, the more political it is" (Muller 1995: 172).

## **The general interest**

Defining the 'general interest' has always been a thorny matter, since it requires, at least ideally, defining both the values and the collectivity in reference to which such an interest is defined (Gautier and Valluy 1998). Is that 'general interest' that of a nation, a country, a specific group within a given society? Who is in charge of defining it, or who is seen as a legitimate agent to do so? Obviously, some agents have historically been more successful than others in obtaining a voice in such a definition, and in many cases the state or powerful private interest groups have long had a kind of monopoly in the matter. Because they could

call on a global vision concerning the needs of society, or because their arguments were powerfully supported in the decision-making processes, this kind of agents was also able to obscure the (political, economic or technical) choices and values underpinning their definition of the 'general interest'.

Such a configuration seems to be largely questioned now, especially as far as issues of environment and development are concerned. Indeed, the last decades have seen a growing number of questions being raised about the relevance of certain choices (suburbanization or nuclear energy for instance) and the capacity of experts and governments to master the long-term consequences of the collective choices they made or supported. Two lines of analysis have long prevailed, at least in France: on the one hand, social and political scientists stressed the ideological dimension and the legitimizing function of such a reference, exposing it as an argumentative notion allowing particular interests or power relationships to be transfigured; on the other hand, they studied the uses public administration agents put the notion to (Lascoumes and Le Bourhis 1998).

As anthropologists, we have tried to explore here other dimensions of the notion of "general interest", and especially how its dominant definition is effectively built and/or questioned through local mobilizations or plans.

First of all, issues of scale, both of mobilization and of research, seem to be of particular interest here. Indeed, what could be defined as 'the general interest' at a given scale of reference (a region, a nation-state) can very well be seen as very 'particular' at another scale? As analyzed by Neveu, what is at first sight a classical Nimby (Not In My Backyard) reaction can appear, on closer consideration, to be an attempt to ground choices with local consequences on other, general, values. In their study of a mobilization against a cement factory in the Czech Republic, Müller and Kohuttek also provide highlights on how a local (or should one say localized) mobilization carries

central debates about the better type of development for the country as a whole. Confronting and linking a variety of reference scales thus allows for problematizing the collectivity in the name of which the 'general interest' is defined. And much of the analysis presented here tends to problematize the often unquestioned link between scales of reference and geographical scale, i.e. that it does not necessarily take a large geographical scale to think the general interest or a localized mobilization to defend particular ones.

A second, related, series of questions concern the values and priorities referred to in the definition of that 'general interest'. Mobilizations on forest policy analyzed by Berglund thus question the priority given to rapid economic development at the expense of the conservation of bio-diversity. Even more interestingly, proponents of both visions refer to the nowadays very fashionable notion of 'sustainability', thus demonstrating the extent to which development choices are value-laden ones. From a different point of view, since her object of analysis is an administrative and political process more than a mobilization, Abram explores how a social planning process in a Norwegian *Kommune* reflects indeed specific political values concerning those who should benefit from welfare provisions, and how local residents should 'look after themselves' instead of relying on welfare. Historical time also influences what is defined as the 'general interest', since as shown by Müller and Kohuttek, this drastically changed from socialism to free market capitalism.

The question of what constitutes the 'general interest' challenges the large planning schemes that have shaped socialist and capitalist societies in the last century. Citizens' interests and grievances did not necessarily fit in with the institutional objectives, the simplification and systematization the two competing political systems had in store for them. As Jim Scott pointed out, "high modernist designs for life and production tend to diminish the skills, agility, initiative and morale of

their intended beneficiaries” (Scott 1998: 349). The grand schemes for improving the human condition have tended to standardize the subjects of development. For the purposes of the planning exercise such subjects had “no gender, no tastes, no history, no values, no opinions or original ideas, no traditions, and no distinctive personalities to contribute to the enterprise” (Scott 1998: 346). No designated social order can, however, remotely match the intricacies and complexities of an actually functioning social order of some historical depth (Scott 1999: 286). As the articles in this volume show, citizens become actively concerned about the planning schemes that are directed at altering their natural and social environments. In their interactions with institutions they thus negotiate their particular interests, values and passions as a possible reading of what could constitute the general interest.

## **Emotions**

Is mobilization possible without emotions and is an emotional engagement necessarily devoid of rationality, thus unruly, chaotic? Anthropologists have been arguing for the last twenty years that “emotions are not things opposed to thought” (Lutz and White 1986: 430) and that “incorporating emotions into ethnography will entail presenting a fuller view of what is at stake for people in everyday life” (Lutz and White 1986: 431). All forms of mobilization we have been looking at in this volume have been linked to the strong emotional involvement of their protagonists. In order to understand the political impact of such mobilizations we have to look at the ways in which emotional and moral claims are translated into ‘collective action frames’. Collective action frames are accentuating devices that either “underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps toler-

able” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). As Tarrow pointed out, much of the ‘work’ of framing is cognitive and evaluative “but framing work should not be reduced to the sterile cogitations of ideologues; no significant transformations of claims into action can occur without tapping or creating emotional energy” (Tarrow 1998: 111). Emotions, Vera Taylor writes, “provide the ‘heat’ so to speak that distinguishes social movements from dominant institutions” (1995: 232). Profound institutional change, however, cannot do without emotions either. The environmental struggle in the post-socialist Czech Republic described by Birgit Müller was the catalyst for an intensely emotional political polarization at the village level that challenged and established in practice the new democratic institutions (Müller 2002: 29-40).

National sentiment played an important role in both the mobilizations in the Czech Republic against the exploitation of rare mineral resources by a big German company and in the mobilizations of Finish environmental activists against the destruction of old-growth forests in Finland and the Russian-Finish borderland. Sentiment did not stand alone here but was linked to interests and values that were grounded in political analysis. In the Czech case it was not only the emotions provoked by the memory of German economic exploitation during the Second World War, that made activists redefine the limestone resources in terms of a national heritage, but it was also an economic criticism of the role the Czech Republic was about to play in the European Union as a provider of raw materials and a user of dirty technology. In the Finish case it was not only the beauty of the old forest that made the activists wanting to defend it, but also the idea that bio-diversity constituted an economic resource for the future, a national heritage, that should not be destroyed. The point is that engagement is not only based on the cool calculus of the maximization of individual or collective material advantages, but that shared values and normative principles

are the driving principles for collective mobilization.

Institutions that want to fulfill technical aims wish to attract the voluntary participation of citizens without taking into account necessarily the full context of meaning in which the latter are embedded. They tend to prefer the passive citizen, disciplined and well-adapted but without creative and critical potential and without strong emotional involvement. It is precisely the unruly passions, the “fantasy of disorder that always underlies the image of the public” (Cruces et al., this issue.) that institutions seem to be most afraid of. Cruces et al. show how Spanish public and private institutions try to define in their own terms what the relationships with their public(s) should be, and how these relationships actually work. As for Abram, she tellingly shows how local institutions build their own definition of ‘the good public’ and manage to avoid any disorderly intervention from an ‘actual’ public. This style of participation also required in many development projects has been termed by Cooke and Kothari (2002) ‘the new tyranny’.

Does it make a difference whether one is considering bottom-up movements and top-down solicitations by state institutions and agencies? Indeed, the claim of ‘independent’ social movements to participate as citizens and the ‘required’ participation by institutions concerned with gaining a new legitimacy, are interrelated. Meyer and Tarrow identify three forms of how social movements are interacting with institutions: through routinization, inclusion and cooptation (1998: 21). First, collective action becomes routinized when challengers and authorities can both adhere to a common script, recognizing familiar patterns as well as dangerous deviations. Second, challengers willing to adhere to established routines are granted access to political exchanges in mainstream institutions. Those who refuse these routines are shut out through repression or neglect. Third, challengers alter their claims and tactics to ones that can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics.

The tactics used by certain parts of movements and by more institutionalized groups increasingly overlap as both acquire skills in using law, legislation, and the media. The effect of such institutionalization is often the separation of more radical activists from their more moderate allies and the fragmentation of coalitions of challengers. However, in the event of mobilization social movements are still characterized by their capacity to surprise, disrupt, and mobilize against and beyond conventional predictions and expectations.

This volume looks at local types of mobilization and it questions, from different places and angles, contemporary forms of political participation. Despite their apparently ‘purely local’ dimension, these mobilizations can be read as localized symptoms of profound political changes, contributing to more global political debates and transformations. In the volume anthropologists analyze not only the many uses notions such as ‘general interest’, trust and co-operation are put to, they also observe processes of communication and negotiation, practices and representations, relations of power that lie, in different societies, behind the term ‘participation’ and that are as many adaptations to local context, traditions and representations of politics.

## Notes

1. Workshop ‘Founding or funding? Civil society, the state and ‘migrants sovereignties’ (convenor C. Neveu) and Workshop ‘Popular power and belief in a better world’ (convenor B. Müller), sixth European Association of Social Anthropologists Conference Crossing Categorical Boundaries, Krakow, 26-29 July 2000.
2. Procedural gains can be access to consultative bodies, and structural ones a modification of the structure of political opportunity. See Neveu (1996).
3. Müller compares this process to Gramsci’s intellectuals, whom he defines as the social group capable of elaborating the vision a so-

cial group has of its place in society - and of expressing the hegemonic relationship of this group with other ones.

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