The present compiled dissertation explores culture jamming as a social movement in late capitalist information society. Culture jamming embraces groups and individuals practicing symbolic protest against the expansion and domination of large corporations into public and private life. International social movement research mostly focuses upon well established movements that are traditionally organized and directed against conventional political institutions. Studying culture jamming as a social movement therefore entails implications for social movement theory and research. Furthermore, attention is directed to emotions in culture jamming. It is thereby also argued that social movement research generally may have a lot to gain from incorporating emotion theory.

Data consists of texts and visuals from the organization Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF), and seven interviews with culture jammers from other groups. Analysis is carried out in five separate studies presented in text I-IV (previously published). Text I maps the AMF along the lines of narrative, organization, ends, means, and strategy. Text II analyzes some nodal points in the AMF discourse and its inherent tensions. Text III analyzes culture jamming as political activism based on four of the interviews. In text IV the AMF visuals are analyzed from the perspective of emotions and mobilization. Chapter eight brings together the seven interviews and the AMF material into an analysis of emotions in culture jamming.
Åsa Wettergren

Moving and Jamming

Implications for Social Movement Theory
Abstract

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The present compiled dissertation explores culture jamming as a social movement in late capitalist information society. Culture jamming embraces groups and individuals practicing symbolic protest against the expansion and domination of large corporations and the logic of the market into public and private life. The central aim is to understand the meaning of culture jamming; its “model” of collective identification, and its protest and mobilizing strategies. International social movement research mostly focuses upon well established movements that are traditionally organized and directed against conventional political institutions. Studying culture jamming as a social movement therefore entails implications for social movement theory and research. For instance, concepts must be adjusted to cover emerging “individualized” forms of collective action and the effects of cyberspace on collective identification. Furthermore, attention is directed to emotions in culture jamming. It is thereby also argued that social movement research generally may have a lot to gain from incorporating emotion theory.

Data consists of texts and visuals from the organization Adbusters Media Foundation, and seven interviews with culture jammers. The groups represented in the interviews are Institute for Applied Autonomy, Reverend Billy’s Church of Stop Shopping, New York Surveillance Camera Players, Bureau of Inverse Technology, Rmark, and the French Casseurs de Pub. The method of analysis is “abductive” qualitative text analysis inspired by hermeneutic qualitative analysis and the epistemological and ontological foundations of discourse theory and post-structuralism.

Analysis is carried out in five separate studies presented in text I-IV (previously published) and in chapter eight. Text I maps the Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF) along the lines of narrative, organization, ends, means, and strategy. Text II offers an analysis of the various nodal points in the AMF discourse and discusses the tensions inherent to the AMF effort to “hegemonize” the meaning of culture jamming. Text III offers an analysis of culture jamming as political activism from the thematic perspective of culture, place and identity, based on four of the interviews. In Text IV the AMF visuals are analyzed from the perspective of emotions and social movement mobilization. Chapter eight brings together the seven interviews and the AMF material into an analysis of emotions in culture jamming.

Keywords: Culture jamming, new social movements, culture studies, sociology of emotion, late capitalism, information society, discourse theory, post-structuralism, adbusters, collective identity
To Hera and Aris, my children and muses

and to Panos, my “memento mori”

“Ta panta rei.” (Herakleitos 500-400 B.C)
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APPENDIX
1. Introduction

This is a dissertation about social movements in the context of late capitalism and information society. More specifically, it is about culture jamming as a social movement. The label of culture jamming in this book embraces various groups and individuals who are practicing symbolic protest against the expansion and domination of large corporations and the logic of the market in public and private life/space. “Symbolic protest” refers to the targeting of central symbols of dominant discourses to deconstruct these discourses, and to reintroduce the symbols in alternative contexts (see chapter three and eight for examples and elaborations). From the internationally dominant theoretical paradigm of social movements, it may be questioned if culture jamming is a social movement at all. At the most it could perhaps be seen as a movement in its early phase, “in formation”. I will argue that in the context of contemporary society it may be a characteristic of social movements that they, as culture jamming, display a prevailing fluid structure, with loose boundaries, informal networks, and a rejection of grand narratives. The globally objectified discourse of our time – we may call it late capitalism – is thus contested by improvised, fragmented, multiple, multifaceted and “guerrilla-like” protests and resistance strategies.

As it turns out, this is also a dissertation about emotions; about emotion as the energy which propels to action and movement, about emotional culture as an area of conflict, and about emotions as objects of social movements. Specifically, it is about how the perspective of emotion sociology may contribute to our understanding of culture jamming.

The structure of this book follows the model of the compiled dissertation (see “Outline” below). The reason for this is partly practical, partly strategic. First, I have published material during the course of this research project and it was purely simpler to include this work in its published form than to revise it and integrate it in a monograph. Second, and this is the most important reason, I want this dissertation to somehow reflect the fragmented character of my research subject. Though I have time and again stated that culture jamming is both this and that, and all the groups included in the study may fit into a single definition and so on I hope to avoid “boxing” culture jamming. I offer several perspectives on culture jamming and more or less one definition (with some variations), but I have not tried to capture culture jamming in an exclusive and comprehensive account.
Case presentation

In the following, I provide a short introduction to the groups involved in my studies on culture jamming. The reader will find supplementary and more detailed information in the summaries of published texts in chapter three. The groups have been selected largely according to a “snowball principle”, starting with the Adbusters Media Foundation, an organization I found by following the lead of a spoof-ad that I happened to stumble upon.¹

The Adbusters Media Foundation was founded in 1989, Vancouver, Canada, by the former marketing man Kalle Lasn. The organization publishes and distributes worldwide the non-profit, reader-supported Adbusters Magazine (120,000 copies and six issues per year), and runs a website www.adbusters.org, and the Powershift Advocacy Advertising Agency that produces social campaigns by means of uncommercials and spoof-ads.² The strategic scope and ambition of the AMF is steadily expanding. Annual events propagated worldwide are the Buy Nothing Day (usually the last Saturday in November) and the Turn off TV Week (one week in April). Recent additions to their activities include the production of the “black spot anti-corp sneaker” as a protest against and alternative to Converse/Nike.³ The AMF has strong and far-reaching transnational activity via the Internet (its central target, however, is the USA), but is also engaged in local struggles for ad-free schools and campuses. The organization seems to rely heavily on committed non-profit engagement, but it is hard to say how many people work within the core of the AMF on a daily basis and whether or not they are professionals. The constituency of the AMF, as with all the culture jamming groups, is difficult to assess. But apart from the circulation of the magazine mentioned above, the

¹ Spoof-ad is an altered ad, for example an ad for McDonald’s hamburger restaurants that has been altered to speak against McDonald’s hamburger restaurants. Sometimes the alteration is achieved by simply adding a small component to the original, sometimes the spoof-ad is totally reconstructed but still very similar to the original. A spoof-ad may also be a false ad, i.e. an ad that resembles ordinary ads in general but does not imitate any specific original.

² An uncommercial is an altered commercial. As in the case of spoof-ads, it may copy an original commercial but change it in order to turn the message against the company behind the original. AMF has for example altered a Calvin Klein commercial, see Wettergren, Å. 2005 ‘Mobilization and the moral shock - the case of the Media Foundation Adbusters’, in H. Flam and D. King (eds). But most of the AMF uncommercials do not work this way. They are instead very short films about the conditions and consequences of consumer culture and they often advance the annual events “Buy Nothing Day” or “Turn off TV Week” or basic AMF mottos, such as “The Global Economy is a Doomsday Machine”. Uncommercials are designed to appear in the advertising slots in between or during films and TV shows, just like ordinary commercials, see Wettergren, Å. 2003b ‘Like Moths to a Flame - Culture Jamming and the Global Spectacle’, in A. Opel and D. Pompper (eds) Representing Resistance: The Media, Civil Disobedience, and the Global Justice Movement, Westport: Praeger Publishers.

³ The black spot anti-brand was conceived to undermine multinational corporations and their “sweat-shop production”. Everyone who buys a pair of shoes becomes a shareholder in Blackspot. Eventually global corporations will face a global cooperative challenge to their market shares (www.adbusters.org).
culture jammers’ network, to which one may sign up on the website, is said to number 75,000 persons. Today, there are local Adbuster groups in France, Norway, Sweden and Japan. I was in contact with Kalle Lasn on three occasions, by e-mail and telephone in 1999 and by e-mail in 2001.

Casseurs de Pub is the French version of the Media Foundation Adbusters (based in Lyon), founded in 1999 by Vincent Cheynet, also a former marketing man. (www.casseursdepub.org) The organization runs campaigns similar to those run by the AMF, such as La journée sans achat, La semaine sans télé, but it also stages its own events. The magazine Casseurs de Pub is published only once a year and contains material from the Adbusters magazine as well as locally produced material. Apart from Cheynet, a couple of volunteers work non-profit for Casseurs de Pub. Cheynet is also engaged in parliamentary politics and has his roots in the Environmental movement. I interviewed Vincent Cheynet in October 2002.

The Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) was formed in 1998 and is based primarily in New York. Its main activities involve the development of activist and protest technology such as various kinds of remote controlled robotic graffiti writers. Among their latest inventions is the “TXTmob”, a cell phone constructed specifically for the purpose of sending quick text messages between activists in, for example, police riot situations. (www.appliedautonomy.com) The IAA also gives lectures and talks to engineering students as part of a strategy to raise debate and awareness about the purpose and use of new technology. The core of the group is made up of three to five persons. In March 2002 I interviewed John Henry from IAA.

The Bureau of Inverse Technology was formed in 1991 and presents itself on its website as “an information agency servicing the Information Age” (www.bureaut.org/11/01/04). The main focus of BIT is technology and the adaptation of various technological devices through different projects. Among the projects are the BIT plane, a miniature spy plane that was released over the Silicon Valley to “capture aerial portraits of the information age”; the BIT cab project where the LCD-screens of taxis are hi-jacked to display “geospecific

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5] John Henry is a pseudonym shared by the whole group.
6] It is important to note that the BIT adopts irony as a strategy to a greater extent than the rest of my cases (see chapter eight). As was evident from my interview with Natalie from the BIT, servicing the information age means subverting dominant ideas about the information age (such as the idea that information can be photographed and stolen by a miniature spy plane) and bringing relevant locally grounded information back to the people (e.g. by using the cab LCD-screens to transmit information about local pollutants rather than indifferent global advertisements), see Wettergren, Å. 2003a ‘Kulturjam - nya vägar till politiskt motstånd i informationssamhället’, in H. Egeland and J. Johannisson (eds) Kultur, plats, identitet - det lokala s betydelse i en globaliserad värld, Stockholm: Nya Doxa.
data” such as rates of local pollutants; and the BIT rocket – a toy rocket that is engineered to be released over crowds and large gatherings, such as demonstrations, to document the actual number of participants. The BIT consists of about two persons. In March 2002 I interviewed Natalie from the BIT, both in her role as a BIT engineer, and as a politically engaged artist doing projects such as One Tree (see chapter eight).

Rtmark was formed in 1991 as an Internet based information and marketing agency servicing activist groups and their projects. The latter are listed, presented and linked to discussion forums through the Rtmark website. Visitors to the website may choose to discuss, participate in, or fund a project. Rtmark has also assisted projects in writing press releases with the Rtmark logo, a fairly good way to get through to the mass media since Rtmark has made news several times endorsing projects such as the SIMcopter and eToy (see website www.rtmark.com). Rtmark thus functions as a shelter for various projects, some of which are their own. It has also constructed a number of fake websites such as GWBush.com and gatt.org. One of the most vigorous projects endorsed by Rtmark lately is “The Yes Men” – a couple of imposters, engaged worldwide by unknowing conference organizers as representatives of the WTO. Rtmark is made up of two to three persons. I interviewed Ray from Rtmark in October 2002.

Reverend Billy is by now a familiar character on the streets of New York. Backed by musicians, a gospel choir, and the staff of his group, The Church of Stop Shopping, he makes numerous appearances in multinational brand chain stores, coffee bars, public places, churches, cultural centers, and universities. He also travels extensively around the USA as well as to cities in Europe to perform. His campaigns are numerous and are multiplying; among them is the campaign against Starbucks and the Disney Store, where the reverend and his followers preach, exorcise, and sing about sweatshops and against the evil spirits of consumerism, shopping and branding. Other strategies include street parades for various purposes such as the Buy Nothing Day – an annual event originating with the Media Foundation Adbusters – or linking to other groups to join actions such as Whirltür where people gather to roll empty shopping carts through Walmart and other shopping malls. Reverend Billy is a strongly emotionally engaging and comic character, always mobilizing in the immediate local setting and in face-to-face situations. He is consequently frequently arrested, taken to court, banned from stores, and so on. (www.revbilly.com) In March 2002, I attended one of Reverend Billy’s performances at a cultural centre in New Jersey and subsequently interviewed him.
The Surveillance Camera Players of New York City (www.notbored.org/the-scp.html) is a group of two to five people whose main activity, originally, was performing silent versions of plays like Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” in front of surveillance cameras “to manifest their sympathy” for the bored officials who had to watch and monitor the cameras. The real purpose is, of course, to call attention to the multitude of surveillance cameras to be found around the streets and squares of New York, and to protest their intrusion in public space as well as their threat to privacy and civil liberties. The group was formed in 1996 and asserts that the post- 9/11 period does not alter the group’s original purpose. On the contrary, 9/11 proved the inefficiency of the surveillance cameras for the purposes of crime-prevention and increasing public security. Meanwhile, the activities headed by the group’s founder and leader, Bill Brown, also include drawing maps of NYC to locate all cameras visible and detectable to the city stroller. Bill also organizes “city walks” in various areas of NYC during which the location of cameras are pointed out to participants while Bill lectures about the various generations of camera technology to be found, the extent of camera surveillance, the industry behind it, its purposes, problems and so on. In March 2002, I participated in a city walk from New York University to Washington Square Park and then subsequently interviewed Bill Brown.

Jonah Peretti is known in culture jamming and Global Justice Movement circles for his Nike Email. In 2001, Peretti responded to a Nike online campaign that offered the opportunity to buy a pair of customized shoes. Peretti ordered a pair of shoes customized with the word “sweatshop”. In a series of e-mail exchanges, Peretti and Nike customer service debated the issue and Peretti’s request was eventually turned down. Peretti e-mailed the full correspondence to his friends, who mailed it further to their friends, and so forth. The correspondence was thus spread to inboxes throughout the world and eventually hit primetime news in the USA (Peretti 2004). The Nike Email landed in my own inbox the same year. Peretti now works at an art gallery and multimedia centre in New York and keeps doing projects primarily exposing and experimenting with the way a story can make it into the mass media. I interviewed Peretti in March 2002, and also gave a talk about the Media Foundation Adbusters to his students in the multimedia center.

Aims

The aim of this project was originally to explore the possibilities for resistance and the formation of new social movements in contemporary Western society,
with an eye to specific historically given circumstances such as economic
globalization; the global, neo-liberal, triumphal march since the fall of the
Soviet Union; individualization; and fragmentation. These circumstances seem
to be some of the significant hallmarks of our time, widely observed and
theorized in both classic and recent sociological theory.

This broadly formulated purpose has gradually been narrowed down to a
wish to explore and understand the meaning of culture jamming, hopefully also
shedding some light upon other similar movements as well as the “model” of
collective identification and the protest and mobilizing strategies employed by
them. My argument is that culture jamming, like all social movements, must be
understood through the historical and social conditions that shape it. Since the
project has been explorative, it has also been somewhat theory generating,
though I bend theory, as I argue, rather than develop it. Existing theory seems
to fall short in the context of late capitalism and information society (see “The
perspective of ‘late capitalism’ and ‘information society’”, below), where new
means for mobilization and collective identification emerge that may warrant
complementary understanding of these and related concepts (such as political
protest and collective action). The sociology of emotions, furthermore, inserts a
new dimension.

Apart from the overall aim of the project, each published study has a
specific aim depending on the context and conditions of its origin. Thus, TEXT
I, “The formation of counter-power in the postmodern condition – strategies
and Situationist heritage in the case of Adbusters.org,” is written as a
contribution to the annual social movements conference at Manchester
Metropolitan University in April 2000. Its aim was to map and sort out the
various aspects and components of the Adbusters Media Foundation, and it
was subsequently published as part of a research report for the Research Group
in Tourism and Leisure, Karlstad University.

TEXT II, “Like Moths to a Flame – Culture Jamming and the Global
Spectacle,” compares the notion of culture jamming as it appeared in the
context of the Adbusters Media Foundation, with other culture jamming texts,
such as Mark Dery’s Culture Jammer’s manifesto. The aim in this case was to
expose conflicts, tensions, and ambivalence in the movement discourse
constructed by the AMF-leader Kalle Lasn, as well as to critically analyze Lasn’s
attempt to “hegemonize” the meaning of culture jamming. I also attempted to
follow the lead of some apparent nodal points (frequently returning references)
in Lasn’s narrative to the various external discourses that they referred to. This
led me to look at the Situationists’, the meme concept⁸, and the First Things First Manifesto.⁹ The original version was presented in the Social Movement Research Network of the European Sociological Association in Helsinki in August 2001. The revised version which appears here was subsequently published in a collected volume (Wettergren 2003b).

In TEXT III, “Culture Jamming – new ways to political protest in the information society” (published originally in Swedish), I move away from the AMF and rely on the interviews conducted with different groups in New York, Paris, and Lyon. This text was written as a contribution to a collected volume about culture, place, and identity (Wettergren 2003a).¹⁰ My aim was to explore the content of some of the interviews from the thematic angle of the collected volume, which also took me outside the analytic focus previously employed in the analysis of the AMF.

In TEXT IV, “Mobilization and the moral shock” I returned to the AMF with the explicit aim of studying emotions in connection to their visuals; something I had found intriguing from the very outset of the project. It was written as part of a project in the sociology of emotions, and I originally

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⁸ “Meme” is the cultural equivalent to “gene”, a concept coined by biologist Richard Dawkins in his book The Selfish Gene that first appeared in 1976. See Dawkins, R. 1989 Memes: the new replicators’ The Selfish Gene, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Memes are best described as “ideas”, but they are seen as relatively autonomous entities with an inherent drive to proliferate and secure their own survival. The breeding ground for memes is the human mind and all kinds of media. According to Dawkins, memes may account for the historical similarities between different cultures, i.e. different cultures show similarities in how they build pyramids or worship gods because these particular ways of doing so derive from strong memes. Memes, like genes, are submitted to the competition for survival and strong memes thus expand on the behalf of weaker ones. It follows that the survival of the meme has nothing to do with its normative or practical usefulness for humankind, but merely depends on its capacity to successfully colonize the human brain. See also Gustafsson, C. 1994 Produktion av allvar - om det ekonomiska förnuftets metafysik, Vol. 3, Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus.

⁹ The First Things First manifesto was an appeal to designers and marketing people to unite in the conscious effort to produce “a new kind of meaning” instead of marketing useless products for corporations and contribute to the expansion of consumerism. This manifesto was written the first time in 1964 by the British designer, Ken Garland. It was renewed and slightly changed in 2000 by the British graphic designer, Jonathan Bambrook in cooperation with Kalle Lasn, see Wettergren, Å. 2003b ‘Like Moths to a Flame - Culture Jamming and the Global Spectacle’, in A. Opel and D. Pompper (eds) Representing Resistance: The Media, Civil Disobedience, and the Global Justice Movement, Westport: Praeger Publishers.

¹⁰ The collected volume was part of a research program, “Culture in the Society of Knowledge”, a cooperative effort between the Swedish Institute for Studies in Education and Research (SISTER), The Royal Institute of Technology, Linköping University, and Borås College.
considered it a “strange bird” to the total body of my research. The first draft was presented to the group on social movements and emotions at the conference of the International Sociological Association in Brisbane in July, 2002. The revised and submitted version presented in TEXT IV is part of a collected volume about social movements and emotions (Wettergren 2005). As it turns out, the work of including the sociology of emotions in my study of culture jamming was fruitful enough to influence the whole project in that direction, something that will become evident in the following chapters.

The perspective of “late capitalism” and “information society”

I have already referred to “late capitalism” and “information society” as the socio-cultural context of culture jamming. These concepts, and the entailing perspective of the contemporary, are now to be explained. The concepts occur frequently in the following chapters, but I return to “late capitalism” specifically in chapter seven and to “information society” specifically in chapter five.

Initially, I used the concept “postmodernity” to cover the social and cultural context of the emergence of culture jamming. I cherished the concept because, as I argue in “Like Moths” (Wettergren 2003b:28) postmodernity seemed to denote both the cultural experience originating in consumer culture, and a movement that “splits, radicalizes and weakens modernity,” interfering with modernity but not in the sense of constituting a radical break with it. I also conceived of postmodernity as a concept embracing other concepts such as “late modernity,” “network society,” and the “information age.” However, as the early text, “The formation of counter-power” (Text I or Wettergren 2001) makes particularly obvious, postmodernity is also posited as an “Other” of the AMF discourse. I found it difficult to operate with a concept that was central both to the level of the AMF discourse, and to the level of my analysis. They had different meanings and it was difficult to keep them separate.

Moreover, during the course of this project I have moved away from the ambition to “cover” the contemporary in a single concept, just as I have moved away from the ambition to find “the” movement. As I became more and more familiar with the discursive field of culture jamming, there were a number of different references to the social and cultural context that I could have chosen to follow-up and include in my analysis. Yet, references to consumer culture,

In this presentation I have willfully opted to sidestep most of the literature available on the various “posts” and “novelties” of contemporary society. The purpose is not to solve the question if society changes, how and why, but to focus upon some particular aspects of the contemporary as being generative of new kinds of resistance.
corporate power, globalization and information dominate, and thus, guided my
decision to “cut” my theoretical perspective on social reality in the shape of
“late capitalism and information society.” This “label” sensitizes to those
aspects of the contemporary that condition the self-understanding of culture
jammers, the contemporary social conflicts that they articulate, and the way that
they organize protest.

The people engaged in culture jamming take as a point of departure the
expansion of capitalism, particularly as carried out by global corporations, into
every nook and cranny of the life world (Habermas 1984; Habermas 1998). The
logic of the economic system becomes the norm; social relations, experience of
the self, self-realization and expression, private spaces as well as public meeting
places, all increasingly are determined by a consumer mentality (Bauman 1992;
Bauman 1995; Bauman 1997b) and are appraised according to their potential
for profit. This is the “late capitalism” part – a full-blown capitalism which
defines and determines all other areas of social life. We may speak of
individualism as a “primary identity” of capitalism (Castells 1997; Collins 1988;
Collins 2004), and individualization as reduction of social complexity to a
matter of individual choices (Bauman 1992; Bauman 1995; Bauman 1997b;
Beck 1992; Giddens 1995), to the point where we have to ask ourselves if
collective identity and collective action are at all possible. While the term “late
capitalism” also connotes economic reductionism and a Marxist critical
tradition, I have not chosen it for these connotations, but rather because we, in
fact, live in a society that is constructed to revolve around the capitalist
economy (Buechler 2000).

Secondly, late capitalism is embedded in and underpinned by the expansion
and development of information and communication technology (see, for
instance, Castells 1998; Hutton and Giddens 2000). If television meant a
revolution in our social and mental perceptions and a narrowing of time and
space, the Internet and the new generation of cell phones have taken this
process even further. The formation of culture jamming is in several ways
contingent upon the expansion of mass media and communication technology.
This is the “information society” part. I return to and develop my argument
about the “information society” and its implications for social movements and
social movement theory in chapter five. Again, it is important to note that I do
not suggest materialist reductionism with the term “information society.” Like
the term “late capitalism,” “information society” is a term that fits some central aspects of the contemporary because it is socially constructed this way.¹²

**Note on the point of view of this perspective**

Initially, I considered it a problem to approach culture jamming with a theoretical perspective upon the contemporary that largely resembled its own diagnostic framing.¹³ The texts that I analyzed were imbued with critical theory, mass media theory, theories about consumer culture and the postmodern; i.e. theories that I myself departed from in my original search for “a” social movement. Using these theories to analyze culture jamming resulted in mere repetition and affirmation of what the texts said which in turn pushed me to look for something behind the texts, something to “reveal.”

While I have gradually inserted a fruitful distance between myself and culture jamming in adopting a qualitative analytic approach inspired by poststructuralism and discourse theory (this will be accounted for in chapter two) and by completing my theoretical perspective with the sociology of emotions, I still share large parts of my critical assessment of the contemporary with the culture jammers, as is evident in the aforementioned perspective. My point of view, however, is different from the culture jammers. It is a point of view informed by the social scientific tradition of critical theory and classic inquiry into the structural aspects of mass consumer culture (for instance Adorno and Horkheimer 2000; Ewen 1977; Friedan 2000; Marcuse 1998; Postman 1996; Tetzlaff 1992), as well as the possibilities for agency and negotiation (for instance Brown 1990; Fiske 1992; Fiske 2000; Hall 1986; Hearn and Rosencil 1999).

From this point of view, culture jamming is seen as the logical answer to a development that transforms and transfers social space and the prerequisites of collective action. These transformations are part of a discursive field¹⁴ and its

² For an interesting account of how the contemporary society may be constructed as an “information society” in state policy-making, see Karlsson, S. 2004 ‘Nödvändigheten väg’ Sociology, Karlstad: Karlstad University. See also Mathiesen, T. 1985 Tittarsamhället, Göteborg: Korpen. on the intertwined expansion of television, communication technology, and surveillance.

¹³ The diagnostic framing refers to the “identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality” pertaining to the general process of framing the contemporary that is found in a movement discourse or narrative. See p. 200 in Snow, D. A. and Benford, R. D. 1988 ‘Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization’, *International Social Movement Research* 1: 197-217. See also chapter four.

¹⁴ Put simply, the notion of discursive field refers to the field of various webs of meaning (discourses) that “compete” for domination or hegemony over meaning construction in a certain area. Discourse—in a similarly simplified way—refers to a web of meaning, in which the different components (signs or moments) are meaningful only in relation to each other, but not in and by them selves. See chapter two for elaborations and references.
power-relations that generate multiple points of resistance situated within discourse (see e.g. Foucault's discussion about power in Foucault 1976: 123-129). As we see in chapter two, the critical theorist’s or the researcher’s point of view is also situated within discourse. But the scientific position is also one from which the formation of a counter-hegemonic discourse can be critically analyzed and deconstructed, as I have done with the AMF discourse of the culture jammer’s movement (Text II or Wettergren 2003b) as well as reconstructed and advanced, as I have done in formulating my own criteria for the inclusion/exclusion of groups and actions under the label of culture jamming. The boundaries of the discursive field of culture jamming are thereby drawn from a position external to the discursive field of culture jamming, but internal to the social scientific discourse of critical theory.

Hence, my analysis has (following the hermeneutic tradition) moved beyond the interviewees’ own utterances; I have in many ways, stated things about and for them, using my position as a researcher outside the discursive field of culture jamming as a “privileged” position from which I can compare and draw general conclusions. This becomes even more evident when I start analyzing the role of emotions and emotional processes in culture jamming. Thereby, however, I do not pretend that my interpretation of culture jamming is truer than the subjects’ own understanding of themselves; it is merely reached from a different point of view. Eventually, neither the culture jammers’ understanding, nor my own captures any “true essence” of culture jamming, but both contribute to the construction of a discourse about culture jamming.

Outline of the thesis

A compiled dissertation normally contains a framework presenting theory and method and a set of published or submitted texts, each independent from the dissertation as a whole, through which the empirical analysis is presented. In the framework presented here, the reader will find an introduction, a case presentation, and a discussion about the theoretical perspective upon the contemporary (chapter one), methodological considerations and method (chapter two), summaries of the published texts (chapter three), presentation of theory (chapters four through seven), and an analysis of culture jamming from an emotion sociological perspective (chapter eight). Thus, including a case analysis in the framework, this book can be said to deviate from the standard model of compiled dissertations. My original plan was to submit chapter eight and have it included among the published texts. However, when I set out to write the analysis, it turned out to be a conclusion to the studies that had been
previously undertaken, both with regard to my search for a fruitful theoretical perspective on culture jamming as a social movement (sociology of emotions), and with regard to my struggle to bend social movement theory to "fit" the process of collective identity construction in late capitalist information society. I thus opted for the compromise to let my latest analysis of culture jamming round off the framework, as an empirical illustration of my theoretical conclusions. Consequently, this is a hybrid dissertation that assumes both the shape of a compiled dissertation and the conventional monograph.

In chapter one, I present the aim of my research and the empirical cases included. I further discuss my choice of theoretical perspective on the contemporary in terms of "late capitalism and information society," and the way that my point of view within this theoretical frame differs from the culture jammers'. In this chapter I also present the outline of the thesis.

In chapter two, I discuss the epistemological and ontological considerations providing the foundation of my identity as a researcher with a primarily post-structuralist orientation, with a "touch" of realism. I also discuss the normative foundations of social scientific research and the "truth claims" that may yet be advanced. The second part of this chapter accounts for the research process and method.

The purpose of chapter three is to give an overview and an introduction to the previously published texts through short summaries structured around purpose, method, and main theoretical point of departure, main arguments, and conclusions. The summary of Text III is a bit more comprehensive than the others because the original is published in Swedish. These summaries may be valuable (to the reader) for the understanding of the theoretical arguments advanced in chapters four through seven. The complete texts in their original published versions can be found in the appendix (Text I-IV).

In chapter four, I selectively explore parts of the vast literature of social movement studies with the purpose to present an overview that is useful for advancing my own theoretical interest. Though such a review is a standard ingredient in most volumes on social movements and therefore not original in any sense, it provides the necessary concepts and background to chapter five.

In chapter five I concentrate on social movements in the context of information society and the emergence of cyberspace/virtual reality. I formulate the argument that the development of the mass media and communication technology change the social perception of self and others in a way that opens up new areas for conflict and new means for collective identification. The main purpose is to show that these social changes also
require changes and adaptations to the definition of a social movement. In the concluding section I formulate my own definition of social movements.

Chapter six offers an introduction to an emotion sociological approach to social movements. It begins however with a general attempt to sort out the different research perspectives in the sociology of emotions, as well as an effort to explain the way I conceive of and use the concept “emotion.” I found that this was necessary, both for my own sake (explaining to myself what I understand emotion to mean) and for the sake of deflecting some arguments that I have frequently faced in seminars and at conferences.

Chapter seven may be read as a specific contextual introduction to the analysis in chapter eight. The perspective of the contemporary society as a late capitalist information society is here narrowed down to the emotional culture in late capitalism, and its inherent structural conflicts. I argue that in late capitalism people may experience a gap between the postulated emotional culture and the “privately negotiated” emotional subcultures. Social movements may articulate the latent conflict of such an experience, and hence, shape their protests in terms of emotional deviance or emotional revolt.

Finally, chapter eight offers an emotion sociological analysis of culture jamming as a social movement, and it concludes the framework. The analysis serves as an illustration to my main argument in chapters four through seven. Focusing on (contingent) emotions and feeling rules in culture jamming, the emotion work of becoming/being a culture jammer and the emotional processes in terms of emotional energy that motivates and rewards jammers, I try to show how the emotional subculture of culture jamming both complies with and deviates from the dominant. I also suggest that the culture jammers move on high levels of emotional energy, indicating that protest is underpinned by processes of collective identification and solidarity that are more wide-ranging than may be concluded from the surface appearance.
2. Method and methodological considerations

The purpose of the first part of this chapter is to discuss the ontological and epistemological preconditions underpinning my identity as a researcher as well as the normative foundations of social scientific research in general. The purpose of the second part is to give an account of the research process and method.

My original position as a sociologist is no doubt constructivist in a rather straightforward kind of way. Beside the assumptions that society is socially constructed, that social structure derives from social interaction, and that institutions guarantee social order over time by rendering structures inert and likely to prevail beyond individual life biographies (Berger and Luckmann 2000) I believe that humans possess a formidable suggestive power and an innate impulse to use it in the (conscious or unconscious) creation of meaning.

Social construction in terms of discourse theory

During the past years, I have come to increasingly adopt a post-structuralist approach, through my interest in discourse theory (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999; Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and Lacanian psychoanalysis especially as it is elaborated into social theory by Zizek (Zizek 1989). Leaning on these influences, I argue that the socially constructed “typologies” or externalized patterns of interaction and meaning creation (Berger and Luckmann 2000) may be seen as discourses. I use the term discourse as defined by Laclau and Mouffe (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:36ff; Laclau and Mouffe 1985) as the “structured totality resulting from articulatory practice,” where articulatory practice refers to “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:105). Articulatory practice thus settles the meaning of elements

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15 At the outset I worked with the notion of narrative, but as I ventured into the realms of discourse theory, the notion of discourse became more and more familiar to me and eventually I preferred to try to use the notion of discourse consistently, to avoid confusion. However, in terms of social movement studies, whether one speaks of discourse or narrative may be a matter of taste. In either case, we are talking about an interpretation pattern, a system of interrelated signs that are rendered meaningful through their position to one another; systems that render the world meaningful and legible to us. Eyreman (2004) distinguishes between narratives and discourses in the sense that discourses seem to be “institutionalized” or “dominating” narratives, whereas narratives are discourses in the making. Discourse in my use of the term, however (following Laclau and Mouffe), may be strong or weak, in the process of taking shape or institutionalized, and there can be alternative discourses competing for primacy or threatening hegemony. Following Laclau and Mouffe (and Lacan/Zizek), I also use the notion of discourse so that in the end, it overlaps with the notion of identity. Discourse is not the same as identity, but identity, as a social construction, is made up of subject positions in one or several discourses (practices, beliefs and so on)
(non-articulated differences) so that they become moments (differential positions articulated within discourse). In and by themselves, elements are floating signifiers that may, in principle, be caught up by and articulated through any discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:34-71). In other words, a discourse is a system of moments identified in relation to each other; in this relation, each moment is defined according to what it is and what it is not in relation to other moments.\footnote{A human being is also a signifier whose identity derives from the discourses in which her person constitutes a moment; see Torfing, J. 1999 New Theories of Discourse, Oxford: Blackwell.} Some signifiers direct and dominate the identification of others by being \textit{constructed as} “privileged” (i.e. “objective”), so called nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) or master signifiers (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999; Lacan 1994; Zizek 1989).

Laclau and Mouffe reject the idea that we may separate “objective reality” from discursive constructions. Objective reality per se becomes a problematic concept in the perspective of discourse theory.

There are not \textit{two} planes, one of essences and the other of appearances, since there is no possibility of fixing an \textit{ultimate} literal sense for which the symbolic would be a second and derived plane of signification. Society and social agents lack any essence, and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:98)

As discourse also includes the dimension of concrete practice, and the objects and materials of practice, reality is always perceived through the lens of discursive formations. This is not to say that everything \textit{is} discourse, but that discourses structure everything that we perceive, do, think, and say.

The structural determination that emerges out of this reasoning is modified by the assertion that there is not only \textit{one} single meaning for each element. As Laclau and Mouffe put it, this would render articulatory practice impossible and reduce all elements to moments, which in turn would entail an entirely deterministic position. Instead, we may talk about a field of discursivity (1985:111) where alternative discourses and articulatory practices guarantee that every element is subject to overdetermination and that any specific articulatory practice never fully grasps the totality of an element. From this follows that \textit{all signification is contingent}, and that part of an element always escapes any given articulatory practice.

\textit{[A]ll discourse is subverted by a field of discursivity which overflows it, the transition from ‘elements’ to ‘moments’ can never be complete. The status of the ‘elements’ is that of floating signifiers, incapable of being wholly articulated to a discursive chain. (…)} \textit{The practice of articulation…consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial}
character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity. (emphasis in original, Laclau and Mouffe 1985:113)

The nodal point as a discursive point of partial fixation is what renders discursive formations possible; it is a contingent fixation of some signifiers as privileged so that others may be positioned in relation to them. The contingency of the nodal points derives from the premise that there is not, and can not be, any privileged signifier that transcends discourse and has a fixed essential meaning in relation to which other meanings are established. Thus, the field of discursivity is infinitely open-ended, rendering society as a thoroughly structured and ordered ensemble of discursive formations impossible. Yet society is the raison-d’être of the social: “If the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of a society, the social only exists, however, as an effort to construct that impossible object.” (Ibid:112)

The statements above hold some important consequences for research. First, it is evident that the researcher’s position is not essentially privileged – the research of a topic itself becomes part of the discursive field pertaining to that topic. Second, and similar to the first point, the researcher seems not to be able to claim privileged knowledge about the topic in terms of what is real/true/objective and what is not. The researcher’s claim is merely a different position in the discursive field.

One way to handle this is to bypass any ontological claims in research, as argued by Andersen (1999). He suggests that a constructivist approach focuses on epistemology rather than ontology. Instead of studying “what is real,” the researcher studies utterances about reality, how reality is constructed in the particular case, i.e. the construction of discourses. Yet, even if ontological assumptions are avoided, epistemologically oriented research deals with what are taken to be “real” utterances (see for example Foucault 1984). Although this realist (or “positivist”) claim according to Andersen does not imply that discourses are objectively given – regularities and boundaries of discourse claimed in discourse analysis are analytical “strategic” constructions – I cannot help but think that the reality of “utterances” is no less complicated than the reality of “the body” or “the stone.” There is no qualitative difference between these elements. Hence, epistemologically oriented research carries ontological assumptions just like “conventional” research does. I believe this warrants a closer examination of “the real.”
The imaginary is the realm of image and imagination, deception and lure. The principal illusions of the imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy, duality and, above all, similarity. (…) The imaginary exerts a captivating power over the subject, founded in the almost hypnotic effect of the specular image. The imaginary is thus rooted in the subject’s relationship to his own body (or rather to the image of his body). (emphasis added, Evans 1996: 82-3)

From the imaginary rises the fantasy of fullness and unity that motivates and permeates action in the symbolic order. But the imaginary is structured by the symbolic order, whether we speak about the imaginary as the kingdom of the newborn or the imaginary as a part of the adult’s being in the symbolic world: the imaginary is culturally and socially specific.

The symbolic order, further, is not simply the same as the dimension of language; Lacan holds that language contains both symbolic and imaginary aspects. Thus, while the signifier pertains to the symbolic order, the signified and signification pertains to the imaginary (Ibid:83). The signified is not the “real” object, but the object imagined, while the process of signification departs from the illusionary correspondence between signifier and signified. The signifier of the body is the word “body,” while the signified is the imagined body. The real object of body is the particular, physical body. This physical, real body, however, escapes signification.

The main characteristic of the real is that it “is”, but it escapes signification (Evans 1996; Lacan 1994; Zizek 1989). The real is absolute, undivided, undifferentiated, unreflecting.

Whereas the symbolic is a set of differentiated, discrete elements called signifiers, the real is, in itself, undifferentiated: “the real is absolutely without fissure” … It is the symbolic which introduces ‘a cut in the real’ in the process of signification: ‘it is the world of words that creates the world of things – things originally confused in the hic et nunc of the all in the process of coming-into-being’… (emphasis added, Evans 1996:159)

Thus, the moment we try to represent or signify the real, it is already somewhere else. “…the real emerges as that which is outside language and
inassimilable to symbolization” (Ibid:159). It is “that which resists symbolization absolutely” (Ibid:159). The list of metaphors is endless, of course. It is clear, already at this point, that the real can only be approached “sideways,” like trying to catch a glimpse of one’s mirror image by glancing furtively through the corner of the eye (Åse 2000).

The real, in Lacan’s account, “has connotations of matter, implying a material substrate underlying the imaginary and the symbolic” (Evans 1996:160). Two points are important to make here: First, the suggested materialism of Lacan (Ibid:106) is unconventional in the sense that is does neither “subscribe to that kind of materialism which reduces all causation to a crude economic determinism” (Ibid:107), nor to the idea of the cultural sphere as a mere “superstructure.” Lacan instead asserts that the symbolic has also real, material dimensions: “signifiers are well and truly embodied, materialized” (Lacan cited in Evans 1996 :107). Second, and corollary to this, the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic are not different levels underpinning each other, but different dimensions simultaneously interwoven and brought to interplay in social action/interaction.

This interplay between the dimensions of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic implies that the real moves into the imaginary and the symbolic, while imaginary and symbolic products “materialize” into real. Hence, “the real” does not signify something external to the social, something that is more present in the physical, or in nature. The real simply is that which cannot be captured in its totality. Whether we speak about “social facts” (Durkheim 1964), stones or utterances, these are all real – not more or less so, and not pertaining to different levels of emergence as suggested by critical realism (Brante 2001) but simply real – and graspable only as moments in discourses. As such, they are

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17 The body is a good example. If the body is real, I still cannot perceive of it in its absolute being. This does not stop me, however, from being inseparable from the body, from using the body as an instrument, from modifying, transforming and disciplining the body, destroying or caring for the body, responding to its symptoms and needs, creating its symptoms and needs. The body is me and not-me, it is symbolic and it is real, and its reality both fascinates and terrifies. “If the moment that reflection begins, I become a stranger to myself, a foreign land, then can I simply return home to unreflective familiarity? Might one not conjecture that human beings, as eccentric animals, are defined by this continual failure to coincide with themselves? Does not our identity precisely consist in a lack of self-identity, in the fact that identity is always a question for us – a quest, indeed – that we might vigorously pursue, but it is not something I actually possess? … I most certainly am, but I do not have myself.” p 43 in Critchley, S. 2002 On Humour, London: Routledge.

The body is overdetermined, it is an element that is positioned as a moment in an infinitude of discourses that all try to cover the meaning of the body, and of subjectivity, and identity. All these different images however, account for only fragments and parts of the real body/me. Thus the real me remains a mystery to myself (and others), see Lacan, J. 1994 ‘The Mirror-phase as Formative of the Function of the I’, in S. Zizek (ed) Mapping Ideology, London: Verso.
subject to overdetermination – any specific articulation offers only one aspect of the many that may be given for the same topic.

**Consequences for research**

Given the aforementioned considerations, it becomes evident that “objectivity” is no longer a viable goal for research. According to Jörgensen and Phillips (1999:48-9), Laclau and Mouffe talk about objectivity as *ideological*. To advance a discourse as “natural,” “given,” or “objective” is an ideological move.

Implicit is the conception of power in the foucauldian sense of micro-power (Foucault 1976: 123-129) as immanent in social relations and productive of the social. Foucault argues that where there is power, there is resistance: the one presumes the other. Resistance, further, is carried out from *within* the actual power relation(s) and from multiple sites: there is not one point of resistance. Hence, as argued also by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), power is present in the very workings of discourse, as the specific fixation of a signifier entails oppression of alternative fixations/meanings. But since power and resistance are mutually dependent, there is no power without (more or less articulated) points of resistance.

The role of science in these power relations may be considered from two perspectives:

One can emphasize, as Dewey did, the moral importance of the social sciences – their role in widening and deepening our sense of community and of the possibilities of this community. Or one can emphasize, as Michel Foucault does, the way in which the social sciences have served as instruments in ‘the disciplinary society.’ That is to emphasize the connection between knowledge and power rather than that between knowledge and human solidarity. (Rorty 1997: 58)

Thus, the insight that we “need to abandon traditional notions of rationality, objectivity, method, and truth” (Ibid:58) leads social scientists either in the direction of deconstruction or genealogy (critique against dominant objectified discourses), or in the direction of advancing alternatives; local, particular, resistance strategies (see also for instance Bauman 1997a; Haraway 1997; Seidman 1997; West 1997). This is not to say that one strategy is better than the other, only that different subjects of study engage critical social research differently.

Both strategies may be embraced at once, as argued by Thörn (Thörn 1997a: 115-19). In fact, it may be that this double nature of the analysis, both deconstructive and reconstructive, is inherent to post-structuralist social science; even when the one is emphasized, the other follows. Hence, Andersen
argues – in line with the first direction above – the “strategy of analysis” suggested de-ontologizes, i.e. reveals the contingency of naturalized discourses. The purpose of this, however, is (in line with the second direction) to construct a “critically different” meaning than the given (Andersen 1999:14-5). In any case, the scientific position – if it is to be taken seriously – demands critical reflexivity and clarification of the contingency of discourse before any normative and strategic advancement of a counter-hegemonic discourse can be made.

As I have already mentioned in chapter one, my analysis of culture jamming has also embraced both deconstructive and constructive moves. Instead of focusing upon dominant discourses, my focus is on the construction of a resistance discourse in the shape of culture jamming. Culture jamming is not a dominant discourse, although hegemonic struggles internal to the field can be identified (Text II). The overall purpose, however, is not to deontologize culture jamming, but to explore and understand it and its potential, as a social movement.

The questions that arise are, “in what sense has my project contributed to enhanced understanding? What are the “truth” and validity claims of my research?” Departing from the “tripartite truth criterion” suggested by Alvesson and Skölberg (Alvesson and Skölberg 1994:35-9), the validity of “reflexive qualitative research” may be evaluated along the lines of signification – enhanced understanding, application – the actual usefulness of theory; or representation – the degree of correspondence between theory and “reality.” While the two latter ways to validate research have been imported from materialist and positivist methodologies, Alvesson and Skölberg argue that they are equally important and complementary to signification. This is a respectable claim that, despite the obvious difficulties, I will try to discuss here in relation to my study of culture jamming.

Validation through signification comes first in my case. Ultimately, I would say that the validation of my analysis is contingent upon both its significance for other researchers and its significance to culture jammers. My argument for doing this research is that I believe it may actually contribute to enhanced understanding of the kind of resistance I have chosen to label as the culture jamming movement. The fact that my point of view (the scientific one) differs from that of my subjects, however, means that the way knowledge emanating from this project is, or becomes, significant to culture jammers is an open question. Further, the project entails claims also to pragmatic validity through the argument that social movement theory may benefit from it. Bending and
adapting central concepts will make it possible to account for what is currently going on in terms of collective protest and social movements. This claim in turn rests upon the assumption that the theoretical perspective of the contemporary adopted here, in fact corresponds to crucial aspects of contemporary society and to consequences for social movements. Hence, the way of perceiving social movements suggested here may lead to better descriptions and understandings of social movements in the late capitalist information age. Obviously, all of these claims may be disputed.

To further outline my epistemological position, I argue that the researcher constructs his/her object of study in interaction with the subject (be it “humans” or “texts”), the area of research, and the requirements and rules of scientific method. Accordingly, “data” are constructed, not just “collected.” The reliability of scientific research ought to refer, at a minimum, to a high level of self-critical reflexivity through the project, and, at best, to a systematic and transparent mode of process. Although there are inherent limitations to the transparency of qualitative research, the second part of this chapter will offer an attempt to account for the method and research process.

Method

The research process generally is marked by a generative approach, in the sense that I started out with a very broad interest and a single case, then narrowed down interest and broadened the inclusion of cases. My theoretical perspective has also been growing in complexity, starting from a general sociological perspective, successively integrating more social movement theory, discourse theory, and sociology of emotions. As with much qualitative research, the research process has been erratic and its various components in terms of problem definition, data collection, analysis, and text production, have largely coincided with one another.

A general account of reflections and turning-points

At the outset of this project, I was driven by a general quest for a contemporary Western social movement that would be molded according to the contemporary Western society and able to come up with a powerful alternative story of our time, and where we are heading. I formulated a hypothesis that stated that if it was true that contemporary society was centered around consumption rather than production, and if this and other contributing processes in this society meant that people were primarily defined as consumers in consumer culture rather than citizens in democracies, then the new social movement ought to
form around the political potential of consumption, i.e. a political consumers’ movement.

At the formulation of this hypothesis, I recalled having seen a spoof-ad against Absolut vodka in a fashion magazine, produced by an organization called the Adbusters (actually the Adbusters Media Foundation). Upon looking up the Adbusters.org website, I decided to continue with this case. I contacted the leader of the organization, Kalle Lassn, by e-mail, and presented the purpose of my inquiry. This was followed by a brief phone-call where Lassn provided some general information. He later sent me material such as his recently published book *Culture Jam – The Uncooking of America*, spoof-ad postcards, a spoof-ad calendar, the culture jammers video with uncommercials, and back-issues of the Adbusters Magazine.

Studying the website and the materials sent to me, I found out that the Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF) did not exactly mobilize consumers, although consumer culture was the terrain they moved in. The culture jammers’ movement launched by the AMF was clearly more than a movement for political consumption in terms of its general framing. Further, it seemed to me that I had to assess whether there were really grounds for speaking about “a movement” – the AMF was only one single organization: if this was a movement, there would be other groups and organizations involved.

The next step was to look for other actors in a wider field of culture jamming. This way, the process of collective identification as well as the inner tensions and conflicts that structured the field of culture jamming, could be brought to the fore. At this point, I was beginning to think in terms of discourse theory, and although I did not apply the terminological set, I began to see the AMF as one actor in a discursive field pertaining to the formation of a movement against consumer culture, corporate power, and global corporations. This movement could be called the culture jamming movement, as the AMF suggested, but the selection of this name as a kind of master signifier was contingent (see “Selection and delimitations” below). Initiating e-mail contact with people practicing culture jamming, it became clear to me that the AMF could be controversial to some groups. The concept of culture jamming as increasingly connected to the AMF (thanks to their marketing of the culture jammers’ movement) made it problematic.

In order to study the AMF in the “physical world,” I had been planning a trip to Vancouver. The occasion came during the spring of 2001, but at this time my attempts to contact Lassn failed. In order to provoke a response, I sent him an electronic copy of “Like Moths” (Text II), hoping that he would like to
I honestly think the whole problem with our society is too much thinking and not enough experiencing ... the whole academic focus diffuses the potential of experience, we explain things, intellectualize things and find comfort in that, comfortable in our understanding without really going through any evolution.
ourselves ...to me this is an oxymoron to study culture jamming this way. Its like you [are] looking at the monkey in the cage, examining and explaining what it [is] like to be a monkey, meanwhile never knowing what it [is] like to stuff bananas in your mouth or scratch your armpits ... and then people walk away thinking they know what it means to be a monkey, why the monkey, and they now know enough about monkeys so they never get to the experience. The monkey becomes extinct. But the researcher gets the recognition, the prestige, the acceptance of institutional society. (Sharp in e-mail March 19, 2002)

The outcome of this correspondence was (again) facing the dilemma of doing research on people that I was sympathetic toward, and determining whether this was a counter-productive, even parasitic, enterprise.

After the fieldwork, I returned to my office with information that called for some reconsideration of the project. My critical assessment about the role of the AMF in the discursive field of culture jamming had been confirmed; most of the groups interviewed did not subsume themselves under the heading of culture jamming, and mentioned the AMF as one reason why: not because they necessarily disliked what the AMF was doing, but because they felt that they were “different.” As I saw it, one aspect of this was my very undertaking of attempting to find something common in these disparate groups: this was contrary to their attempt to avoid grand narratives. In other words, “culture jamming” and/or closely related kinds of protest could be seen as “a floating signifier” that resisted fixation. On the other hand, this could be interpreted as differentiations internal to the discursive field of culture jamming, and as a response to the increasingly forceful marketing of “the culture jammers’ movement” of the AMF.

I finally opted for the continued use of the term culture jamming. My definition of culture jamming (see “Selection and delimitations” and “Additional note on delimitations” below) was already inclusive and abstract enough to include the various groups interviewed. Although I had been looking for a more specific definition, the interviews had taught me that it was better to support the complexity and fragmented pluralism of the field and, as far as possible, to respect the rejection of grand narratives by those interviewed.

Accordingly, each of the studies presented in this book offer a theoretical/analytical framing, and generalize the jammers in accordance with this frame; but the totality of the analyses functions as a kaleidoscope of the culture jamming field. This said, the theoretical approach in my last analysis, an emotion perspective coupled with an implicit attempt to wrestle with social movement theory, represents, in my view, the most successful of my attempts to say something interesting about culture jamming that differs from the culture jammer’s own understanding.
Data collection and analysis

Selection and delimitations

The first round of collecting empirical data, as already mentioned, took place in 1999 once I located the AMF on the Internet. The starting point was texts and visuals from the website. I downloaded and printed a great deal of text (roughly 150-200 pages). Most of these documents were read as general information about the organization, the activities, and the theoretical framing of the AMF. Texts that were placed on the front page of the website (easy to find for the new visitor) and that contained a presentation of the organization, the culture jammers’ movement, goals, means, and “ideological declarations,” were selected for analysis. The reason for this was to capture the self-image of the AMF, the one they used to address visitors and make them sign up to the culture jammers’ network. When I received the book Culture Jam (see below) it made most of these selected web documents superfluous. The First Things First Manifesto, central to the analysis presented in Text II, was downloaded from the AMF, while the Culture Jammer’s Manifesto, also central in Text II, was retrieved from another Internet source (see Text II for details).

Once I received the material from Kalle Lasn, I had a book, a video, a calendar, a bunch of spoof-ad postcards, and about ten back-issues of the Adbusters magazine at my disposal. I went through the material and then chose the book Culture Jam for the first round of analysis. It offered a strong and explicit programmatic statement and ideological framework for the culture jammers’ movement. Although the magazine would seem to be an obvious object for research, it gave me a fragmented and rambling impression. The magazine resembles conventional fashion and hype magazines in a formal way; fragments of images and interesting notes, interchanged with longer but catchy

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20 It is important to mention that the AMF website has been thoroughly altered and restructured, presumably sometime during 2004. Although slight changes occurred now and then previous to this, the new website is less transparent and less directly informative about the organization and the culture jammers’ movement (this information is now fragmented and scattered over various “functions” of the website). It appears more “conventionally” political in terms of addressing the political administration of the USA, and more present-oriented in terms of “front” issues, i.e. what’s up now. The entrance to the virtual shop where one can purchase various AMF products is now relatively difficult to find. In contrast, a range of electronic forms to fill in for various purposes, such as media requests for interviews and requests to have an AMF member to speak at your particular event, have been added. It is also easy to get to the secure and formal site for donations to the organization (donations are made by card transactions) and it is very easy to establish your own local adbusters group. The latest ambitious project “the black-spot sneaker” is further accentuated on the front-page (with images and up-dates about shoe design). The fact that this cooperative undertaking is already producing and delivering shoes gives a pretty serious impression. In sum, the new website seems to reflect the development of the AMF into a more efficient and well-organized movement organization with plentiful resources, albeit more careful about announcing its ideological foundation.
articles, and series of images, political caricatures, and spoof-ads. Surely, the magazine contains interesting material, but the ideological core is much clearer in the book. The contributions from various authors and designers, furthermore, says little about the AMF except that these contributions follow the AMF core issues. Finally, the Adbusters magazine is the most well-known part of the AMF and it has an ambivalent status that did not fit my purpose of singling out the ideological narrative and organizational structure of the AMF.²¹ I thus excluded it from analysis, hoping that I would be able to return to it later on with the purpose of focusing exclusively on its role in the AMF/culture jamming context.

Later, I focused upon uncommercials in The Culture Jammer’s Video and images from the website. The analysis presented in Text IV originally focused upon three spoof-ads and four uncommercials (out of six available uncommercials on the Culture Jammers Video). The spoof-ads were selected to achieve variety in the emotions evoked, the ironic composition, the targeted product or company, and accessibility in terms of how clearly the message appeared. Since there are far fewer uncommercials than spoof-ads to choose from, my ambition was to include all six from the videotape. Due to time and space limitations, however, I eventually excluded two. One of these was an uncommercial for a local Greenpeace organization, advancing the environmental issue of a car-free society. Although this issue is embraced by the AMF, it is not one of their main issues. The second was an uncommercial about a G8-summit featuring among others President Clinton and advancing the key issue that “the global economy is a doomsday machine.” It was left out because of its time-specific references and because of its information density – it would demand lengthy description and analysis. In Text IV, due to further space limitations, the example of a spoof-ad which is difficult to decode (a spoof-ad against Marlboro) was excluded in order to center upon emotionality. The uncommercial promoting “Turn off TV week” was left out because the points I wished to make with it were already made in the analysis of the remaining spoof-ads and uncommercials. Thus the final version of the analysis presented in Text IV contains two spoof-ads and three uncommercials.

The next phase consisted of the interviews. In order to make a selection of persons to interview, I departed from a definition of culture jamming derived

²¹ I have been told several times by design, art, and marketing students and professionals, that the Adbusters Magazine is well-known and cherished among these groups, not because of its ideological content (which seems to be disregarded or taken less seriously) but because of its graphic innovation and ideas. This observation is supported by an interview with Kalle Lasn currently featured on the website (http://www.adbusters.org/the_front/index.php?catid=1&blogid=1, 17/2 2005) See also Klein, N. 1999b No Logo - taking aim at the brand bullies. New York: Picador.
from the AMF narrative identified in the first text published and their application of the Situationist concept “détournement.” Thus, culture jamming was “a symbolic form of protest in the sense that it targets central symbols of dominant discourses, deconstructs the discourses, and reintroduces the symbols in alternative contexts” (emphasis added, Wettergren 2003b:29). As a strategy, culture jamming could indeed be found in many kinds of direct action activist groups (such as Reclaim the Streets) or groups related to “established” movements (such as the feminist group Guerilla Girls). But I was interested in groups that could not be sorted under some previously established social movement heading, that primarily targeted corporate power, consumer culture, and/or involved media activism broadly speaking, and that would basically agree with the diagnostic framing of the world found in the AMF narrative.

Having discussed the matter with Jonah Peretti, I was aware that “the culture jamming movement” now, to a great degree, was a matter of my arbitrary delimitations, and that my alignment with the AMF in the search for “culture jamming groups” would be disputed. For the initial selection and contacts, I sought widely, relying on tips from colleagues, friends, and Jonah Peretti (who I wanted to interview as an informant, considering his own activities and scholarly interest in the area). I also searched the net and randomly contacted a few groups. As it turned out, there were many people from different groups in San Francisco, New York, and London willing to see me. Thus, contrary to what I had expected (that people from these groups would be difficult to involve), people were generally very interested.

I had to face the practical problems of covering all three cities. I was primarily interested in groups from or in the USA, since I perceived culture jamming as originally a North American phenomenon. Although the roots of culture jamming can be traced back to the Situationists (see Text I and II), the concept of culture jamming was invented in the USA, and the movement discourse of the AMF that I departed from was highly contingent upon the political situation in the USA, where corporations have a direct and significant influence upon political elections. Further, while there were some really
interesting groups in San Francisco, New York was the site where I seemed to be able to reach most people during the particular period when I had time to travel. The reason I went to Paris later that year, was to interview Ray from the RtMark. I had intended to do this interview in New York, but it was cancelled at the last moment. Since I considered the RtMark a very interesting case, I decided to insist on the interview.24 It also gave me occasion to go to Lyon and interview the French Casseurs de Pub (Adbusters), as an exception to the rule of including primarily North American groups.25

Additional note on delimitations

After the interviews, it was clear that the AMF effort to advance “the culture jamming movement” established connotations with the Adbusters Media Foundation and thereby pushed other groups to either differentiate from or identify themselves with the quest of the AMF. Thus, according to John, the Institute for Applied Autonomy preferred to call themselves “a tactical media group,” which was also the preferred term for Ray from the RtMark (although, Ray generally rejected the “illusion” of a movement); while Natalie from the Bureau of Inverse Technology seemed inclined to opt for the most strategic term (in terms of media attention) of the two terms (culture jamming or tactical media).

Tactical media is defined on the website of the Critical Art Ensemble (a group mentioned by John, Ray, and Natalie) as “…situational, ephemeral, and self-terminating.26 It encourages the use of any media that will engage a particular sociopolitical context in order to create molecular interventions and semiotic shocks that contribute to the negation of the rising intensity of authoritarian culture.” My assessment was that tactical media could be included in the definition of culture jamming that I was using (see above).

Vincent of Casseurs de Pub did not recognize culture jamming (or tactical media) – although he naturally felt connected to the AMF – but related primarily to the French radical left movement and the environmental

24 The RtMark was frequently mentioned in my e-mail contacts with both activists and other helpful people prior to my trip to New York. It seemed to be a common reference.
25 As indicated in the analysis in chapter eight, some interesting hypothetical points can be made by comparing the French group with the Americans: Vincent Cheynet did not dismiss parliamentary politics; he did not recognize the term culture jamming; neither (to my surprise) did he want to align himself with the French Situationists. He aligned himself with the radical environmental movement and stressed the importance of changing life-style in order to live a life consistent with one’s beliefs. He was more inclined to speak in terms of opting out and denial, than were the American culture jammers, and so forth. Since my material was so restricted, however, I decided to avoid making comparisons at this time. It would be interesting to pursue these findings in a future project.
26 www.critical-art.net (26/1 2005) For a commentary on tactical media and the Critical Art Ensemble as “cyber activism” see Peterson (2001:160 ff)
movement. The latter is an interesting difference between this single non-
American group and the others.

Reverend Billy felt closely related to the Adbusters Media Foundation and
“the culture jamming movement.” Peretti explicitly put his Nike Email in the
context of culture jamming. Bill from Surveillance Camera Players, finally,
expressed the most ambivalent position relative to culture jamming. He rejected
it because he thought culture jammers were mistaken to target corporations
instead of state and political institutions, and because he thought AMF projects
and other similar “artistic” projects were too easily co-opted. But he also
expressed admiration and sympathy. It is a task for further research to follow
up the tensions and ambivalence that appear in these differentiations.

The interviews

The persons interviewed, except Peretti and Reverend Billy, all explicitly spoke
in the name of the group, though I only met one person from each. In all but
one case, this was the same person who had chosen to respond to my initial e-
mail contact.27

The fact that I only interviewed one person from each group may be
considered a problem. On the one hand, I was aware of the problem, but it was
hard to arrange all the appointments within eight days. It demanded some
sacrifice and re-organization especially on the part of the interviewees to fit me
in. On the other hand, it may be argued that the people I interviewed can be
considered “movement intellectuals.”

[W]e use the term movement intellectual to refer to those individuals who
through their activities articulate the knowledge, interests, and cognitive identity
of social movements. They are movement intellectuals because they create their
individual role at the same time as they create the movement, as new individual
identities and a new collective identity take form in the same interactive process.
(Eyerman and Jamison 1991:98)

Movement intellectuals, in a sense, are articulators, the intellectual vanguard, of
a movement. As such they are often ascribed a representative role, especially by
the media (Ibid).

In the case of culture jamming, none of those interviewed would claim the
role of representing a movement; but all claimed that they spoke for the group.
All of them were established intellectuals to some degree – i.e. persons whose
intellectual formation comes from institutional settings such as academia or art

27 All of the interviews except the one with Vincent from Casseurs de Pub were conducted in English
and in public locations such as cafés, restaurants, a bookstore (locations were selected by the
interviewees). The interview with Vincent was made at their office in Lyon and conducted in French.
In fact, it can be convincingly argued that culture jammers in general, as I have pointed out (Text I-IV and chapter eight) belong to – or claim to belong to – a vanguard both in the collective protest context and in the wider social context.

Early on I decided not to apply a gender perspective in my study of culture jamming. Such a perspective may be warranted however, considering that culture jamming seems to predominantly attract men, except for the cases where culture jamming is used as a strategy in the feminist struggle (for example the Guerrilla Girls: www.guerrillagirls.com/).

I listened through the interviews several times and transcribed them in gradual stages corresponding to my use of them. All interviews were eventually transcribed and analyzed for the study presented in chapter eight, but before this I used four of the interviews in the analysis presented in Text III and I also transcribed selected passages with an eye to “emotion cues” (I used these transcriptions to compare to my analysis of emotions in the AMF visuals, Text IV). The transcriptions were made word by word as far as possible. Some passages containing small-talk and side-tracks were summarized within brackets with a position indicator point if I would need to relocate the place on the tape. This was also the procedure I used for passages where the back-ground noise disturbed the quality of sound, and when single words were difficult to hear. In general this system is
Analysis

The empirical material – texts from the website, the book *Culture Jam*, Mark Dery’s Culture Jammers Manifesto, the interview transcriptions, spoof-ads and uncommercials (see “Selection” above) – have all, in principle, been treated the same way through the process of analysis, i.e. as texts submitted to qualitative text analysis. Treating a film or an image as a text of the same sort as a written text is of course not evident. My approach has been to look initially for the overall “surface narrative” of the visual, then to continue to observe the details of its construction (props, characters/actors, angles, perspectives, colours, sounds, cuts, symbolic and physical placement of, and relation to, the viewer) (see further Selby and Cowdrey 1995). All the “texts” have been analyzed as part of a specific context, as “movement texts” (Thörn 1997a; Thörn 1997b), i.e. as part of the self-presentation, framing and mobilizing activities of the groups. The uncommercials and spoof-ads are further to be understood as adapted to the genre of commercials and ads, and to be interpreted against the institutional backdrop of the mass media and its conditions for advertising.

Thus, both the AMF texts and the interviews have been read (watched or looked at, in case of the visuals) a number of times, retrieving and comparing themes and categories emerging from the text, as well as comparing these themes and categories with, and ordering them in, categories and concepts retrieved from theory. The method has been “abduction,” as it is described by Alvesson and Sköldberg.

*Abduction* seems to be the method actually used in much research based on case-studies… It means that a…specific case is interpreted with a hypothetical comprehensive pattern, which, if it is correct, explains the case in point.” (my translation, Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994:42)

The abductive method uses contingent theory for inspiration and sensitizing to empirical data, while also generating theory or theoretical adjustments from the empirical findings. It may be compared to the hermeneutic spiral, and its pendulating movements between the particular and the general, with the difference that abduction implies that this movement is not only undertaken in the context of the empirical observations, but also describes the analytical treatment of empirical cases vis-à-vis theory/theories. My aim is to explore and understand the phenomenon of culture jamming, as well as to illuminate the phenomenon from various theoretical aspects. Given that I have not strived to

not reflected in the interview quotes, as I have tried to use only quotes that were clear and unproblematic in terms of transcription.
produce the account of culture jamming I have tried a few different theoretical approaches. Consequently, the “texts” have been re-read and approached from the various perspectives a number of times. The case of the AMF has been involved in all analysis, except for the one in “Culture jam – new ways” (Text III), which was based only upon the interviewed groups. The analysis presented in chapter eight draws from all eight cases.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} Jonah Peretti is included as a “case” in this number.
3. From “The formation of counter-power in the postmodern condition” to “Mobilization and the moral shock”

In this chapter I summarize my arguments in the published texts I-IV that are attached in the appendix of this book. All but Text III, which is published in Swedish, are published in English. Hence, the summary of Text III is somewhat more detailed than the other three. The summaries are structured around purpose, method, main theoretical point of departure, main arguments, and conclusions. It should be noted that the summaries to a large degree reflect the terms, concepts, and relevant abbreviations used in the originals, and hence are not always consistent with the terminology adopted in the other chapters of this book.

I. The formation of counter-power in the postmodern condition

The purpose of this text is to discuss the Adbusters Media Foundation – here I call it the Adbusters’ organization or simply the Adbusters – from the perspectives of ideological roots, social origin, and strategic position. It presents a qualitative analysis of documents retrieved from the Adbusters’ website and from Kalle Lasn’s book *Culture Jam*. The theoretical perspective is informed by theories of postmodernity, media theory, social movement theory, and Bourdieu’s theory of distinctions.

In the first section, I present the case and – drawing on Thörm’s theory of movement discourses – an analysis of the Adbusters’ movement narrative through the categories 1) Human nature, 2) Social problems/grievances, 3) Cause of grievance, 4) Opponents, 5) Remedies, 6) “We”, 7) Utopia. Human beings, according to the Adbusters, are born free, spontaneous, and creative. The problem in contemporary society is that consumer culture erases authentic culture and pacifies human beings, alienating them from their true and creative nature. The social cause of this problem is the continuous commodification process – penetrating all areas of life – and its associated definition of growth in terms of GDP. The engine behind this process is the neo-classical economy. Global corporations are identified as main opponents. The “remedy” suggested by the Adbusters is to “reprogram” the “economic doomsday machine” and effect a “global mindshift” through which human beings will become aware of what is going on. The “we” proposed by Adbusters is broken down into three levels where the central agents are the “culture jammers”, followed by “the

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students and grass-root activists” and last, but not least, “the people.” The utopia of the Adbusters is captured through five Adbuster projects: Grounding Corporations, Demarketing, Media Carta, Freedom of Communication, and Redefining Progress. The most important conclusion drawn from this overview is that the Adbusters generally advance the idea of two comprehensive ends of free communication on the one hand, and human civilization in balance with both Nature and human nature on the other.

The second section deals with the Adbusters’ connection to the Situationists and “the postmodern.” Here, I show that Lassn also considers the problems of contemporary society as pertinent to “the postmodern condition.” There are multiple connections between the Situationists and the Adbusters as well as evident parallels between the Situationists’ theory of the “Society of the spectacle” and Lassn’s critique of the postmodern condition. Moreover, the Situationist theory, although forestalling theories of postmodernity, holds that there is truth and authenticity beyond the “spectacle” or “the simulacrum,” and thus it becomes a useful theory of resistance for the Adbusters. The relationship between the Adbusters/culture jammers and postmodernity is, however, more complicated. Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of cultural intermediaries, I argue that culture jammers may be seen as part of the new middle classes that, according to Bourdieu, are the carriers of postmodernism, submerging themselves in consumerism, the “fun ethic,” and the dissolution of categories. In the Adbusters’ case however, the fun ethic is used as a resource for protesting and transgressing the postmodern condition.

Under the heading “Resources and strategic position,” part three categorizes the organization’s resources as shared beliefs; cultural, symbolic, and economic capital; and media access. “Shared beliefs” are related to collective identity and the movement narrative, but also are more loosely defined as “a tendency, preceding the narration.” Hence, lacking clear boundaries between members and non-members of the organization, shared beliefs are

the only common denominator between the Adbusters organization and the largest part of its individual sympathizers. It becomes a powerful resource if and when the movement actually breaks through and starts influencing the political agenda. (Wettergren 2001: 201)

The economic resources consist of revenues from donations, sales, and subscriptions. The level of cultural and symbolic capital is high, judging from the looks and content of the Adbusters Magazine and other products.

The Adbusters organization has access to media through the construction of its own media channels (the website and the magazine) but also – though to a more limited extent – through the pursuit of airtime and advertisement space
for its uncommercials and spoof-ads. The organization actively advances its
issues on a number of “fronts” divided among categories of those pertaining to
the media, and those pertaining to politics and economy. The “strategic pincer,”
further, denotes the strategy of exercising pressure on the target from the
bottom-up and top-down simultaneously. The strategic pincer, according to
Lasn, if persistently applied to a specific corporation for a longer period of
time, will result in its destruction. The “meme,” finally, is a central strategic
concept referring to “a unit of information” that “leaps from brain to brain”
and replicates itself (Lasn cited in Wettergren 2001: 203). The Adbusters stress
five memes: True cost, Demarketing, The doomsday meme, No corporate “I”,
and Media Carta.33 Concluding this part, I briefly touch upon the aspect of the
“cyberworld,” the strategies employed and space occupied by the Adbusters in
it. Lasn thus also advances cyberjamming, and I argue that the virtual network
of the Adbusters is open and fluid and probably much more extensive than the
physical organization in the local context. Concluding the section on resources
and strategic position I suggest that the Adbusters’ strategic position primarily
accentuates awareness-raising and mobilization. It seems the Adbusters
incorporate relevant grass-roots movements and activists in the construction of
a “meta-movement,” or alternatively that they function as a complementary
media/PR-agency for those movements protesting the WTO-meeting in Seattle
in 1999, for example.

In the summary and concluding reflections, I discuss the perception of the
human mind as a battlefield in the postmodern/information society, as
exemplified in the Adbusters meme-concept and their idea of a “global
mindshift.” I also discuss the possibility of a conflict between having Media
Carta/freedom of information as goals on the one hand, and the utopian
prospect that people – through the mindshift – will “see the truth” on the
other. I conclude that the Adbusters seem to advance a universalistic counter-
hegemonic metanarrative through the use of pluralistic and inclusive strategies,
and conclude that even if “the culture jammers’ movement” mobilizes primarily

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33 True Cost: In the global marketplace of the future, the price of every product will tell the
ecological truth.
Demarketing: The marketing enterprise has now come full circle. The time has come to unself the
product and turn the incredible power of marketing against itself.
The Doomsday Meme: The global economy is a doomsday machine that must be stopped and
reprogrammed.
No Corporate “I”: Corporations are not legal “persons” with constitutional rights and freedoms of
their own, but legal fictions that we ourselves created and must therefore control.
Media Carta: Every human being has the “right to communicate” – to receive and impart information
through any media” see p. 124 in Lasn, K. 1999 Culture Jam - The Uncooling of America, New York:
Eagle Brook.
from the (new) middle classes, it is not organized along class lines but around matters of culture, it promotes “a cultural struggle.”

II. Like Moths to a Flame – Culture Jamming and the Global Spectacle

The purpose of this study is to analyze key texts of culture jamming and other prominent sources referred to in the Adbuster narrative to give examples of the inner tensions, conflicts, and ambivalence displayed in these texts. It is based on qualitative analysis of material from the Adbusters website, the book *Culture Jam*, and Mark Dery’s *Culture Jamming: hacking, slashing, and sniping in the empire of signs* (generally referred to as the first Culture Jammers’ manifesto). The theoretical perspective involves social movement theory, general sociological theory and theories of postmodernity as well as media theory and theory of “cyberpolitics.”

My analysis connects the Media Foundation Adbusters (MFA) movement narrative to the context of postmodernity. 35 The latter in my use (not to be confounded with the connotations of postmodernity in the MFA use) refers to a Western cultural experience originating in consumer culture on the one hand, and on the other hand, to a movement that “splits, radicalizes, and weakens modernity” (Wettersgren 2003b). The concept of postmodernity, in my view, includes other concepts covering contemporary society such as late modernity and the information age. I define culture jamming as “a symbolic form of protest” that “targets central symbols of dominant discourses, deconstructs the discourses, and reintroduces the symbols in alternative contexts” (Ibid: 28). The exact means and ends of different jammers vary, and culture jamming may include a range of practices from graffiti to pirate broadcasting. The term “culture jamming” was coined by the audio-collage band Negativland in 1984, but the practice of *détournement* (turning around) that can be said to be characteristic of culture jamming, can be traced to the Situationists. The MFA rejects the use of Marxist theory and concepts still central to the Situationists. MFA and culture jamming generally avoids association to the “old Left movement” and seems to dissociate from the idea of mass movements generally.

35 Actually the Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF), most commonly called “the Adbusters”. The abbreviation MFA used in this text derives from my ad-hoc choice to sometimes call the Adbusters the Media Foundation Adbusters. I thus wanted to distinguish between the whole organization, on the one hand, and the Adbusters Magazine, on the other. The editors of the collected volume in which this text appeared suggested the abbreviation MFA. Later, when I realized that the correct name was actually the Adbusters Media Foundation, I continued using an abbreviated form but changed it into the AMF.
When one compares Mark Dery’s culture jammer’s manifesto with the MFA narrative, important differences emerge. In Dery’s account, culture jammers are united by the shared experience of media and consumer culture, by a struggle for a “radically pluralistic society”, and by true freedom of expression. The centrality of the latter is interpreted in the light of cyberspace as an emerging space that turns the social and the subject into codes of information. Thus, fighting for the freedom of expression/information in cyberspace is similar to fighting for the freedom of the subject. The freedom of information is a central issue also for the MFA (Media Carta), but the MFA also advances other issues; its overall goal is “revolution.” The MFA also appears more explicit in portraying the culture jammers’ movement as a global anticorporate movement. In his book *Culture Jam*, Lasn exhorts the reader to see the current situation and to practice culture jamming as a lifestyle. Compared to Dery’s manifesto, there is much more emphasis on unity and *truth* in Lasn’s account of culture jamming. Accordingly, there is a tension inside the MFA narrative between the wish to realize freedom of information/expression on the one hand, and the conviction that there is something like objective truth (about the state of the world). The tension between individualism and collectivism is also apparent. Both Lasn and Dery incorporate individualism in their accounts of culture jamming. I suggest that the differences between Dery and Lasn reflect the difference between reform and revolutionary strategies.

Lasn has a past in the marketing industry and is involved in the renewal of the First Things First Manifesto, a document originally issued in 1964, for the purpose of mobilizing designers (primarily) to engage in information and education. The renewed document (2000) involves graphic designers, art directors, and visual communicators, and the undersigned bind themselves to promoting the “production of a new kind of meaning” (Wettergren 2003b:34). The renewed manifesto, though largely similar to the original, excludes a passage stating that the manifesto does not want to remove the “fun” from life. This indicates ambivalence inherent to culture jamming. As “cultural intermediaries” in possession of substantial cultural and symbolic capital, jammers occupy a paradoxical position when they protest consumer culture. I suggest that Lasn tries to suppress the idea of joyful postmodernity in order to connect fun and enjoyment to the purpose of protest; i.e. culture jamming is fun, not because it allows the subject to exercise his/her skills in a subversive way, but because it reunites him/her with his/her true and authentic nature. In Dery’s account, the ambivalent position is instead embraced and culture jamming is advanced because it is fun for its own sake. My point is that while
Lasn totally rejects playful postmodernity, Dery displays a more tolerant and openly ambivalent attitude. The paradoxical position of culture jamming may be seen further in their use of irony, which is a way to “release the pressure of ambivalent positions” (Ibid: 35). It may also be interpreted as a strategy to reveal contingency in hegemonic discourse; but as such it is an uncertain and not always effective strategy since irony presumes shared knowledge and experience between sender and receiver in order to be detected.

Drawing on Peretti’s account of his Nike Email, I continue to investigate the “meme-concept.” The concept, which is also embraced in the MFA strategy, can be traced back to Dawkin’s The Selfish Gene published in 1976. “Memes are ‘tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, [and] ways of making pots or building arches’… Memes spread ‘by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.’… Arguing that memes are analogous to genes, Dawkins separates human ideas from human agency. Memes are self-replicating entities living in the human brain, and human culture is the product of meme replication. (Wettergren 2003b and Dawkins cited in Wettergren 2003b: 37)

Peretti’s meme trajectory is an example of how jammers may access the media in various inventive ways. I suggest that the meme concept illuminates some basic inconsistencies in Lasn’s narrative that posits the human being as both creative and free, and as a passive receiver of memes. The meme concept further invites new mobilizing strategies and explains the central role accorded to designers and advertisers. The concept finally reflects the cultural collapse of the difference between information, advertisement, and propaganda in contemporary society.

Although culture jammers seem to avoid mass demonstrations, connections between culture jamming and street activism can be found in the manifestations of the Global Justice Movement. These connections are seen in interactions where jammers inspire new, inventive kinds of street protest, and where the MFA coordinates the effort to buy airtime for their commercials and ad-space for their spoof-ads before and during large protest events. The MFA website further displays activists’ testimonies and pictures from the events. The ambivalence inherent to the core issue of culture jamming may also be found among activist groups involved in the Global Justice Movement. Problems to be surmounted in the construction of the culture jammers’ movement are problems pertinent to the cultural and social context of contemporary social movements.
Culture jamming can be analyzed as an instance of political activism and a social movement, departing from the thematic structure of culture, place, and identity. I adopt this structure by focusing on the dissolving of boundaries between economy, politics, and culture; on the influence of cyberspace upon political action; and on culture jamming as a means to political collective identification in the highly individualized information society. Empirical material consists of three interviews with persons from three different groups – Institute for Applied Autonomy, Römark, and the Bureau of Inverse Technology – and a fourth interview with Jonah Peretti. I draw mainly on general sociological theory of postmodernity/late capitalism/information society – but in this text, I emphasize the social context of information society – and I draw sparsely from social movement theory.

I do not want to “nail” culture jamming to any specific definition. Instead I wish to emphasize the ambivalence of culture jamming as a form of protest. The first part presents the origin of culture jamming, both in terms of its main strategy, Situationist “détournement,” and in terms of the concept. I discuss the direct Swedish translation of the concept and play with the possible associations of the word. Mainly, there are two interpretations: 1) the meaning of jamming as in traffic jam – culture jamming jams the flow of information or the flow of consumer culture, and in this move reveals the ideological character of hegemonic discourse. Culture jamming is often associated with media as in pirate-broadcasting and computer-hacking, but I contend that to many jammers the most important medium is the street and face-to-face interaction; 2) jamming as in music, jazz. In this sense culture jamming may be understood as an improvisational and transcendent form of resistance that presumes considerable knowledge of and skills in established rule systems. Irony and humor is often an ingredient and outcome of this playful juxtaposition of perspectives. In this act, jammers deconstruct hegemonic discourses and create space for the input of alternative discourses that become intertwined with the dominant discourses. While the first aspect renders a primarily cognitive understanding of culture jamming, the second displays its emotional side – culture jamming as a source of pleasure and joy to practitioners.

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36 Since it was originally published in Swedish, the summary of this text will be somewhat more detailed. It appears as a chapter in Johannisson, J. and Egeland, H. (eds.) *Kultur, plats, identitet!* (Culture, place, identity!), Stockholm: Nya Doxa, 2003. It should be noted that the references to the original as presented in the appendix (Text III) may be found in the general reference list of the dissertation.
“Politics” according to the Swedish language dictionary of the Swedish Academy, refer to statecraft, principles or methods of realizing programs for societal life. To Bauman, politics is the regulation of peoples’ options. In my understanding, politics also refers to an action that reveals the contingency of the objectified discourse. According to Beck, politics must not be understood as a set of timeless institutions, but as a process continuously reinventing itself. Politics as a process is characterized by change. The socio-cultural changes of globalization contribute to a transfer of power over peoples’ opportunities through setting the “code of choice” that determines good and bad options, from conventional political institutions to multinational corporations, global mass media, and the advertising industry. To the interviewees, power is mainly located to these latter institutions.

The culture jamming groups attempt to reflect the power, yet lack of accountability of global corporations in “the bureaucratic front.” This concept, used by one of the interviewees, pertains to the public face of corporations, often imitated in the construction of culture jamming websites. The bureaucratic front adopts neutral and general language, and hides the actual individuals who make up the corporation, those responsible for its actions and decisions. The strategy of imitating this front may be interpreted as an effort to claim the power inherent to the Other’s practice, rendering symbolic power to the culture jamming strategy. In this ironic move, culture jammers also criticize the practice of the opponent, and draw attention to the effects of individualization. Individualization means that the individual alone shoulders responsibility for her destiny, while the human powers (among them corporate power) that structure her destiny remain anonymous and objectified. “The bureaucratic front” – using the corporations’ own means against them – points to the complex “critique by means of appropriation” or “being on the inside” employed by culture jammers. (It is not only a matter of imitation, but also a matter of know-how contingent upon cultural and symbolic capital.)

Culture and identity become increasingly important in all spheres of the information society, partly as a consequence of an expanding consumer culture. Following Lash, in the information society culture is submitted to the rational logic of economy and politics, while the symbolic practices of culture increasingly influence politics and economy. Different kinds of information – such as information, propaganda, or advertisement – are broken down to pieces of information that compete for successful communication to the prospected receivers. For a message to rise out of the meaningless background flow of signs and become meaningful information, its prospected receiver must be
caught and affected. The brand or logo represents the way that cultural and emotional symbols are appropriated to achieve this end. The brand symbolizes the code of good and bad options when the subject tries to orientate in information and consumer society. Power is thus located in the production of symbols and the control of communication.

According to Lash, it is symptomatic of the information society that there is no (longer) a point “outside” from which to deliver critique, since information society dissolves the distinction between the particular and the universal. We may observe that culture jamming delivers protests from an insider-position in which they master the scientific, technological and artistic discourses. They protest by sometimes assuming the shape of the Other, sometimes differing sharply from the Other. To culture jammers, such knowledge and skill are central ingredients and preconditions for protest. They accordingly also occupy a paradoxical insider-ship that may be considered by some as a double moral standard.

The merging of politics, economy and culture is seen also in an increased privatization of public space, and protest against the symbolic and concrete effects of this is one of the unifying features of culture jamming. They contest the ever-increasing presence of corporate control over physical spaces that used to be public, and the consequence of which is that previous democratic rights such as the right to demonstrate and express one’s opinion, become criminalized. The airwaves are also considered an inherently public space by the culture jammers, who maintain that it is a democratic right to use the airwaves to communicate alternative discourses.

The local space is further politicized in relation to the increasing presence of a mediated abstract global space. Global space becomes the backdrop against which the local becomes a site of struggle and protest. The BIT specifically experiments with ways to “ground” the global in the local, or reverse the relationship, by hacking into the global communication channels to transmit local information. It is the physical interaction with “the real stuff” that empowers people to use globalized information and understand its political dimension. This may be interpreted in the light of Bauman’s assessment of cyber-space as the space where power is now operating, while traditional politics is still bound to the physical and local space. Culture jammers, accordingly, try to reinsert power in physical space, while they mount political struggles in cyberspace, thus following the transfer of power.

Social movements adapt to given socio-cultural contexts, while also exerting repercussions on this context and producing (alternative) knowledge and
assessments of it, disseminated into wider society. The social movement scholar, accordingly, must be ready to try out new concepts and theoretical tools to capture and interpret social movements. Culture jamming is particularly challenging to the notion of collective identity. According to Lash, new social movements build on a “new sociality” presuming a high level of individualization. It is expressed in what he calls “disorganizations,” which are smaller than traditional organizations, and are value-oriented, horizontal, anti-systemic and action/production-oriented. They are reflexive and unstable and build upon the assumption that fundamental common value-systems are impossible.

I argue that culture jamming groups may be viewed in this light, of a new sociality and of disorganizations: they consist of two to five persons; reject the idea of large movement organizations partly on individualistic grounds and partly because they reject grand narratives; they are not interested in expansion; they are skill-based; and they build on continually negotiated values and friendship. The latter is emphasized by their exclusive character and in their use of fake names. On the other hand, culture jammers express sympathy and solidarity with other groups that are like-minded and are thereby inclusive and tolerant of difference. A further aspect is that culture jammers appear ambivalent in their assessment of themselves as “activists,” some arguing that the “real” activists engage in kinds of mobilization and protest that are important and fundamental, but neither glamorous, nor fun. Fun and humor as important ingredients in culture jamming accentuate friendship as constitutive of the groups. Culture jamming may be interpreted as an expression of subpolitics or life-politics, politicizing the private and privatizing the political. Disorganizations may be the organizing principle of life-politics. However, as life-politics, culture jamming is not simply action, but is integrated into daily action and private identity.

In conclusion, it can be said that culture jammers may be seen as inhabiting what Lash calls the “live” and “wild” zones of information society, the area of the intellectual of “the new media culture” (Wettenrgegen 2003: 188). This is plausible since culture jammers come from the “cultural intermediaries” and display a high level of symbolic and cultural capital. The “recruitment basis” for culture jammers may be the cultural intermediaries of information society, occupying the wild and live zones that in turn function as cultural and political experimental laboratories. There seem to be parallels between the way culture jamming can inspire new ways of doing protest in the context of the Global
Justice Movement, and the way that the Situationists contributed to the student movement.

IV. Mobilization and the moral shock

The Adbusters Media Foundation’s visuals can be fruitfully analyzed from the theoretical perspective of the sociology of emotions and emotions in social movements. The empirical material consists of a series of selected spoof-ads and uncommercials produced by the AMF, and of Lasn’s book, *Culture Jam*. The question addressed is: How can emotion theory enhance the understanding of AMF visuals as tools of mobilization? In the analysis and presentation, I draw also on general sociological theory, social movement theory, and Lacanian psycho-analysis developed into social theory by Zizek. The theoretical inspiration is illustrated in the three analytical concepts that are central to the analysis and the argument: the concept of “moral shock,” the concept of “sacred object,” and the concept of “symptom.”

The representative position taken by the AMF in the field of culture jamming is self-appointed, and the analysis undertaken pertains exclusively to AMF discourse, and not to culture jamming as a whole. When the AMF visuals are placed “in context,” they appear to be part of the strategy of détournement/subvertising, meant to reframe the interaction between human beings and “corporate machines.” The visuals occasionally appear in conventional ad-spaces. In relation to Lasn’s “movement discourse” as presented in his book, the visuals stand out as examples of awareness-raising techniques, expected to produce a “shock-wave of cognitive dissonance” in the mind of the viewer (Lasn cited in Wettergren 2005: 118).

The AMF visuals are important objects of analysis, because visuals in social movement studies rarely attract the attention they may deserve, and because in the case of the AMF, the visuals are the only globally visible sign of the organization’s existence. The visuals are also interesting from the perspective of social relationships, status, and power, because they seem to function as watersheds, dividing those who “get it” from those who don’t, thus, also, affecting emotions in the receiver. Finally, the visuals “free-ride” “the

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37 This text appears as a chapter in Flam, H. and King, D. (eds.) Emotions and Social Movements London: Routledge (2005) It should be noted that the book is till in the publishing process so the version displayed in Text IV is the final submitted version.

38 The original analysis contained more examples, but some had to be removed due to space problems in the final version. The selection of visuals was made in order to obtain variety in terms of composition and the emotions evoked. No attempt was made to find out which spoof-ads and uncommercials were produced at which point in time, and consequently the analysis does not claim to illuminate any change in AMF visuals over time (see further Text IV).
construction of pleasurable fantasies created by contemporary consumer culture” (Ibid: 119). They engage emotions in the same way ads do, but disrupt the fantasy and instead urge the viewer to question his/her consumer practices, causing a discrepancy that may give rise to emotions.

Two spoof-ads and three uncommercials are included in the analysis, and the presentation is structured according to their composition and emotional effect. The construction of pleasure through humor and irony is exemplified by the spoof-ad “The true colors of Benetton.” I argue that the spoof-ad is ironic in its juxtaposition of form and content, and produces a humorous effect that may be conducive to successful communication of the message. It also points to the irony of the ad-campaigns of the Benetton Company. Irony and humor may not always promote the reception of a message, however. Irony may subvert its own position, and both irony and humor are based on shared knowledge and experience, hence narrowing the range of potential receivers of the message. Besides pleasure as an outcome of the humorous effect, the image may also produce guilt as it implies an “other” who is being exploited by the subject's choice to play along with the (original) Benetton fantasy.

The construction of shame and guilt through the ironic mode is exemplified by the spoof-ad Smirkoff, and the uncommercial Obsession Fetish. Here, I argue that irony may deceive the viewer because it appears humorous, but these two visuals are neither funny nor pleasurable. Smirkoff displays a battered child and Obsession Fetish displays a woman suffering from bulimia/anorexia nervosa. Both position the viewer as jointly responsible, and render laughter at the ironic composition of the visuals impossible. The emotions produced, I suggest, are guilt, shame, and disgust.

The AMF visuals can also produce shame, guilt, disgust, and fear without employing the ironic mode. Examples are seen in the uncommercials Buy Nothing Day and The Product is You. In the former, the American consumer/the viewer is compared to a fat, insatiable, disgusting pig whose destructive gluttony turns the Earth into a crumbling yellow and dead planet. In the latter, the viewer is positioned as a victim: as the perfect, apathetic consumer, himself a product complete with a bar code branded in his neck.

Both these examples offer the viewer unpleasant and upsetting subject positions, resulting in a range of unpleasant emotions, whether the viewer accepts these subject positions or not. They also indicate that the AMF experiments with ways of overcoming the possibly dubious effect of humor and instead, directly accuses or shames the viewer.
The second part discusses the meaning of shock in mobilization, drawing on the visuals analyzed as well as upon Lasn’s book. In Lasn’s account, contemporary context is marked by cynicism as a result of the manipulation of human emotions by consumer culture. But cynicism, I argue, may be built in to the very construction of identity, as identity is emotionally anchored in the subject. This inertia of identity throws light upon the centrality of moral shock to social movement mobilization. Moral shock is comparable with an injustice frame, but is different because it may be independent of a social movement discourse. While the visuals represent efforts to effect moral shock in the viewers, they appear detached from the context of the movement discourse (as it is presented in Lasn’s book). Hence, this is not mobilization in the conventional sense of framing the shock in ways that will make people join the AMF. Instead, I suggest that the lack of cognitive framing underscores the unpleasant impression of the visuals and may lead to the rejection of the entire message, or to the reception of it. But in each case, emotions are likely to be upset, and the unreflecting relation between ad and consumer is likely to be disrupted. If we follow Lasn’s account, this may be the point where the viewer supposedly realizes the truth, connects to her real emotions, and becomes engaged.

In the final, I argue for a supplementary interpretation of the visuals as sacred objects of culture jamming, generating emotional energy and solidarity between jammers. With the same line of reasoning, they appear as symptoms – as the real manifestation of illusory identity and subjectivity, organizing the enjoyment of being a culture jammer. The visuals accordingly serve both the function of awareness raising and the function of collective identification. In the latter function, the visuals are a message also to the Other/the advertising industry that confirms its power, and, in this move, confirms the power and meaning of culture jamming as protest politics.
4. Of social movements – perspectives, contexts, concepts

This chapter will selectively explore parts of the vast literature of social movement studies with the purpose of presenting an overview that is useful for advancing my own theoretical interest. The study of social movements is a wide area of research, international in scope, engaging and uniting scholars from a range of disciplines; from political science and sociology to cultural studies and postcolonial theory. There is no single research paradigm, though attempts have been made to synthesize different theoretical perspectives (see for instance Buechler 2000; Cohen 1985; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; DellaPorta, et al. 1999; McAdam, et al. 2004a). It is a difficult task since the different perspectives do not always share the same ontological and epistemological point of departure. This does not hinder fruitful concepts from being borrowed and used across perspectives, even if some scholars protest this free application of concepts, arguing that such “conceptual plasticity” empties concepts of their analytical power (McAdam 2004 25). The following account is not an attempt to bridge perspectives, nor an attempt to set new agendas for research. Departing from my constructivist position in discourse theory presented in the previous chapter, I draw freely from existing research traditions in focusing upon some themes and developments central to my argument.

Social movements and collective action/behavior

In spite of some differences, most contemporary definitions of social movements agree on certain distinct features. Social movements are a specific form of collective action not to be confounded with other forms of collective action/behavior. On the one hand, they differ from occasional crazes, panics or fads, spontaneous protest outbursts, or aggregate individual behavior (Melucci 1996: 14, 23) in being organized in informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, in sustained challenge to authorities through frequent use of protest. On the other hand they differ from institutional collective action such as political parties, interest groups, or religious sects. They further mobilize support for their conflictual issues (see for instance DellaPorta and Diani 1999; Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Melucci 1996).

The effort to distinguish between social movements and other forms of collective behavior runs through the historical development in social movement

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39 In my view, it is the anarchistic cross-fertilization of ideas in the shape of concepts that spurs the most interesting research on social movements. A strictly paradigmatic approach would fail to follow the change and would possibly end up asserting that there are no social movements because today’s movements can hardly be captured by yesterday’s paradigm.
research, from the American collective behavior perspective that was developed in the post-war period and dominated American social movement research until the late 1960's (see for example Smelser 1962), over the birth and establishment of the Resource Mobilization Paradigm from the 1970's and on (see for instance McCarthy and Zald 1977), through the emergence of the European Identity or New Social Movements Paradigm in the 1980's (for instance Melucci 1980; Touraine 1981), to date.

The collective behavior perspective, as presented by Neil Smelser (Smelser 1962) focuses upon all kinds of collective behavior as basically the same kind of behavior emanating from “structural strain,” giving rise to shared “generalized beliefs,” on which basis mobilization occurs. Hence, collective behavior and social movements are the expressions of system dysfunction: “We assume that when generalized beliefs arise, some sort of strain is present. (…) Rumor and related beliefs arise when structural strain is not manageable within the existing framework of action.” (Smelser 1962:81) While social movements are an “organized” kind of collective behavior in contrast to “elementary” forms of collective behavior, they do occasionally, and under certain conditions, display the features of the latter “lower” forms, such as “panics,” “crazes,” and “hostile outbursts” (Ibid).

In contrast, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) leaves the general interest in collective behavior behind and emphasizes that social movements are neither exceptional nor simply reactive phenomena, but rational means to desired ends. Social movements are collective actors in the pursuit of collective and individual interests. Deprivation and grievance (resulting from structural strain), central to the analysis of the collective behavior perspective, are not the main causes of social movements. These are seen as “a component, indeed, sometimes a secondary component in the generation of social movements” (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1215). The “structural strain hypothesis” loses its main explanatory value since the proponents of the RMT perspective assume that:

… there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement if the movement is effectively organized and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established elite group… For some purposes we go even further: grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organizations. (emphasis added, McCarthy and Zald 1977:1215)

Thus, social movements are seen in the RMT perspective as part of normal, conventional politics rather than an abnormal eruption in response to system dysfunction. Social movement actors resort to unconventional methods only if
the normal political channels are blocked. Consequently, proponents of this perspective argue that social movements do not necessarily differ so much from ordinary conventional politics; they are an extension of the political institutions. Lobbying groups and interest organizations may be studied as empirical examples of social movements (DellaPorta and Diani 1999). Assuming that reasons for social movements to rise (conflictual interest and grievances) are always present in society, RMT researchers ask not why social movements rise, but why some grievances and interests are articulated by social movements and others are not. Here, focus shifts from structural strain (always present) to the “mobilization processes” (not always present) and their relative success or failure (McCarthy and Zald 1977).

Hence, the RMT research agenda focuses primarily upon the mobilization of resources such as money and labor. These resources are provided by “constituents” to the social movement organization. As indicated in the quotation above, the role of “movement entrepreneurs” are central in the mobilization process. While the latter is not defined in the early programmatic statement of Zald and McCarthy (1977), the movement entrepreneurs appear to be individuals belonging to the “cadre” of a movement organization – i.e. “the individuals who are involved in the decision-making processes” (Ibid: 1227) – responsible for the instrumental and strategic selection of goals and means.40

Introducing a distinction between the social movement on the one hand and its organizational form on the other, a social movement is defined in this early text as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society” (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1218) while the social movement organization (SMO) is “a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement” (Ibid:1218). It follows that the issue of a social movement may be advanced by a number of different SMOs, giving rise to the term “social movement industry” (SMI) as “all SMOs that have as their goal the attainment of the broadest preferences of a social movement” (Ibid:1219). The social movement industry is to be understood as the “organizational analogue of a social movement” (Ibid).

40 Such individuals may devote full time to the organization, and they may receive compensation for doing so, in which case they are termed a “professional cadre.” The “professional staff” is made up of individuals who devote themselves full time but are not part of the decision-making process, while “workers” are those who are intermittently involved, but not part of decision-making. “Constituents” are individuals who give time or money to the organization, see p 1227 in McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. 1977 ‘Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory’, American Journal of Sociology(6).
As apparent from the above, the move from Collective Behavior to Resource Mobilization Theory meant a move from studying the “spontaneous” and loosely organized aspects of collective action pertaining to social movements to the highly organized and professional aspects. It is also a move from a social-psychological model of social movements to an economist rational choice model (DellaPorta and Diani 1999; Eyerman and Jamison 1991; Jasper 1998; Thörn 1997a). Later developments of the RMT perspective have reintroduced some of the social-psychological “cultural” aspects (for instance Snow and Benford 1988) and also enlarged the scope of this research paradigm to encompass political environments (Kitschelt 1986). We will return to this below.

The identity paradigm developed in Europe from the 1980’s and on takes a different approach to collective action/social movements. The label “identity paradigm” refers to the emphasis of this perspective upon the construction of collective identity as basis for collective action. We will return to the concept of collective identity in a separate section below. In Europe, the influence of the labor movement on political life and the rise to power of social democratic parties in the post-war period has led to an emphasis upon social movements as carriers of historical projects and social change (DellaPorta and Diani 1999; Eyerman and Jamison 1991; Melucci 1980; Thörn 1997a; Touraine 1981). On the one hand, the institutionalization of the labor movement in the social democratic parties allows for the perception of social movements as highly organized and professional collective action phenomena. On the other hand, the theoretical departure in social constructivism allows for an emphasis upon the cultural processes of constructing a collective identity as basis for action. Moreover, from this perspective, it was argued early on that the boundaries between culture and politics, private and public, were dissolved in face of contemporary, complex society and that this must be taken into account when analyzing the symbolic protest of new social movements (Melucci 1980).

Melucci defines social movements as “a form of collective action (a) based on solidarity, (b) carrying on a conflict, (c) breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs” (Melucci 1985 :795). Hence, in Melucci’s account, the distinctive feature of collective action pertaining to social movements is not only that it is based upon solidarity and carries a conflict, but that it aims at social change in the sense that it “transgress[es] the norms that have been institutionalized in social roles, … go[es] beyond the rules of the political system and/or…attack[s] the structure of a society’s class relations” (emphasis removed, Melucci 1980: 202).
Social change, symbolic protest, political opportunity structures

Touraine is usually referred to as among the first to break with the Marxist perspective in European theorizing about social movements (DellaPorta and Diani 1999: 11-12; Thörn 1997a:101-4).41 Calling himself a post-Marxist, he is still close to the Marxist tradition in claiming that each society is characterized by a cleavage between two major opposed classes. The dawning of the post-industrial society – as distinct from the previous industrial society – meant that the labor-capital class conflict had played out its role and new opponents would rise to articulate the conflict of the post-industrial era (Touraine 1981). Thus, linking the idea of “new” social movements to the emergence of a “new” society, Touraine’s theories have become influential for the general thinking of sociologists about the contemporary as qualitatively different from the previous industrial society.

Habermas has also had considerable influence upon social movement theory within the identity paradigm, either in the consideration of social movements as collective learning processes, and carriers of modernity, and historic social evolution (Eyerman and Jamison 1991; see also Fraser 2003; Eder in Thörn 1997a), or through his theory about the colonization of the life world by the system. The former is the basis of the cognitive perspective that I will introduce later on, while the latter has been influential in Melucci’s theory of social movements.

Following Touraine, Melucci also emphasizes the new structural conditions of social movements in contemporary society. But rather than speaking about post-industrial society, Melucci uses the label “complex society.” In line with many contemporary sociologists who theorize the transformation of the political field under the pressure of contemporary economic globalization as a transfer of power from traditional political national institutions to global economic institutions and corporations, and the appropriation of the cultural sphere by economic interests and so on, Melucci argues that collective action is shifting ground from the political to the cultural, yet remains politically relevant. In contemporary “planetary society,” he argues, society is unified through information and language and is, therefore, before anything else, culturally and symbolically perceived. Accordingly, power today operates to a great extent through language, and the symbolic challenge of movements, tacit or open, is thus their most important contribution to social change. In complex society, we cannot expect a single movement to rise, but rather a multiplicity of

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41 See Thörn (1997:101-104) and Eyerman and Jamison (1991:26-7) for more detailed accounts of Touraine’s works and thoughts.
movements, whose *main* agenda is not to gain political power or redistribute resources, but to defend personal autonomy, direct attention to the risks and dangers of contemporary Western living, and to unmask neutralized or anonymous power relations (Melucci 1985; Melucci 1995; Melucci 1996).

In systems where the power becomes increasingly anonymous and neutral, where it is incorporated in formal procedures, to make it visible is a fundamental *political* achievement: the only condition for negotiating the rules and for making social decisions more transparent. (Melucci 1985:814)

While “political opportunities” may contribute to facilitating the mobilization and collective manifestation of movements, movements also lead a life in “latency” where their activities are less manifest though no less important. In periods of latency, social movements work with cultural innovation and creation of new codes and symbols which can be practiced on an everyday life basis by supporters. The criterion of social change in Melucci’s definition is therefore not necessarily equal to “political” change or a change of institutions. Through their very existence, movements create autonomous spaces, challenging the hegemony of the system. “[M]ovements question society on something ‘else’: who decides on codes, who establishes the rules of normality, what is the space for difference…” (ibid: 810)  

The Swedish sociologist, Håkan Thörn (Thörn 1997a; Thörn 1997b), offers a distinct contribution to the identity paradigm in analyzing the discursive construction of social movements through central movement *texts* (see below). Inspired by primarily Laclau and Mouffe, Habermas, Touraine, and Melucci, Thörn links the concept of social movement close to a theory of modernity as characterized by the inherent production of antagonisms and ambivalences and continuous social change: social movements are the faithful companions of modernity articulating its antagonisms. He differs, however, from the approaches of the identity paradigm in which the contemporary is assumed to constitute a break with the modern industrial society. The contemporary society is neither post-industrial nor post-modern: its complexity is a built-in characteristic of modernity; it is full-blown modernity. Through the discursive practices of social movements, the antagonisms of modernity become conflicts, the resolution of which affect the shape and direction of the continuous process of social change (see also Melucci 1980).

In Thörn’s account, social movements “should be understood as a specifically modern type of interaction process constituted by a series of collective

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42 Nevertheless, in the mid-1980’s the latency of the symbolic challenge was a problem for Melucci and he ends his article with a discussion of how messages can be made *effective* and translated into *political change*. He wants a political space in between state and civil society, where social movements can be heard and have influence while still maintaining their autonomy.
action)” (my translation, Thörn 1997a :123). Implied here is that: 1) “a social movement must be seen in relation to the process of modernization …a social movement is always formed in one or more…antagonistic and conflict-oriented relations,” 2) the social movement creates a collective identity in an ambivalent and multidimensional context of communication, thus creating movement discourses expressed in manifests, 3) the social movement includes goal-oriented strategic action ultimately aiming at social change – the utopian dimension of social movements (this dimension is what makes a movement “social”), and 4) a social movement (an analytical construction) is related to a movement culture (the empirical analogue to a social movement) – a relatively autonomous context of interaction between networks, organizations and institutions, producing collective action.

In the Resource Mobilization tradition, there is a weaker emphasis upon the connection between social movements and social change, presumably due to a lower integration with general (abstract) sociological theory and a stronger emphasis upon the conventional political component in social movement activities. The success or failure of a movement is primarily assessed in relation to its impact on political policy-making, political decision-making procedures, and the structure of political institutions themselves (see for example Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1994). Thereby, social movements are also seen as deeply connected to the rise of the nation state as an entity that both provides a target and a medium for “contentious collective action,” and provides the means for movements to form and spread their messages through improved infrastructure and public social spaces (Tarrow 1994). However, pari passu the re-orientation toward culture, that will be discussed later on, also sensitizes RMT scholars to the fact that social change may also be achieved through cultural change.

43 Since its early days, the RMT perspective has given rise to, by and large, an (in ambition) all-encompassing approach to social movement studies that is sometimes labeled the “political process perspective.” The political process perspective bases the study of social movements upon three pillars: 1) Political opportunities, 2) Mobilizing structures, and 3) Cultural framings. This is a development of the RMT that has also involved European researchers and an attempt to merge American and European traditions. While some accounts of social movement theory mention the political process perspective as a discrete research perspective, most of the American scholars may be referred to both the RMT and the political process perspective. For this reason, I have chosen to treat it as continuous with and included in the label of Resource Mobilization Theory. See Della Porta, D. and Tarrow, S. G. 2005 Transnational protest and global activism: Rowman & Littlefield. DellaPorta, D., Kriesi, H. and Rucht, D. (eds) 1999 Social Movements in a Globalizing World, London: MacMillan. McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (eds) 2004a Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DellaPorta, D. and Diani, M. 1999 Social Movements - an Introduction, Oxford: Blackwell.
The concept of “political opportunity structure” is particularly useful for making cross-country and cross-national comparisons, explaining the difference in movement strategies, development, and success by the structure of given political systems (Kitschelt 1986; McAdam, et al. 2004b). As a concept, “political opportunity structure” has been perceived as immensely fruitful by social movement scholars, resulting in the extension of its use to a number of factors in social movement environment. Attempting to reinstall a more restrictive use of the concept as an analytical tool for the political context of a movement, McAdam (McAdam 2004:27) offers a definition of the dimensions of political opportunity structure (POS) as:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically under-gird a polity
3. The presence or absence of elite allies
4. The state’s capacity and propensity for repression

It is assumed that the POS varies in all these dimensions and at different times, and that social movement activity varies accordingly. If the institutionalized political system is open, elite alignments are unstable, elite allies available, and the state’s use of repressive mechanisms minimal, the political preconditions for a movement to rise ought to be ideal. Indeed, if a social movement arises then, no further investigation to the “why” of social movements is needed.

…people join in social movements in response to political opportunities and then, through collective action, create new ones. As a result, the “when” of social movement mobilization – when political opportunities are opening up – goes a long way towards explaining its ”why.” (Tarrow 1994:17)

When opportunity structures open up, Tarrow suggests that we see the beginning of a movement cycle. In spite of the explanatory potential accorded to the POS, Tarrow recognizes that social movements may lay dormant in between movement cycles, which also explains how movements can seemingly rise from one day to another. Even if the movement advances “new” issues, it is likely to benefit from already existing networks and “mobilizing structures” (see below). Further, it is rarely only one movement that dominates the cycle; rather there are movements and counter-movements and the opportunity for one movement to influence the political agenda functions as a cue for the formation of other movements as well. This sudden burst of collective action will trigger various responses from the state. Eventually, order will be reinstated and the opportunity structure will close again, ending the movement cycle.

The importance of political opportunity structures relates to social change in several ways. In my view, Tarrow’s argument that opening political opportunity
structures give rise to social movements means that movements depend on social change, because in times of social change, the POS tends to open up, manifesting itself as weakening power structures, conflicts, and fractions between elites (Tarrow 1994:153-169). On the other hand, social movement activities also create political opportunities and social change, through their impact upon “political cultures” (Tarrow 1994:118-134, 170-186). By this term, Tarrow refers to a broad and long-term cultural impact that may be affected by a social movement, even when short-term impacts upon political institutions and processes seem to be limited.

[It is hard to avoid the impression – even if it is difficult to demonstrate – that the most far-reaching impacts of movement cycles of protest are found in slow and incremental changes in political culture. We can see these changes in three ways: in the impact of movements on collective action frames, on repertoires and on political agendas. (Tarrow 1994:184)

This indicates how hard it is, in fact, to distinguish “the political” from “the cultural,” even for the RMT paradigm that insists upon such a distinction.

Collective identity, solidarity, cultural framing and mobilizing structures

The reader may have noted the frequent mentioning of “solidarity” as a distinctive feature of the collective action pertaining to social movements. While this phenomenon is not originally given much attention in the RMT perspective – McCarth and Zald write about “preference structures” and “interest aggregation” (McCarth and Zald 1977) – it has been growing in importance because of the free-rider problem that follows the use of an economic cost-benefit model as framework for the analysis of collective action. “[S]ince social movements deliver collective goods, few individuals will ‘on their own’ bear the costs of working to obtain them” (McCarth and Zald 1977:1216). One suggestion is that solidarity and moral engagement can be mobilized as non-material or symbolic resources (DellaPorta and Diani 1999: 8; Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 23-26; Jasper 1998). This is a logic extension of the RMT assumption that SMOs mobilize adherents primarily from pre-existing organized and well-integrated groups within the “segments of a population which share preferences” (McCarth and Zald 1977:1218). These groups are also friendship and solidarity networks. However, as argued by Cohen (1985), this solution only displaces the problem – solidarity is already there, but how can it be explained in the first place? “[A]n analytical perspective that focuses on strategic-instrumental action cannot provide an answer to the question of the origin and logic of group solidarity.” (Cohen 1985:677)
This problem, and the gradual integration of European and American research traditions, has led to a re-orientation toward micro-sociological processes of social interaction and the cultural orientation of social movements as a complementary theoretical framework together with resource mobilization (mobilizing structures) and political opportunity structures (see also Johnston and Klandermans 1995b; McAdam, et al. 2004a). “Cultural framing” stresses the construction and negotiation of non-material resources, of shared beliefs, alternative ideological worldviews, interpretations, and lifestyles and so on as equally crucial components in social movement activities.

The concepts of frames and framing derive from Goffman (Goffman 1986) and were developed by Snow and his colleagues into analytical tools for social movement research. A frame in this context is defined as:

…interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment. (Snow and Benford cited in Tarrow 1994:122)

Among the basic categories of framing activity in social movements are “diagnostic framing” – “identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality” (Snow and Benford 1988: 200); “prognostic framing” – suggesting solutions to the problem and identifying strategies, tactics, and targets (Ibid:201); and “motivational framing” – “the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis” (Ibid: 202). “Frame alignment” is another useful concept that refers to “the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values, and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary” (Snow et al. cited in Snow and Benford 1988: 198). Snow et. al. convincingly show how framing processes play into one another as well as interact with mobilizing structures and political opportunities, affecting the success or failure of a movement. 44

The framing activities of social movements according to Tarrow (1994: 118-150) are a necessary component in translating “material interests” into action, and such activity builds on the construction of meaning. Against a

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44 There is a range of other sub- and related concepts to those mentioned above that is developed by Snow and others, and it is frequently (and freely) applied in social movement studies. Suffice it to say that these concepts have become part of standard analytical language when researchers identify how social movement actors re-narrate and re-interpret historical and contemporary events crucial to the particular movement, constructing a movement identity, movement opponents, necessary action, allocating responsibilities, mobilizing bystanders and external support and so forth. In addition to the cognitive assessment of the world that is implied in the concept of framing, emotion sociological contributions to social movement studies stress its inescapable emotional components, especially when one talks about processes such as “motivational framing” (Goodwin et al 2001; Jasper 1998; Flam 2005).
The injustice component refers to the moral indignation, expressed in this form of political consciousness. This is not merely a cognitive or intellectual judgment about what is equitable but also what cognitive psychologists call a hot cognition – one that is laden with emotion… The agency component refers to the consciousness that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through collective action… The identity component refers to the process of defining this “we,” typically in opposition to some “they” who have different interests or values. (Gamson 1992:7)

The return of identity, values, grievances, “cultural contradictions” (Zald 2004:268-9) – even of emotions, as indicated in Gamson’s definition of the injustice frame above – as the basis for collective action, through the reorientation toward the cultural field, is still different from the way that these phenomena were treated by collective behavior theorists, because they are integrated into the general RMT framework of strategic and cognitive collective action (Zald 2004). Hence, frames are strategically constructed to achieve the purposes and interests of the mobilizing actors. In these processes of constructing movement cultures (Johnston and Klandermans 1995a) and collective action frames, solidarity is not only a pre-existing resource, but also is constructed along with the “political consciousness” (Gamson 1992:110).

While both political opportunity structures and cultural framing have to do with mobilization, the RMT has reserved its original interest in the conceptual cluster of mobilizing structures.45 “Mobilizing structures” pertains to the “collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam, et al. 2004b: 3). In McCarthy’s (2004) more specific definition (below), mobilizing structures include also

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45 The concept seemed to me quite straightforward at first, designating organizations, groups, networks, and so forth, through which mobilization occurs. However, the more I read about the concept the more blurred it became, sometimes referring to organizational forms as in McAdam et. al.(2004b), sometimes used as distinct from SMOs and the organization of social movements, see pp 135-136 in Tarrow, S. 1994 Power in Movement - Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
“repertoires,” a concept used to designate the available historically accumulated stock of movement forms and action.

The argument is that in the dawn of industrial society, collective action and protest began to take a modular shape, i.e. the types and forms of action could be applied to a wide range of issues and were not tied to any particular kind of protest (Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1988). As noted by Tarrow, the concept of repertoire is both a structural and a cultural concept, as the knowledge and memory of available forms and actions reside partly in the cultural sphere of society.

By mobilizing structures I mean those agreed upon ways of engaging in collective action which include particular ‘tactical repertoires,’ particular ‘social movement organizational’ forms, and ‘modular social movement repertoires.’ (McCarthy 2004: 141)

The repertoires available depend on the kind of conflict, POS, contested issues, framing, and so forth. Further, social movements not only draw upon, but may also contribute to and change the available social movement repertoires by inventing new forms of organization and types of action, or by adjusting old ones. Hence, there is also a component of social change in the adaptation of mobilizing structures.

It is important to note, in this context, that the RMT scholars have moved away from “formal” organizations and increasingly study less formal types of organizations, such as groups and networks. Though an interest organization, for instance, may still function as a social movement organization, it is argued that the kinds of organizations depend on the kind of social movement (McAdam, et al. 2004b: 4, 11). This is consistent with the argument advanced by many scholars studying “the new” social movements (environmental, feminist, peace, and so on), who contend that the organizational aspects of these movements mirror their critique of established institutions (see for instance Bouclier 2000; Eyerman and Jamison 1991; Melucci 1980; Thörn 1997b). Thereby, the social movements in the contemporary can be said to be present-oriented rather than goal-oriented, i.e. the movement is the message.

The medium, the movement itself as a new medium, is the message. As Prophets without enchantment, contemporary movements practice in the present the change they are struggling for: they redefine the meaning of social action for the whole society. (Melucci 1985: 801)

The cultural reorientation of RMT is influenced by the emphasis upon culture in the identity paradigm, and its focus upon the construction of collective identity. Collective identity in this perspective is the sine qua non of the collective action pertaining to social movements.
I call collective identity the process of ‘constructing’ an action system… Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place. By ‘interactive and shared’ I mean that these elements are constructed and negotiated through a recurrent process of activation of the relations that bind actors together. (Melucci 1996:70)

Collective identity as process involves three dimensions: 1) “cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means, and field of action,” but not necessarily unified and coherent frameworks; 2) “a network of active relationships” constituted by “forms of organization and models of leadership, communicative channels, and technologies of communication”; and 3) “a certain degree of emotional investment, which enables individuals to feel like part of a common unity” (Melucci 1995: 44-5; Melucci 1996: 70-1).

Repeatedly stating that social movements are analytical constructs and not empirical givens, Melucci argues that the researcher should probe into the construction of identity, the ambiguity, diversity, process, and conflict underlying the apparent unity of a social movement (Melucci 1980; Melucci 1985; Melucci 1996). While he seems to align his own theory with the RMT perspective of the conscious and strategic component in the construction of collective identity (for instance Melucci 1985), Melucci also emphasizes this inherent lack of unity and coherence; collective identification (as we may call it to stress that we speak of ongoing process) is ambiguous and contradictory and involves continuous negotiation. In his later texts (Melucci 1995; Melucci 1996), when he speaks about the emotional investment of social movement actors in a collective identity, he further opens up a new complex dimension suggesting that collective identification is not a “purely” conscious/cognitive undertaking.46 Anticipating the routine objections to this suggestion he continues, “To understand this part of collective action as ‘irrational,’ as opposed to the ‘rational’…part, is simply nonsense. There is no cognition without feeling and no meaning without emotion.” (emphasis added, Melucci, 1995:45)

Movement intellectuals, collective learning processes and discourses

A contribution drawing upon influences from both RMT and the identity paradigm is the “cognitive approach” in which Eyerman and Jamison (1991)

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46 Melucci is by no means the first to reintroduce emotions as an important uniting factor in collective identity. For instance Flam, H. 1994 States and anti-nuclear movements: Edinburgh Univ. Press. argues, in her analysis of European anti-nuclear movements, that ties of faith and solidarity upheld during a period of latency were the base for a new wave of protests in the aftermath of the Chernobyl incident.
knit together the aspects of movements as prophets (Melucci 1996), as collective learning processes, as carriers of historical projects – specifically the modern democratic project (see for instance Habermas in Cohen 1985:705-16) – and social change, into a focus on social movements as knowledge producers. Thus, social movements in this approach not only produce meaning and values but also expand cognitive perceptions of the world and inspire new technological and scientific knowledge. Drawing on Habermas’ theory of communication (Habermas 1998), Eyerman and Jamison claim that movements articulate “latent knowledge interests.” They argue that “much if not all knowledge emanates from the cognitive praxis of social movements” (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 59).

A social movement is defined as a:

...cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by a dynamic interaction between different groups and organizations. It is through tensions between different organizations over defining and acting in that conceptual space that the (temporary) identity of a social movement is formed. (Eyerman and Jamison 1991:55)

The movement exists as long as this conceptual space is open and dynamic. When this process has ended, the knowledge product(s) become institutionalized; individual actors disseminate into wider society practicing their knowledge as established intellectuals or as representatives of new kinds of professions; and the movement organizations become institutions or dissolve.

Studying movements as collective learning processes, Eyerman and Jamison accord considerable importance to the “movement intellectuals.” The movement intellectual may appear remotely connected to the “movement entrepreneur” that we have met above, but the choice of “intellectual” rather than “entrepreneur” stresses the intellectual/cognitive rather than the entrepreneurial/organizational capacities of the persons concerned.

[We] use the term movement intellectual to refer to those individuals who through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of social movements. They are movement intellectuals because they create their individual role at the same time as they create the movement, as new individual identities and a new collective identity take form in the same interactive process. (Eyerman and Jamison 1991:98)

The role of movement intellectuals is to articulate the concerns of the emerging social movement, place these concerns into broader frameworks, and explain the meaning of protest. Eyerman and Jamison point out that there is no clear line between established or professional intellectuals and the “organic intellectuals” of movements. A movement may be initiated by established
intellectuals. However, movements increasingly depend on professional and specialized intellectuals, while the broad ideology-making “classical amateur” – the partisan – is less common today than in the 19th Century. Movement intellectuals are also involved in the process of shaping and “carving out spaces for new intellectual ‘types’ or roles to develop,” so “social movements help reform intellectual life itself” (Ibid: 100 - 101).

Movement intellectuals are also central to Thörn, as the authors of the manifests he analyzes. Thörn, however, emphasizes that it is the collective recognition of movement actors that constitutes the author as a movement intellectual. This said, Thörn shows how the collective identity is discursively constructed by movement intellectuals (Thörn 1997a; Thörn 1997b). In so doing, he also follows McLuﬃ’s call for deconstruction of the apparent unity and points to the contradictions, tensions, and conﬂicts inherent in these central movement texts. Nodal points in the collective identity construction – the construction of “we” – are the identiﬁcation of social conﬂicts and their causes, the main opponents (Other) of the movement, the identiﬁcation of action strategies, and a utopia.

**Social movements and globalization**

Most social movement research, until recently, has presumed the existence of the nation state as the territorial (and indeed also political) boundaries of social movement activities. The RMT perspective, in particular, tends to emphasize the centrality of the nation state in its perception of political opportunities and constraints. In spite of the cultural re-orientation, it is still largely assumed that the main targets of social movements are the traditional political institutions of the nation state, and the RMT concepts have also been carefully “tested” and developed in empirical studies of “national” movements. This may prevent RMT from assessing political activities directed against other targets, such as global corporations or economic institutions, let alone political activities that ignore the boundaries of the nation state. Attempts to analyze social movements in a “global” context tend to collapse into comparative studies of

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47 A recent example is the formation of “the international movement Attac”, that was initially spurred by an article written by Ignacio Ramonet published in Le Monde Diplomatique in December 1997.

48 Indeed, the way the mass media works, movement intellectuals may even be created by the media in search for “a new movement.” As noted by Eyerman and Jamison the media demand representatives that can easily explain the ideology of the movement and, in the process, reduce its complexity to single organizations and movement communicators. An interesting case in point is Canadian journalist, Naomi Klein, who, upon publishing the book *No Logo* in 1999, was selected against her will by the world media as the central intellectual of the Global Justice Movement. See also Gitlin, T. 1980 *The Whole World Is Watching*, Los Angeles: University of California.
transnational movements that, in spite of their international connections, still operate mainly in a national context and with national policy-makers as main targets (see for instance DellaPorta, et al. 1999).

Meanwhile, movement intellectuals, activists, groups, networks, organizations, and even institutions have long since opened up a dynamic global social space of interaction, learning and identification around issues such as global civil society, global politics, human rights and the rights of indigenous people, the increasing polarization between North and South, migration, exploitation of mental and physical environments and intellectual properties, fighting and controlling global corporate power, Tobin taxes, and so on (for accounts and examples, see Beck 2000; Cohen and Rai 2000; Eriksson, et al. 1999; Giddens and Hutton 2000; Hardt and Negri 2002; Klein 1999b; Shiva 2000; Thörn 2002; Williams and Ford 1999). This space of interaction, and its collective identifications and solidarity ties, although it can also be said to be a “movement of movements,” usually goes under the name “the Global Justice Movement.” In their effort to look for empirical evidence that such a global movement (or movements) in fact exists, RMT scholars tend to disregard the fundamental point stated by, for instance, Melucci, that social movements are indeed constructions, not empirical givens.

From a constructivist perspective, the discursive formation or cultural framing of a social movement is no less “real” than its mobilizing structures and political opportunities. Hence, while all these aspects are important to study, a movement that is vividly in the process of construction, that movement actors say exist, and within which framework they claim to act and interact, cannot be discarded by reducing it to its necessarily locally and nationally grounded discrete individuals, groups, and organizations. Neither can it be discarded because these local groups and organizations display multiple affiliations and also function as movement organizations in other contexts and issues (see for instance Tarrow and McAdam 2005: 146). On the contrary, from the perspective of the identity paradigm, Castells argues that:

49 A newly published collected volume Transnational Protest and Global Activism edited by Della Porta, D. and Tarrow, S. G. 2005 Transnational protest and global activism: Rowman & Littlefield. tries (again) to grapple with among others the Global Justice Movement from the perspective of the RMT tradition. In their contribution, McAdam and Tarrow investigate how the concept of scale shift may be applied to the expansion and diffusion of a social movement at both the national and international level. Including the Zapatista movement in their analysis, they note that the Zapatistas managed to mobilize “a remarkable international solidarity movement.” (p.146) They conclude, however, that this was not really a global movement but the result of “transposition” of “domestic movements.” “Transnational transposition involves not transformation, but partial commitments, verbal compromises, and organizational drift from one issue to another, as priorities and agenda change. Although what results is far less than a “global” movement, the major strength of the current campaign against neo-liberal globalization is that it retains considerable local, regional, and national roots.” (Ibid:146)
…social movements must be understood in their own terms: namely, *they are what they say they are*. Their practices (and foremost their discursive practices) are their self-definition… [A necessary] research operation is to establish the relationship between the movements, as defined by their practice, their values, and their discourse, and the social processes to which they seem to be associated: for example, globalization, informationization, the crisis of the representative democracy, and the dominance of symbolic politics in the space of media. (Castells 1997: 69-70)

The theoretical orientation and the epistemological and ontological foundations of the identity paradigm, seem to lend themselves better to the analysis of global social movements and movements in the context of globalization; but even here, problems may arise.

Building primarily on Touraine, Castells (Castells 1997; Castells 1998) argues that society is presently undergoing radical change along three main lines: 1) globalization, 2) networking and flexibility, and 3) the crisis of the patriarchal family (Castells 1997:65-6). Social movements occupy a central place in his theory, as “subjects” of historical project identities that express and shape the conflicts between the main trends of the information age: globalization and identity. “I advance my definition of social movements as being: purposive collective actions whose outcomes, in victory as in defeat, transform the values and institutions of society.” (Castells 1997:3)

Delivering a rather pessimistic account of the structural context for the formation of social movements in the “information age,” Castells holds that civil society – traditionally a birthplace for social movements – is disintegrating in the process of globalization, and therefore, that we should rather expect new project identities to emerge out of resistance identities. “[W]hile in modernity…project identity was constituted from civil society…in the network society, project identity, if it develops at all, grows from communal resistance.” (Castells 1997:11) Resistance identities according to Castells are primarily *reactions against* the specific processes of social change, and they are often based on easily defined boundaries such as tradition, religion, nations, and biology.

Consequently, it may be argued that Castells, too, misses the current ongoing aims and efforts of the Global Justice Movement.\(^5\) In assuming that civil

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\(^5\) This may be an unfair assessment of Castells for two reasons. First, Castells’ volume on social movements in the information age was published two years before the protests against the WTO summit in Seattle 1999, an event that is often singled out as the “starting point” of the Global Justice Movement, see *Smith, J.* 2001 “Globalizing resistance: the battle of Seattle and the future of social movements.” *Mobilization* 6(1): 1-19. Second, in his later work, Castells moves on to look at Internet communities and cyberpolitics, which indicates that he, in fact, reasons along the lines that I discuss in chapter five. See *Castells, M.* 2001 *The internet galaxy : reflections on the Internet, business, and society: Oxford University Press.*
society cannot be reconstructed on a global level, he also seems to link “proactive” movements to the era of nation states.

One reaches a different conclusion if it is assumed that social movements, in “going global,” actually construct a global civil society and global politics. For instance, in his recent work, Thörn has moved on to look at the way movements are shaped by, and help shape social change in the process of globalization. Social movements are seen as central to the “globalization of politics.” Based on his study of the transnational Anti-apartheid movement, Thörn attempts to understand the emergence of the Global Justice Movement, its networks and infrastructure, and the construction of collective identity “at a distance,” expressed as solidarity and globally coordinated local action (see also Klein 1999a; Thörn 1999; Thörn 2002; Thörn forthcoming).

Thörn’s perspective is much more genuinely constructivist (and constructive) in assuming that social movements not only react to the structural environment of globalization, but make and remake the structural contexts, while making the movement. We have seen above that practically all contemporary scholars of social movements admit that social movements contribute to social change not only by having an impact upon political institutions and processes, but also through the sheer fact that they work on and interact with their environment. It is remarkable, that this insight seems to vanish when faced with the task of analyzing global social movements. If there is no global political/cultural arena for these movements to act upon, it is because it is in the making by these movements (and by their various opponents and co-actors). Further, a serious consideration of the implications of “virtual reality” raises the question if this arena does not, in fact, exist already.

Concluding reflections

A social movement has been presented in this chapter, through various definitions and theoretical approaches, as a specific form of collective action that builds upon solidarity and collective identity, and articulates conflictual issues through sustained interaction and protest manifestations. A social movement acts upon the specific context in which it occurs, and is therefore closely connected to social change in one way or the other. It may contribute to change in producing new knowledge, new action repertoires or mobilizing structures, new norms and values, and so on, but it is also an outcome of social change in articulating structural conflicts and competing interests, as well as seizing the opportunity to create alliances when political opportunity structures open up. The concrete or empirical dimensions of social movements can be
pointed out as the organizations, networks, groups, individuals, movement intellectuals, and texts (I would say all kinds of “text”) that all constitute a movement culture. A social movement is as much a “cultural” as a “political” phenomenon. In fact, we have seen that it may be argued that contemporary social movements increasingly articulate a cultural struggle through symbolic protest, mirroring the way that society has developed in the context of late capitalism and information society. Finally, I have argued that when it comes to shifting focus from the national to the global level, many such attempts fall short by overlooking the processes of construction, identification, and interaction currently ongoing. This failure may be an outcome of rigid concepts, or lack of appropriate sensitizing concepts.

Without being comprehensive, I suggest that analyzable features of global movements/the Global Justice Movement are the annual events of both local and international Social Forums; the recurring protest events at WTO, IMF, and EU summits and the like; the NGOs (though these organization occupy an ambivalent position in the Global Justice Movement); but above all, the best way to grasp the fluid and evasive phenomenon of such movements is to approach their discursive and intentional existence. In so doing, it is also necessary to pay attention to the explicit rejection of a unifying ideology and large formal organizations inherent to some contemporary movement actors. Another important key to global movements may be precisely the feelings of togetherness and solidarity that they generate among activists around the globe. This is made possible through the emergence of “virtual reality” in the information society. It is to these matters that my argument now turns.
5. Movements in the information society

In this chapter, I deal with an aspect of social movements that was willfully suppressed in the previous chapter, namely, the media. While the role and importance of the mass media for social movements have been analyzed from various perspectives (for instance Camauër 2000; Carroll and Ratner 1999; Gamson 1992; Gamson 1995; Gitlin 1980; Kolb 2005; Mathiesen 1985; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Zoonen 2000; Zoonen 1994) in this chapter, I concentrate on the context of the Internet and the emergence of cyberspace/virtual reality to formulate the argument that the development of the mass media and communication technology changes the social perception of self and others in a way that opens up new areas for conflict and new roads to collective identification.

This is not a comprehensive account of the general social theory pertaining to cyberspace and its implications for human beings and the social. I am merely trying to advance the importance of cyberspace to social movement theory and to suggest some inspiring questions for future research. As I have already illustrated how information becomes a site of struggle in my earlier analyses of culture jamming (Text II, III and IV), my main purpose is to show that these social changes also require changes and adaptations in the definition of a social movement. In the concluding section, I draw from the present and previous chapters in formulating my own definition of social movements.

I deal with the issue of social movements and the media from three angles: 1) how the increased and normalized presence of media and communication technology in society influences perceptions of the world and social relations in general, 2) how the media shapes and influences social movements’ activities and messages, and 3) how social movements make use of techniques to manipulate established media and how they use new communication technology to develop their own media.

The analytical frame of “information society,” which is also the one I have selected to denote the context and emergence of culture jamming, directs attention to the constant flow of images as well as written and spoken messages that run through our experience of everyday life (Gitlin 2001). As I have argued elsewhere (Wettergren 2003b), this is not really a matter of information flows; what we indiscriminately call “information” is rather dissolution of types of messages such as advertisement, propaganda, and information. Increasingly, there is no telling what’s what: for every assertion, it is possible to find a negation; for every explanation, it is possible to find a critique; and most of the
time, we are exhorted to buy something. The flows of information moreover make us less prone to pay attention; most messages instead melt into the background blur of sounds and images. This condition influences social movements, in the sense that these movements must continually invent ways to make their voices and messages heard and noticed.

The national public services, the commercial television stations, and the main newspapers have been, and still are, the most powerful means of transmitting messages directly into people's private spheres. News, debates, and shows are widely read and watched (Gamson 1995; Gitlin 1980; Greg 1990). However, these are also the most exclusive media. Studies show that reporters and journalists routinely exclude alternative and critical messages, and work in favor of dominant discourses (Gitlin 1980; Hall 1980; Hall 1982). Voices and messages other than the established ones are included, if deemed newsworthy or spectacular. The concentration of power among the global mass media corporations where the chief incentive is profit, further complicates access, and even positions the mass media as an opponent of the contemporary anti-corporate struggle (Herman and Chomsky 1994; Herman and McChesney 1997).

Movements are influenced in two ways. First, they must consider their public actions and manifestations in the light of how they will be framed by the media, if they are included. A very large demonstration for instance, while noticed and sensed by people in its physical surroundings, may or may not attract media attention. But if it does, the media is sure to look for and concentrate on its most “disruptive” or spectacular components. Second, if the primary purpose is to attract the media, movement actors must know how the selective routines of the media work, and what kinds of events are considered newsworthy (Carroll and Ratner 1999; Gitlin 1980).

Of course, even a social movement message that makes it to the news has to be able to distinguish itself from the background blur of sounds and images; the message has to be short and simple (Bourdieu 1996). Since violence and death are events sure to find their way into the media and to disturb the routine flow of information, a pessimistic conclusion would be that only terrorist groups and actions can attract the fascination and interest of the media and their mass audiences long enough to achieve attention (see for instance Baudrillard 1982). However, such actions defeat the message (if there is one) and are sure to isolate the activist group from potential sympathizers. Even if attacks on property, goods, and symbols are commonly reported when the media pays attention to social movement manifestations, most social
movements are not inclined to physical abuse or murder. Humor is also an attractive and important resource in the struggle to be heard. As seen in the case of culture jamming, there are numerable ingenious, humorous, but also shocking ways to manipulate the media and disturb information flows (Wettergren 2003a; Wettergren 2003b; Wettergren 2005).

The mass media accentuates emotion, generally speaking, both in transmitting emotions and in addressing emotions. People enjoy and look for emotional arousal (see chapters six and seven). However, as is argued in chapter six, emotions/emotional processes are also present at a subconscious and non-reflective level. Nigel Thrift mentions the term “response-ability” (Katz in Thrift 2004:60) to denote emotion as “bodily thinking.” Thus, studies have indicated that

an action is set in motion before we decide to perform it: the ‘average readiness potential’ is about 0,8 seconds, although cases as long as 1,5 seconds have been recorded. In other words, ‘consciousness takes a relatively long time to build, and any experience of it being instantaneous must be a backdated illusion.’

(Thrift 2004 and McCrone cited in Thrift 2004: 67)

It may be argued that it is this time-span – where human beings are emotionally engaged and ready to respond, but not yet aware – that becomes the critical space for the competition between discourses in the information flows. The time-span between action and cognition, a matter of a split second, becomes politicized (Thrift 2004).

The Internet and the opening of cyber space is a crucial component in the perception of the contemporary as an information society. This development influences forms of organization, identity, and affiliation in global and abstract patterns rather than local and physical (Best and Kellner 2001; Castells 1998). The economic globalization, the fast movements of capital, the distant organization of “flexible” labor and business relations, and so on, are all made possible by the emergence of cyberspace (Best and Kellner 2001; Castells 2000; Giddens 1995). Much of the physical world, indeed, moves into cyberspace; we make purchases with money that we never touch, we interact in and with spaces that we never enter physically, we have numerous contacts and exchanges with persons that we never see or talk to, to name but a few common every-day experiences. The virtual, however, is no less “real” than the physical, to the extent that it actually interacts and influences both our bodily and mental being in the world. Apart from trivial influences – such as the effects on bodies that spend days and nights seated in front of the computer for compulsive Internet surfing, or interactions like maintaining the household economy in the virtual bank, or shopping for furniture at the virtual Ikea – the emergence of the
virtual compels the human mind to struggle for ways to conceptualize this new
space; the placement of self and identity in relation to it; and the transformation
of power and politics that it entails (Jordan 1999; Jordan 2000).

It is possible to think of several consequences and possibilities of cyberspace
for social movements: as structural conditions for new conflicts to be
articulated by social movements; as a, so far, free medium for transmission of
messages; as a space in which movements exist; as transforming the way we
think about and conceive of the constitutive components of social movements
such as collective action, collective identity, solidarity, and organization.

For example, the Internet at first seems to liberate information, but it can
also be argued that it empties information of its value *inter alia* for the reasons
stated above. It is not enough to have a computer to access whatever valuable
information there may be, one also has to know how and where to look for the
information as well as know how to assess its trustworthiness. The Internet
opens up for articulation the conflict “information by whom, for whom, and
how?” And yet, the Internet actualizes the political idea of free communication
and free information, which spills over to a demand upon other media as well
(Wettergren 2003b). Placing an idea or message in cyberspace, furthermore, is
almost like throwing water in the ocean. But the message may have unexpected
consequences, and eventually turn out as a wave (Peretti 2004). Such
experiences actualize the perception and conceptualization of ideas as
disconnected from the human mind, as self-multiplying entities with their own
life that occupy cyberspace and human minds alike, as understood in the
increasingly popular “meme” concept (Dawkins 1989; Gustafsson 1994; Peretti
2004). The potential of the autonomous power of ideas influences the strategies
of social movements as well as theories of social movements.

Cyberspace itself constitutes an action system (Melucci 1996), in its own
right, with its own symbolic protest forms (Peterson 2001). Such cyber activism
embraces computer hacking, mail-bombing, and fake websites to name but a
few examples of how the action repertoire may be adapted and expanded in
cyberspace.

After the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade by NATO forces in May
1999, for instance, hackers broke into the NATO website to protest the action.
There have been several examples of hackers invading Pentagon and Defense
Department websites to deface them or to post critical messages. Hacker
campaigns have also been organized against the governments of Mexico,
Indonesia, and other countries. (Best and Kellner 2001:238)

As a free medium for the transmission of messages, the Internet is
increasingly used by activist groups to plan and coordinate collective action
Indymedia connects local work to a global struggle, and it is from within this global context that the [Indymedia] movement perceives itself. Despite the presence of some editorial control, open source programming erodes any centralization of Indymedia that might otherwise occur. …Not only do journalists place original, previously unpublished work there, IMCs themselves will often link to already-broadcast or published reports. (Atton 2003:9)

While the fact that most of this activity is concentrated in the West – calling attention to the elites and the marginalized within activist networks – my intention is not to paint an all too optimistic picture, but to focus upon the possibilities of cyberspace for social movement actors as well as the way they are actually being used to create global and “postmodern” resistance politics (Burbach 2001).

51 www.indymedia.org
In the context of late capitalist information society, politics is increasingly a personal matter, because the dominant discourses work through our minds and bodies. Following this argument, the individual becomes the locus of social structure, and resistance is expressed as a resistance against subjectivation to dominant discourses. At the experiential level, the personal, the local, and the global level become interconnected (Buechler 2000). Cyberspace provides the technical infrastructure of this connection, while the activist networks and sites created in it provide the concrete space of interaction that makes (multiple) collective identification with an imaginary community possible. Thus enabling life politics (Bauman 1999; Beck 1997; Giddens 1995) as a manifestation of collective action.

This also points to general questions about the nature of identity, raised by the emergence of cyberspace, that social movement actors may creatively experiment and play with, both as part of a resistance strategy and as a medium for self-realization. As seen below, and as I have discussed in my analyses of culture jamming (Text III and chapter eight), the opportunities to play with identity and to construct illusionary images of oneself or one’s group or organization on the Internet, are seized upon by social movement actors.

**Fluidity, public experience of self and movement as motion**

An illustration of some of the points I make above is offered by McDonald’s (McDonald) analysis of Direct Action groups in Australia and the USA. Through field studies and interviews, McDonald tries to capture the changing experience of movement activists in the information society. Most importantly, he applies some concepts common in accounts of “postmodern” protest politics, such as affinity group, the rejection of representation, network culture, fluidarity, and the narrative structure of action.

Affinity groups consist of “5 - 15 people who know each other and act together” (McDonald 2002:115). They are project-oriented and are formed around specific events such as the World Economic Forum. The organizing principle is skill sharing and joint struggle. Every person, however, is responsible for him/herself and acts as him/herself, while still being enmeshed in the “friend-like” and trust-based relationships of the group. “The mode of interaction between friends is fluid – characterized by loose boundaries, uncertain structure, talking at once, even an embodied suppleness where physical interaction is fluid.” (Ibid:116) The activists in the affinity groups reject the idea of representation or delegation within the groups as well as the idea that the group as such represents something else than itself.
The group names generally describe action rather than identity (such as Reclaim the Streets) and activists use multiple names and also share names. McDonald claims that this, on the one hand, reflects the Internet culture and its “model of freedom from the constraints of embodied identity,” and on the other, “suggests a mode of experience that is personalized, while not individualized” (Ibid: 118). According to MacDonald, the activists separate the personal from the individual, and construct the former as an opposition to individualization while “the relationship between person and identity is fluid” (Ibid).

With terms such as the Internet or network culture, McDonald refers to the experiences of self and the social that emerge out of the birth of cyberspace, and argues that the new forms of acting and protesting together that can be observed in the Direct Action groups, converge with the social model of “dominant globalization.” Inherent in this model are: the perception of time as “friction,” an orientation toward the present, and a rejection of utopias. “[T]he future is not allowed to determine the present.” (McDonald 2002:119) McDonald suggests that:

the emerging action paradigm evident in direct action can be seen as part of an emerging network social model, just as the forms of action and culture of the labour movement can be seen as expressions of industrial society (the imaginary of the future, a model of justice based on sameness, the separation of public and private). (McDonald 2002:119)

The orientation toward the present leads to strategies of creating autonomous and free spaces in the here and now, of enlarging and intensifying the present through a specific social sensitivity to others and to multiple simultaneous events running parallel, in which emotion is the medium and the orientating mechanism. In joint action, the participants communicate with their bodies and feelings.

The temporal experience here is one of simultaneity, of multiple things happening at the same time, as opposed to a sequential logic. The action paradigm is...fluid as opposed to linear, one that is open to random events and the unpredictable. (McDonald 2002:121)

The narrative dimension in the Direct Action groups is expressed in the time and energy spent filming, photographing, and interviewing each other in action, and then – at a later occasion – reliving the moment by watching the results together. Through this practice, each activist is allowed to tell his/her story, and to explore his/her place within the larger context, as part of this large story, yet distinct, as an autonomous and personal experience. McDonald

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MacDonald also uses terms such as “network culture” and, in general, these terms seem to refer to the cultural dimension of Castells’ network society or what I understand as information society.
suggests (Ibid:125) that this may be conceived as “a shared struggle for personal experience” rather than a “mobilization of collective identity.” The individual or the person is not submerged into the collective, but instead is produced through it. Yet, the struggle for “personalization” and subjectivity in and through joint action is a resistance against the isolation and disconnection of individualization.

This narrative dimension, and practice of filming and interviewing oneself and each other, may, in addition, be interpreted as means to create symbols of collective identification (see chapter eight and Text IV). The videos, photos, and stories are usually placed on activist news sites on the Internet (also the AMF website transmits such stories of culture jamming actions) and thereby, the experience is communicated to those who were not there but still feel involved in the movement issues (see also Peterson 2001). My point is that this practice contributes to a “virtual” collective experience and functions as a mediated interaction ritual, generating solidarity and emotional energy (see chapter eight). Further, I would argue against McDonald, that collective identification does not necessitate individuals to “submerge their identity” in the collective. Rather, the shared struggle for personal experience, suggested by McDonald, goes through collective identification and hence the individual as a subject – a person – is constituted by his/her articulation within the movement discourse.

McDonald’s findings are consistent with my own analyses of culture jamming, although I disagree with some of his conclusions. The creation of autonomous free spaces observed by McDonald in the performance of the Direct Action groups, may be recognized in the practice of culture jamming, too, but it is much less a question of manifestations in physical public spaces. Though they may also frequently move in the space of the city, and claim free zones (Reverend Billy, Surveillance Camera Players, the Institute of Applied Autonomy when they try out new devices, the local actions of the Adbusters Media Foundation), the culture jammers rather emphasize the mental autonomous spaces, and the autonomy of thinking and living that escapes, cheats, challenges, or abuses the logic and purpose of consumer culture and corporate control. The “rejection” of the future, and orientation toward the present is also typical for culture jammers, but – and my guess is that the same can probably be found also in the Direct Action groups – it is mainly expressed in the demand for immediate reward in terms of “fun” and an explicit impatience with the slow working processes of the mobilization and
organization of traditional movement organizations (Text III and chapter eight).

To expand the argument that social movements and our perceptions of them in the information society are affected by the emergence of the virtual, I want to briefly draw on Massumi’s (2002) inspiring thoughts about movement. Though not involved with the discourse of social movement studies, he represents a cultural theory that searches for “fluidifying” ways to conceptualize reality as it appears from the perspective of “the virtual.” Massumi understands movement “as qualitative transformation” and suggests that movement precedes position in an ongoing process of ontogenesis. He asks himself how change is possible at all from the theoretical perspective of cultural theory that assumes subjectivity to be a position in a grid of intersected discourses; where discourses, even alternative ones, are always defined in relation to what is already established as conceivable, thinkable, doable.

The sites, it is true, are multiple. But aren’t they still combinatorial permutations on an overarching definitional framework? Aren’t the possibilities for the entire gamut of cultural emplacements, including the ‘subversive’ ones, precoded into the ideological master structure? Is the body as linked to a particular subject position anything more than a local embodiment of ideology? Where has the potential for change gone? How does a body perform its way out of a definitional framework that is not only responsible for its very “construction,” but seems to prescript every possible signifying and countersignifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible permutations on a limited set of predetermined terms? (Massumi 2002:3)

The problem, he contends, lies in the priority given to position over movement. When the analysis takes the position as a starting point, movement becomes only transportation between already defined points. If, instead, we give priority to movement, the points or positions that the movement has passed through (but never really occupied) can be (contingently) identified in retrospect. “In motion, a body is in immediate, unfolding relation to its own non present potential to vary.” (Ibid:4) As long as a body is moving, it is unpredictable and undetermined. As soon as the body is positioned and identified, its potential breaks down; it freezes.

So movement precedes and is given priority to position, but this does not mean that everything is movement and positions do not exist. “Indeterminacy and determination, change and freeze-framing, go together.” (Massumi 2002:8) Social and cultural constructions are freeze-frames that feed back into the movement out of which they emerged and “back-form its reality.” This can be expressed in the difference between potential and possibility: While potential is “the immanence of things to its still indeterminate variation, under way,”
possibility is “back-formed from potential’s unfolding” (Ibid: 9). Possibility, in other words, is the result of social construction’s back-feeding into movement, thus prescripting it, while potential is unprescribed.

I want to add one last important point for the discussion about social movements; this point concerns sociality v.s. social construction. If we assume that movement is ontologically prior to position, then everything can be said to be in a state of emergence, in movement, as qualitative change, of undetermined potential. Change then is a normal state of things while stasis is what needs to be explained; not the other way around. Massumi calls this state of permanent change, “the field of emergence” and contends that this is not to be seen as “raw nature” or something “pre-social.” Rather, the field of emergence is “open-endedly social” (Ibid:9).

It is social in a manner ‘prior to’ the separating out of individuals and the identifiable groupings that they end up boxing themselves into… A sociality without determinate borders: a ‘pure’ sociality. One of the things that the dimension of emergence is ontogenetically ‘prior to’ is thus the very distinction between the individual and the collective, as well as any given model of their interaction. That interaction is precisely what takes form. That is what is socially determined – and renegotiated by each and every cultural act. Assume it, and you beg the whole question… Not assuming it, however, entails finding a concept for interaction-in-the-making. (Massumi 2002:9)

Reconnecting to McDonald’s analysis of the Direct Action groups, I suggest that the activists involved try to create such an open-ended, undefined, “pure” sociality, by acting together in an unstructured and non-hierarchical, “fluid” way, where emotion as “embodied thinking” (see chapter six) is an orientating mechanism and a mode of communication.

The reasoning above allows us to approach the issue of social movements from an imaginative angle. Movement as motion and change suggests that movement actors “plunge” into change and articulate positions, interpret and create meaning, and actively partake in the emergence of the social. A social movement is the interactive (pluralistic and heterogeneous) space created by actors in this process of interpreting and shaping society’s eternal becoming, in conflict with dominant social actors who seek exclusive rights to determine the same process.

While the fluid structure, the orientation toward emotions and the present may sound reminiscent of the “low” forms of collective behavior as conceived in the collective behavior perspective, I would say that it is far from it. The groups and protest events are surely both well organized, rational, and carefully planned as to when and where to appear (for instance at a World Economic Forum, a WTO or World Bank summit, etc…) and who to engage (friends or
people you trust). The “pure sociality” is constructed and performed as an instrumental strategy to deny subjectivation and inclusion into dominant discourses, including its “Others.” In other words, if it may be argued that there is a lack of powerful radical alternative discourses that can organize these pluralistic and diverse contestations into a coherent challenge to dominant discourse, it may be because such an alternative is in the making inter alia by refusal to be categorized according to given overarching definitional frameworks.

Concepts such as fluidarity, public experience of self, and movement as motion, are necessary because they open up for complementary and “new” ways of thinking about collective action in the contemporary. Such concepts are both products and producers of social processes pertinent to the emergence of “the virtual” as a central dimension of information society. However, I contend that “traditional” concepts such as solidarity and collective identification can be stretched to capture what is currently occurring in terms of collective action, and even that they must be kept if we are not to lose sight of the knowledge and insights already gained through decades of research into social movements. (Such a radical over-throwing of research traditions would only lead to a reinvention of the wheel.) Nevertheless, it is crucial for the development and update of this research that social movement scholars dare to venture outside their own institutionalized scientific discourses and rejoice in the name of unpredictability.

**Concluding reflections: Social movements in this book**

In the present and previous chapter I argue that the context of late capitalist information society calls for some adaptations to concepts of social movement research. In this concluding section, I wish to advance my own perception of a social movement and its various components.

My original concept of social movements, at the outset of this project, was strongly influenced by Eyerman and Jamison (1991) to whom social movements are collective learning processes and knowledge producers creating a “…cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by a dynamic interaction between different groups and organizations” (Eyerman and Jamison 1991:55). This shaped my perception and placed emphasis upon the ideas of a movement, and how these ideas are “bandied” between carriers of the movement. Thus, from the outset, I considered movement as a complex phenomenon not to be reduced to its carriers, be they individuals, groups, or organizations. Further, social movements as collective learning processes point
toward the very contingency of society as a social construct; movements are tools in the process of social construction. Here, it is important to note that my interest in social movements derives precisely from this point. Social movements are the means to partake in the process of social construction especially by those who lack sufficient resources to have formal power. But, generally, social movements provide the point where social structure and individual social actors meet, and where changes in micro-interaction will or may have effects on structural conditions.\(^5\)

The mere production and dissemination of ideas – even if system critical – is not a movement; people must act on these ideas. Examples of people “acting collectively upon ideas” is easy enough to find; it is what people do every day in the production and reproduction of social structure, values, and norms through micro-level social interaction. But social movements embrace a specific form of collective action, which is, to borrow Melucci’s words, based on solidarity, conflict, and transgression (breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs) (Melucci 1985:795). Thus, so far we can say that social movements are a space of dynamic interaction between movement actors that engage in collective action based on solidarity, conflict, and transgression. In addition, solidarity and orientation toward conflict and transgression are all outcomes of collective identification. By collective identification, I understand largely the same as is included in Melucci’s definition of collective identity (see chapter four), but I wish to accentuate process by the choice of identification. I also wish to advance its emotional dimension.

\(^5\) It may be objected that I have already defined my concept of power in the focauldian sense, as micro-power situated in social relations and the workings of discourse (chapter two). However, this does not contradict the fact that power may be conceived as a personal resource to “have” more or less of, and to be used in the repression and subjugation of others. As argued by Buechler (2000:148-9), the “microphysics of power” merely move beyond the restricted definition of power as a possession of certain individuals, to assert that power is productive (as well as repressive) and omnipresent; it works through a multiplicity of locations and through the field of social relations; it manifests itself as the “operation of concrete and precise disciplinary technologies” hence becoming “invisible, impersonal, and anonymous” and that “power is exercised on the dominant as well as the dominated.” (pp 148-9) Consequently, there are certain subject positions (dominant) that lend themselves better to “command” the various workings of power. For instance, we may assume that rulers of states can affect social structure more or less without the support of a movement, as an entire set of resources required to effect social change is in a ruler’s command. Yet, the ruler’s dominant position is situated within the dominant discourse, and s/he can only uphold it as long as s/he does not challenge this discourse. Another way to put it is that “power” derives from consensus, and the majority’s support, see Arendt, H. 1970 On Violence, 2nd Edition, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. If the change imposed, bluntly challenges consensus (dominant discourse), we can expect stability in elite alliances to crumble and protest movements to emerge. As long as change seems to be within the range of dominant discourse, an individual or a group of individuals can effect social change by means of a whim. (The extreme example of this is of course the decision to go to war, which, from a global perspective affects not only one, but at least two societies.) The “weak” – which is not necessarily the same as the poor and deprived – can only have an impact, if they act collectively.
Generally ignored by social movement scholars (except the collective behavior tradition), collective action engages and produces emotions and emotional processes (see chapter six). Put differently, movements “move” because they act, rationally and instrumentally, upon emotional processes. In chapter six, I elaborate this argument about emotions in social movements. Here, I only wish to say that considering emotions in social movements is not the same as reintroducing the concepts and perceptions pertaining to mass psychology and collective behavior theory. Emotions constitute the energy propelling to action, generally speaking.

Collective identification is the process by which the space of dynamic interaction of a social movement is constituted and sustained. Collective identification pertains as much to the process of acting on emotions, constructing felt relationships, as it pertains to the “cognitive” dimension of defining contexts, conflicts, opponents, goals, means, organization, and so on. But there is more to collective identification than feeling connected and the “cognitive” dimension; collective identification is also the strategic management of emotions that are conducive to collective action. It may even include the construction of an emotional subculture (chapters six through eight).

From the perspective of discourse theory, social movements give rise to or constitute alternative discourses, i.e. signifying networks of perceptions, articulations, and practices that challenge dominant discourses. An alternative discourse can be institutionalized for instance in the shape of a political party or an interest organization. Institutionalization in post-structuralist discourse theoretical terms means stabilizing floating signifiers around a master signifier, the content and meaning of which is then defined by the actors who ”won” the struggle for meaning. Indeed, it may be argued that all available alternative discourses are institutionalized in the sense that they are related to existing dominant discourses, and together with these, they provide available ways to understand, think of, and do the world, “the overarching definitional framework.” When we study social movements, we may thus study the interactions, tensions, and conflicts that constitute the formation of new alternative discourse.

Discourses, however, are never entirely closed and settled, and there may be degrees of movement in a social movement. The latter may also take up and carry alternative, fairly “settled” discourses in the sense that there is nothing radically “new” about them. Examples would be racist or neo-fascist movements. These build on existing alternative or repressed discourses, but
there is still a degree of movement in the sense that there is dynamic interaction between a range of actors.\textsuperscript{54}

My interest in potential social movements or indeed social \textit{movements} in the present brings me to consider open-endedness and possibility as central, though not exclusive, criteria to speak of a social movement, though I am aware that according to most social movement scholars, specifically adherents of resource mobilization theory, such criteria are untenable.\textsuperscript{55} Social movement actors are involved in the continuous process of the becoming of society, in conflict with dominant actors, articulating their own meaning and direction. Though this meaning creation is always situated within the world of what we know, can do, and can think of in terms of available discourses (always given in relation to dominant discourses), the attempt to avoid formulating “a movement discourse” is in itself a protest and an attempt to \textit{transgress} dominant overarching frameworks.

The more movement actors pull in the direction of settling discourse, the more they move away from process and into institutionalized alternative discourses. Considering that we find ourselves today in a situation where the world as we can think of it and do it is very narrowly defined according to the global neo-liberal discourse, and the great alternative(s) seems to have failed, the rejection of definitions and the – albeit socially constructed – attempt to stay moving, to maintain the potential of movement, and stay put in the open-ended, may be the only way out of “the gridlock” (Massumi 2002). Creating new possibilities that give rise to new institutionalized or semi-institutionalized alternative discourses may be a matter of embracing unpredictability. Contemporary social movements are looking and searching in an undefined terrain, where fluidity, understood as movement actors’ ability to reject positioning and instead tentatively feel their way through, may become the primary means of orientation.

In conclusion, my approach to social movements is tentative in a “new” direction, although it draws significantly from and can be said to conform to the general unruliness of approaches combining into the identity paradigm. It is

\textsuperscript{54}Another example of a semi-institutionalized movement discourse is the environmental movement that can perhaps be said to remain a movement, although parts of it are integrated into dominant political discourses.

\textsuperscript{55}Melucci’s emphasis upon the process of collective identity construction and his advice that researchers deconstruct the apparent unity of any given movement, is in line with my reasoning about social movements as moving and open-ended phenomena. Indeed, if one tries to identify movements in the present, deconstruction is hardly necessary, as it is only the process of becoming that is available as an object of study. Social movement research that looks at “de facto social movements” such as the labor, the peace, the environmental, and the feminist movements, actually look at semi-institutions or freeze-frames, while the analysis may attempt to re-construct the movement itself.
not an attempt to construct a new social movement research perspective, but it is an attempt to move on from looking at social movements that are commonly perceived as such in the research field, to social movements that at least many resource mobilization theorists would not consider social movements.

Paraphrasing McCarthy and Zald (1977:1215), I would like to suggest that there are always conflicting discourses and points of resistance in every society that may be organized and mobilized into a social movement. This is a basic assumption of the post-structuralist approach; dominating discourses are always in an antagonistic relationship to suppressed or alternative discourses. This is also what makes the protest discourses political – not that they are directed against the state or other conventionally political institutions, but that they threaten the hegemonic status of a dominating discourse by advancing alternative definitions and revealing the contingency of what we are taught to think of as “objective” or “natural.” If, however, established theory leads us to conclude that in spite of displacements and changes in dominant discourses and social power structures, in spite of new technology and new ways of conceiving the self and the world, nothing really changes in the business of social movements, this must be because theory is flawed.
6. Theories of emotions and their relevance for social movement research

The purpose of this chapter is mainly to argue for the relevance of an emotion perspective in social movement research. To do so, however, I found myself struggling with the concept of emotion. My analysis in “Mobilization and the moral shock” (Text IV) is based on an ad-hoc perception of emotions that sidesteps the question of the ontological nature of emotions, by concentrating on emotions as objects produced by and for the purpose of collective mobilization. In chapter eight of this book, however, I attempt to (though admittedly hypothetically) account for the way emotions shape and motivate culture jammers’ strategic choices, organization, and cultural framing, and to show how the “emotional revolt” of culture jamming is contingent upon social structural circumstances such as emotional culture of late capitalism. In this attempt, I realized that I risked falling into the trap of dealing with emotions as objective givens, as essences, which was contradictory to my intuitive assessment of emotions as social constructs.

The first section of this chapter, therefore, presents an attempt to sort out what I mean by emotions. I thereby do not claim to have solved any problems for the wider field of emotion sociology, or that the stance that may crystallize out of this is unique in any sense. Suffice it to say that the need to interrogate myself on this subject reflects the anarchistic pluralism of approaches in the field of emotion research.

The second section deals with recent studies about emotions and social movements and thus partly returns to the arena where the concept of emotion will appear as more or less unreflectively given. The general argument to be delivered in this chapter is that emotions are pertinent to collective action, but in a sense that neither entails a return to the crowd psychology of collective behavior theorists, nor a rejection of rational and interest-based collective action.

What emotions?

Sociology and social science generally have not considered emotions important for social processes and action. Though early sociologists designated a place for emotions in social life, the perception of emotion as opposed to or distorting reason seemed the most tenacious one (Barbalet 1998). The emerging

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56 For historical overviews about the role and place of emotions in sociology, see for instance Barbalet, J. M. 1998 Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure - A Macrosociological Approach.
(contemporary) sociology of emotions, however, can be said to aim at reconstructing a connection between reason and emotion. In this effort, it has become important to show that a) emotion is not merely disruptive and dramatic, b) emotion originates in social life and is an object of management according to social rules and norms, and c) emotion is not a supplementary dimension of action but integral to action.

For obvious reasons, the study of emotions invites consideration of both social and psychobiological aspects (Barbalet 1998; Dahlgren and Starrin 2004; Scherer 1999). Following the emotion sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (1990:119; see also Thoits 1990: 191-2) an emotion comprises four elements: “a) appraisals of the situation, b) changes in bodily sensations, c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and d) a cultural label to specific constellations of the first three elements.” This definition is generally consistent with the overall literature regarding the components of an emotion, but it may be interpreted and qualified in a number of ways, following the debated issue concerning which of the psychobiological or social components are most salient, as well as if emotions can be seen as a biological essence or if they are purely a social construction.

It is possible to talk about an “organismic” (Hochschild 1990:119-20), or psychobiological (Scherer 1999) model of emotions that focus upon the dispositional side of emotions, for instance the biological function of emotion. Darwin claimed “there is a strong line of emotional descent running from animals to humans, born out of the evolution of affective expression as a means of preparing the organism for action” (Thrift 2004:64). Although concentrating primarily on the classification of universal emotional expressions, Darwin understood emotions as discrete categorical phenomena. Following this, neo-Darwinians argue that there are universal basic emotions – anger, fear, sadness, disgust, enjoyment – manifested in cross-cultural facial expressions (Ekman 1999; Scherer 1999; Thrift 2004). However, the search for universal emotions and emotional expressions is complicated by evidence that social and cultural contexts shape attitudes about emotions and create feeling and expression rules (Hochschild 1979; Hochschild 1983; Hochschild 1990) that regulate when, why, and how intensely emotions are felt and expressed (Scherer 1999; Ekman inThrift 2004: 64). Disgust, for instance, may be triggered by different things in different cultures, display cultural variations in expression, and it may have different names.

Variants of the psychobiological model, in the sense that they tend to “predict” emotional outcomes and entail universalistic claims, I would say are the structuralist or “positivist” (Barbalet 1998: 85) models in the sociology of emotions. These models concentrate on the way that emotion motivates social action and suggest that specific social structural preconditions, such as class structure (Barbalet 1996-1997; Barbalet 1998), the (stratified) structure of interaction rituals (Collins 1990; Collins 2004), or generally the structural relationships of power and status (Gordon 1990; Kemper 2001; Kemper 1990), give rise to specific emotions. Yet, trying to render emotions a matter of sociological inquiry, as distinct from biological or psychological accounts of emotions, they all stress that emotion is a social phenomenon, with social origins and social effects; it is not (only) a matter of the biological organism or the individual psyche. They do this in different ways, however.

For instance, Kemper, while very explicit on the point that there are universal, “natural” and primary emotions (fear, anger, depression and happiness) related to universal social relational outcomes of power and status, takes great pains to refute the constructivist model of emotions. …one must examine emotion as soon as possible after the instigating social relational episode, because coping and emotion management can come into play very early in the sequence, short-circuiting an emotion that social relations instigated. Even prior to the experience of a particular emotion one can decide to avoid it by putting oneself in a social relational situation that does not evoke the proscribed emotion, but rather, spontaneously and naturally, instigates a culturally preferred emotion. (emphasis added, Kemper 1990:229)

Kemper argues that regardless of these attempts to manage emotions – regardless, that is, of what the individual may express or even be aware of experiencing – the predicted primary emotion does result. “[S]uppressed or not, the initial emotional result of status-loss is…anger, regardless of any succeeding psychic states or emotions that may ensue from differences in management or coping.” (Ibid:227)

In contrast, Collins is less inclined to speak of primary emotions, but prefers the term “emotional energy” as the outcome of situated interaction rituals (IRs) (Collins 2004). Combining Goffman, Garfinkel and Durkheim, Collins states that all social interaction involving two or more persons sharing the same focus of attention, is a ritual, and that their outcome – collective effervescence – results in solidarity for the collective and emotional energy (EE) for the individual (Collins 1990; Collins 2004). The concept, emotional energy, refers to

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57 As mentioned by Barbalet these models also often have a phenomenological methodological foundation.
a feeling of confidence, courage to take action, boldness in taking initiative. It is a morally suffused energy; it makes the individual feel not only good, but exalted, with the sense of doing what is most important and most valuable. (Collins 2004: 39)

Emotional energy varies along a continuum, however, which means that one can be low and high on EE. At the lower end, the individual experiences low self-feelings and vice versa. Further, EE is unequally distributed. Power and status are the social mechanisms that determine the individual’s outcome of EE.

Even less deterministically, Barbalet prefers to talk about emotions “in process.” In Barbalet’s account, it is pointed out that emotions not only inhere in social relations, but as they are experienced, also transform social relations, thus giving rise to new emotions and so on. When we name and speak of emotions, he contends, they become objects, but as such, they are merely “hypothetical constructs” (Barbalet 1998: 180, 186).

The notion that emotion is a hypothetical construct follows from the fact that emotion cannot be reduced to its indicators. The various conceptualizations of emotion in life and in science derive from the frameworks in which the indicators of emotion are placed. These vary with the context and purpose of those involved. Thus the definitions of emotions are necessarily culturally diverse, both across societies and within them. (Barbalet 1998: 80)

To Barbalet, “Emotion is always situated” and involves “the whole person,” not “an isolatable aspect or attribute of a person’s body or psychology” (Ibid:79). Hence, his perception of emotions seems to have very little to do with the “organismic” model. However, naming a range of emotions that motivate and fuel social action in and between various social fields, he, in my view, risks doing what he indicates that one should not do. Namely, treat emotions as objective givens that are triggered by specific social relations.

For example, Barbalet argues that “it is the structure of class relations themselves which tend to determine the emotions which individual class members feel” (Barbalet 1998:68). The central emotion triggered by class relations, he argues, is resentment. “Social actors experience resentment when an external agency denies them the opportunities or valued resources (including status) which would otherwise be available to them.” (Ibid: 68) The emotional experience need not be acknowledged or even experienced at the level of awareness, and socio-cultural conditions may prevent resentment from being articulated through mobilization and collective action and instead may result in “self-blame and shame” (Barbalet 1998:77). But the fact remains that resentment is “there,” embedded in class relations and their unequal distribution of valued resources.
While these structuralist accounts tend to essentialize emotions, constructivist and most social interactional research of emotions avoid this problem by concentrating on the way that emotions are socially constructed and managed. In constructivist accounts, bodily or physiological processes are taken into account only as effects of the socially constructed emotion and not as discrete independent processes (Hochschild 1990; Kemper 1990). Alternatively, the psychobiological processes constituting the individual experience of emotion is not accounted for at all (Bloch 2001).

The “interactional model” advanced by Hochschild also seems to concentrate on emotions as social constructions. But the model integrates psychobiological aspects as socially shaped “ingredients” (Hochschild 1990:120). Consequently, on the one hand, Hochschild claims against the “organismic model” that emotions are not just “there” to be triggered, expressed, or suppressed in different ways, but they also become in social interaction. “Feelings, I suggest, are not stored “inside” us, and they are not independent of acts of management. (…) In managing feeling, we contribute to the creation of it.” (1983:18) On the other hand, she invites psychobiological aspects when she speaks about “the signal function” of emotions (Hochschild 1983; Hochschild 1990:119). Thus, if we return to Hochschild’s definition of emotion above, the four elements are experienced simultaneously but not necessarily consciously. Together with our other senses, emotion is a like a sixth sense that allows us to feel the situations in which we find ourselves, guiding our selection of appropriate actions and expressions in an otherwise insecure and unpredictable social terrain.

This said, in her research, Hochschild emphasizes the way that emotions are managed in the everyday life. She argues that emotional cultures vary with regards to feeling and expression rules, determining the socially correct emotions and emotional expressions in various situations. People manage their emotional responses through techniques such as surface acting (changing feelings from the outside in through the conscious use of facial expression) and deep acting (changing feelings from the inside out through e.g. reframing, narrowing the mental focus or bodily relaxation) (Hochschild 1979; Hochschild 1983; Hochschild 1990). Such emotion management or emotion work is the result of socialization and thus as normal an ingredient in the everyday life of individuals as any other semi-unconscious self-disciplining act assuring that most people conform to the norms and values of the group or larger society.

We may conclude that an emotion comprises both psychobiological and social elements; that an emotion may have a biological pre-conscious function
to alert the subject to the situation at hand, but it may also be the object of conscious or unreflected social requirements and processes of emotion management. We may also conclude that social structural relations contribute to the creation of emotions. The question is if these various aspects may be integrated into a post-structuralist model that allows for emotion both to motivate social action, to have a “signal function,” to inhere in social structure, and to be an outcome and object of social action, without reducing emotion to “nature” or essence and without rejecting the basic assumption that “the real” escapes signification? The reason that I have chosen Hochschild’s model of emotions as primary framework for my presentation here, is that I think this model is both simple and complex enough to inspire further explorations of this matter.

Notes on terminology

As at this point I venture into a more autonomous discussion and interpretation of the topic, it is useful to say something about the particular terms used here. It has probably already been noticed that not only “emotion” appears in this text, but also “sensation,” “affect,” and “feeling.” Another frequently used term in the context of sociology of emotions is “mood.” Callister and Stern hold that in contemporary research “the affect concept subsumes the other two and is widely accepted as a ‘valenced feeling state.’ Emotions and moods, on the other hand, are thought of as specific examples of these feeling states” (Callister and Stern 1999:18).

I would argue, however, that these distinctions are not at all clear in the literature. As it appears to me, affect seems to denote the same as feeling or emotion and is a term preferred by the “organismic” model, and theories that build primarily on these biological and psychological understandings of emotions. Sensation is used across models as referring to bodily processes connected to emotions (see for instance Barbalet 1998), and sometimes affect is used this way as well (i.e. affect as the physical sensation of an emotion). Feeling and emotion appear to be terms preferred by the interactional and constructivist models. Personally, I follow Hochschild in using primarily the term emotion, while feeling is sometimes used interchangeably, or, as it is used in common descriptive language in expressions such as “I feel,” “a feeling of,” “it feels.” I take feeling to be a more common sense term for emotions.

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58 Hochschild seems to indicate a similarly floating distinction when she writes: “By ‘emotion,’ I should say, I mean the awareness of bodily cooperation with an idea, thought, or attitude and the label attached to that awareness. By ‘feeling’ I mean a milder emotion.” (Hochschild 2003:75) This also indicates, however, that she emphasizes the conscious and cognitive dimension of emotions.
Mood, finally, is used across models to refer to more general and long-term states of mind. If mood is used, it is generally assumed that emotions compared to mood are of a more short-term and intensely felt nature, that emotions but not moods have specific objects or referents: “Thus, the term mood generally refers to the feeling state itself, whereas the term emotion refers both to the feelings and what the feelings are about.” (Schwarz and Winkielman 1999: 449) It is also assumed that emotions but not necessarily moods tend to attract the individual’s attention to his/her own feelings.

As a consequence, moods may function in the background of other activities, influencing a wide range of cognitive processes and overt behaviours. In contrast, emotions and the events that cause them are often the focus of attention, as a comparison between being angry about something and being in a bad mood may illustrate: While anger focuses people on what they are angry about, being in a bad (or a happy) mood may color all of the diverse experiences of the day. It is this diffuse and unfocused nature of moods that is at the heart of their pervasive effect. (Schwarz and Winkielman 1999: 449)

In sociological research into emotions, mood may be a quite useful term. For instance, “flow” and “stress” in Bloch’s account are moods articulated in the modern context of living and therefore are worth studying as “an existential barometer of the quality of everyday life” (my translation, Bloch 2001:18).

“Feelings and moods qualitatively express our relation to the world.” (Ibid) Mood is also the starting-point for Collin’s development of the term emotional energy. While emotions are commonly associated with dramatic feelings, he argues, “there are also emotions that are undramatic; they are long-lasting, underlying tones or moods, that permeate social life” (Collins 1990:30).

The problem with the concept of mood as a certain kind of emotion is that it usually triggers efforts to generate corresponding feeling words. In this spirit, Goodwin et al. (Goodwin, et al. 2001) suggest that moods, though they may also be short-term, are emotions such as shame or pride (long-term), joy or depression (short-term), and they are characterized by a “general scope.” Emotions that have “specific objects” may also be short or long-term; examples of the former are anger and grief, and examples of the latter are hate and love.59 Classifications such as these are obviously relative to quite a narrow context, and to the extent that they are used in a general sense, they essentialize cultural constructions.

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59 Such categorizations raise obvious questions such as, by what criteria do we say that depression is a long-term mood with a general scope? And who says that grief is a short-term emotion with a specific object? It may be argued that within specific cultural and historical contexts, these emotion words apply and can be said to be grounded in personal experience, but it seems to me that this specific cultural context is indeed highly specific and not even valid throughout the cultural context of the Western world.
In this text, and in the analyses of emotions in culture jamming that are presented in this book, the preferred term – mostly for pragmatic reasons and a wish to be consistent – is emotion. This said, I speak of long-term and short-term emotions, more or less intense emotions, emotions with and without specific referents, and most importantly, I speak of emotions both as a motivation for and an object of social interaction. I further draw freely from positions and models within the sociology of emotions.

However, while I believe that sociologists ought not to fear drawing on physiological and even psychological accounts – because these sciences obviously contribute to the understanding of the body with which we feel and act in the social world – as a sociologist, I tend to be more interested in what emotions do with social life (and vice versa) than in what they do with the individual psyche or body. I also accept that our potential to feel and express feelings may serve basic universal biological functions, but I want to make it clear that in my account, emotions are social constructs. While an emotion is composed partly of psychobiological elements, it cannot be reduced to these elements or referred to some basic essence independent of social context.

**Embodied emotional process and action**

One crucial way that emotion informs action, is through the body. This does not mean that emotions belong to biology or nature, since the body is also inscribed in social relations, and social relations are incorporated, embodied. Phenomenological approaches tend to emphasize the individually embodied experience of emotion.

> [E]motions, which have so often been treated as opposed to thinking, are paradoxically self-reflective actions and experiences. But the self-reflection in emotions is corporeal rather than a matter of discursive reasoning. (Katz 1999: 7)

According to Katz, emotions are not “talk” and he thereby means that they are part of the phenomenological world that is not “discursively” constructed. Yet, the phenomenological pre-discursive domain of experience, as argued by Bloch is “located within the social by mediating between us and… the social reality in which we always already find ourselves” (my translation, Bloch 2001:14). The concept of discourse that I use, however, means that this location in “the social,” whether through “talk” or “pure perception,” is the same as location within discourse.

It is from this viewpoint that I embrace the idea of emotion as “corporeal thinking” (Thrift 2004:67). This idea makes it possible to account for the way that emotion functions as a sixth sense, without reducing emotion to essence.
People do not simply display characteristic emotions, but have characteristic ways of relating emotions to each other, and of relating emotions to cognition and perception. These involve a sense of how to act, how to play the game, that is never altogether conscious or purely reducible to rules. (Calhoun 2001:53)

My point is that emotion management as part of the social construction of emotions, while it is most often associated with semi-conscious or conscious and strategic production of emotion, is also incorporated and performed in a habitual manner.

By looking at emotion as embodied social construct in this way, I believe that it is possible to understand also how emotion informs action more generally, without reducing emotion to essence that “precedes” the social or that originates in the psychobiological constitution of the human being. We may then proceed to the structuralist accounts referred to earlier, bearing in mind that when we name a specific emotion as a crucial ingredient in this or that action, this naming is in fact a contingent fixation of a floating signifier to an imagined signified. Thus, Barbalet (Barbalet 1998) shows that action and emotion are deeply intertwined in several ways. One is the way that emotion provides us with a better theory of action than rational choice theory.

As all action brings a possible future into the present, the concept of time, or more properly temporality, and especially future time, is necessarily introduced into the analysis in this account. By definition, the future cannot be known and therefore actors cannot have available to them information which might form the basis of calculations for the orientation of action. Instead, action is necessarily based on the feeling of confidence actors have in their capacities for successfully engaging the future… The “rational actor” model of economic and social analysis is thus shown to be not only empirically flawed, but heuristically misleading. (Barbalet 1998 :101)

Confidence is characterized by “assured expectation and self-projection” and derives from the individual’s experience of acceptance and recognition in social relationships (Ibid:86). According to Barbalet, the centrality of confidence to action is valid at both the individual and the collective level (Ibid:102).

With a similar purpose to incorporate emotion in a theory of action, Collins argues that the concept of emotional energy accounts for some common stumbling blocks of rational choice theory (Collins 2004:143-5). If we assume that self-interest and rational calculation is the basis for human action, phenomena such as altruism and “emotional and value-oriented behavior” become evidently hard to explain. Collin’s concept of emotional energy is, as
already discussed, composed of the feelings of pride and confidence that a person derives from successful interaction rituals. Such successful interaction grants the individual status and recognition as a member of the group. If we assume that emotional energy is the clue to action, we may thus predict that an individual will act in a manner that grants her future status and emotional energy.

Hence, Collins does not refute the idea that action is grounded in self-interest, but rather the idea that it is based on conscious calculation. Arguing that in fact “individuals in natural situations do very little calculating” (Collins 2004:144), the theory of emotional energy also solves this problem by assuming that the navigation toward sources of emotional energy is primarily non-conscious.

If human beings are EE-seekers, it is not necessary that they should engage in conscious calculation… Human behavior may be characterized as emotional energy tropism. Social sources of EE directly energize behavior; the strongest energizing situation exerts the strongest pull. Subjectively, individuals do not experience such situations as controlling them; because they are being filled with energy, they feel that they control. They may well describe their behavior, if they are reflective about it, as a firm decision, a strong sense of volition. But they need not exercise any conscious calculation over the costs and benefits of various alternatives. When EE is strong, they see immediately what they want to do. (Collins 2004: 181-2)

Barbalet’s reasoning about confidence quite convincingly shows that emotion is an important action motivating ingredient, and Collin’s theory about emotional energy seemingly goes even further to argue that a craving for positive emotions such as pride and confidence constitutes both the push and pull of social behavior. Both theories serve to argue that what we call rational behavior does not exclude emotion, but rather presumes it. Nevertheless, the theories differ on some important points.

First, Barbalet argues that confidence constitutes an individual as self-secure and “encourages one to go one’s own way” (Barbalet 1998:86). Confidence in this context is opposed to feelings such as shame and modesty that “function to enforce social conformity” (Ibid). It seems to me then, that confidence constitutes a person as autonomous and relatively independent of what others think of him/her. In contrast, Collins idea about EE-tropism suggests that all human beings actually conform to, and seek recognition from, some collective. In theory, the collective in question may of course be small – two persons – and it may be a collective in which status is accorded to non-conformist behavior – as related to the dominant culture – and so forth, but Collins emphasizes conformism, while Barbalet emphasizes autonomy.
Second, and related to the first point, at first sight, Collin’s theory seems to be less problematic than Barbalet’s in the sense that it advances “energy” rather than specific emotions, and thereby partly by-passes the problem of making cultural concepts universally applicable. Yet, Collins concept of emotional energy often seems to be just another term for “feeling good.” Replacing calculation and self-interest with emotional energy, he echoes rational choice theory in reducing the complexity of human action to a single dimension or metric. Indeed, in spite of its universalist ambition, parts of Collins theory appear as highly situated, mirroring contemporary emotional Western culture and its preoccupation with joy, fun, and individual recognition (see chapter seven and eight). Barbalet’s theory is more abstract and tentative and therefore appears more useful for my purpose here.

In Barbalet’s account, in spite of arguing that emotion inheres in social structure, great attention is paid to social and cultural context. Hence, emotion and action, and the way that emotion and action transform the actor and his/her environment, are always situated and contingent, thus rendering general predictions with no attention to context precarious. By advancing the notion of temporality as a key to both agency and emotion, Barbalet further explicitly points to the open-ended process of becoming that is a very central ingredient in my own perception of emotion, social movements, and social change (Barbalet 1998:183-7).

Actors qua actors…can never be assumed to be merely in a state of being, but through their actions are in a state of becoming. (…) Action, which is necessarily an apprehension of the future with the resources of the past, has its animus and telos in emotion. Emotion is the basis of action; it both directs action to the future, and constructs the resources which action draws upon through the emotional apprehension of the past. (Barbalet 1998:185-6)

Emotion, then, is not only external and situated in social relationships and structure, but is also integral to the individual experience of time (past, present and future) and the placement of self in time, which enables agency and thereby transformation. “Emotion, as movement, is in that sense both external to the subject who experiences it and integral to their being as a consequence of their being moved by the feeling.” (Ibid:186)

Massumi’s (Massumi 2002) call for reversing the priority between position and movement is again useful to expand this point (see chapter five). Instead of beginning with position – i.e. specific given emotions – sociologists who try to understand what emotion “is,” and how emotions inform action, ought to begin with emotion’s becoming: emotional processes that flow in and between bodies in social interaction. We should conceive of these processes as external
flows (originating in social relations) that move us but that we also incorporate, direct, transform and control.

An illuminating example of how this works in the concrete micro-setting is offered by Sandlund (Sandlund 2004) in a study of the social organization of emotions in talk-in-interaction. Her findings show how individuals act upon their own and perceived emotions of others, continuously monitoring and transforming the shared context of interaction and simultaneously their own position in it. As I would suggest that the interaction is energized by the flow of emotional process, it is also interesting to see how the individual negotiates what s/he feels and why s/he feels it, by accepting or contesting the labels, explanations, or expressions of others. While cognitive assessment and articulation of emotion occurs primarily when there is disagreement or conflict, this study supports the conclusion that generally “emotional communication” is neither conscious, nor articulated in words. Hence, the flow of emotional process serves to orientate the “interactants,” where cognition simply could not keep up the speed and detail.60

Sandlund’s study further supports that emotional process – like movement, like the becoming of the subject through action – is unpredictable and undetermined. The becoming of emotion, consequently, carries a number of potential emotions; it is not necessarily good or bad, motivating or inhibiting action, but it is the energy of action. When people reflect upon their emotions in connection to certain events, trivial as well as dramatic, they select emotion labels, freeze and back-feed the emotion process, drawing on specific context and available discourses.

It is important to note, however, that the way that emotional culture is inscribed through socialization of our “emotional habitus” also means that emotional process is not to be seen as “nature” or something “pre-social.” It is “the real thing” in so far as it is real embodied discourse (of emotion). Yet when we capture process with emotion labels we capture only a contingent

60 Sandlund’s study is pioneering in the sense that its purpose is to study emotions in talk-in-interaction. Collins (2004) also refers to micro-interaction in his model of mutual focus/emotional entrainment, but the studies he refers to do not focus upon emotions – this focus is added by Collin’s interpretation. Though his model reinforces some of my arguments here, he also draws many far-reaching conclusions that Sandlund’s study seems to refute. For instance, Collins argues that individuals draw on their resources and stock of symbols in order to occupy a central place in interaction and hence get more EE out of it. In contrast, Sandlund’s findings may be taken to suggest that conversational turn-taking, when the flow is at its best, indeed involves every participant in a loyal and generous manner; Collin’s further argues that mutual focus/emotional entrainment is an unconscious and consensual bodily synchronization, while I would say that Sandlund’s findings suggest that people in fact negotiate emotions through bodily communication, not “simply” synchronizing but also “contesting” and “commenting” upon other’s bodily postures and expressions, at an unconscious or semi-unconscious level.
aspect of emotional process. To separate “natural” from “socialized” processes, would entail the same problems as the effort to distinguish between primary and secondary emotions. After all, we are always already in the social, and so is every imaginative attempt to grasp something “pre-social.”

In conclusion, when I speak of specific emotions, I understand them as contingent and contestable. The emotion words and their suggested importance for action, here, are pragmatically selected from available scientific and popular discourses, with the purpose of advancing the argument that emotional process is a necessary ingredient in action. More specifically, my argument is concerned with emotional processes in collective action. This said, we will now proceed to look at some recent research of emotions in social movements.

**Emotions in social movements**

There are many points of entry for studying emotions in social movements.

As an integral part of all social action…emotions enter into protest activities at every stage. Some help explain why individuals join protest events or groups…Others are generated during protest activities… These affect whether a movement continues or declines, and when. In all stages, there are both preexisting affects and shorter term emotional responses to events, discoveries, and decisions. (Jasper 1998: 404-5)

The risk is that a set of existing concepts merely get their emotional variants, such as emotional framing as an additional frame, rather than showing how emotions actually shape and direct the cognitive assessments of framing activities, and turn these cognitive assessments into collective action. This said, research on social movements drawing on emotion theory is still a rather narrow field, and scholars choose different ways to go about exploring the topic (Flam 2005). Here, I will limit the presentation to point out some interesting results of the recent research that has been made.

The relevance for social movements of resentment (Barbalet 1998), righteous anger (Collins 2004), or anger in general (Holmes 2004a; Holmes 2004b) is an obvious starting point. Barbalet’s argument concerning resentment is already briefly referred to above. The structure of a class society generates resentment, and given the right social and cultural circumstances, this emotion can inform collective mobilization in defense of rights. But resentment, while often conceived to pertain to the lower classes, is also present among the upper classes who feel the threat to their power and status. “Class resentment is a phenomenon of class systems and can therefore affect any class.” (Barbalet 1998:72) Further, Barbalet argues, *vengefulness* is an emotion that may inform collective mobilization (Ibid: 126-148). Vengefulness is closely related to
resentment; “Vengefulness and resentment are the emotional apprehension of a social violation of the satisfaction of a need.” (Barbalet 1998:126) Vengefulness is directly related to oppression and denial of rights and the desire to “get even” with the oppressors. While resentment, Barbalet argues, does not contain this desire, resentment and vengefulness often operate together in collective mobilization.

A neglected aspect of social movements, for instance, is vengefulness against the agents of subordination, indeed, humiliation, which movements oppose in asserting the dignity and standing, the rights, of their members. (Barbalet 1998:136)

Hence, as frequently observed (for instance Barrington Moore 1978; Gamson 1992; Gamson 1995; McCarthy and Zald 1977) structurally founded injustice and inequalities do not automatically motivate collective organization. Injustice must be perceived as socially caused, so it is possible to target action against an opponent (Barrington Moore 1978). As argued by Gamson, this is achieved through collective action framing. Labeling specifically the injustice component of collective action frames a “hot cognition” (Gamson 1992:7) laden with emotion, Gamson points toward resentment and vengefulness.

Nevertheless, finding it difficult to operate with the distinction between resentment and vengefulness, the term I prefer to use in this context is “righteous anger.” Collins (2004:127) defines righteous anger as a collective form of anger that originates in the perceived violation of a group’s sacred symbols (rights for instance). However, the resemblance with my use of the concept ends here. In Collins account, righteous anger is primarily associated with the restoration of dominant social order, and is thus linked to carriers of dominant discourse and directed toward “a heretic or scapegoat.” Collins moreover considers anger, including righteous anger, a “short-term” emotion. In my use, the temporal dimension of righteous anger depends on the context, it is primarily interesting to social movement research because it may be constructed through collective identification and framing processes, and as an action-instigating force it includes both vengefulness and resentment.61

However, anger is not necessarily the primary emotional thrust behind collective action of repressed groups. On the contrary, as argued by Flam (Flam 2004), in view of the political opportunity structures of repressive regimes and the fear of violent state responses to collective protest, together with the assessment of bystander apathy and fear, anger may be dilated and replaced by

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61 It may be objected that not all social movements aim at revenge, but even so I find the distinction between vengefulness and resentment that Barbalet suggests hard to apply in analysis. For instance, the anger expressed by culture jammers is clearly based on the perceived violation of basic rights, but it hovers between resentment and vengefulness (see chapter eight).
displays of fun and enjoyment, promoting “safe,” ambivalent, and satiric protest forms. Though it may be argued that righteous anger motivates protest even if it is not displayed, this shows that collective actors, like individual actors, do not just react or act on mobilized feelings, but weigh them against other emotions alerting them to risks and dangers associated with action.

In fact, in his account of emotions in the labor movement, Barbalet (Barbalet 1996-1997) convincingly shows that this movement was cast in an ultra-rationalist outfit for strategic reasons. The separation between reason and emotion is a characteristic of class society, he argues, and the capitalist economy, turning emotions that are conducive to reproducing capitalism into “non-emotions,” while all emotions that may disrupt this order are rendered illegitimate or confined to the “diminishing arena in which the familial, sentimental, and non-instrumental aspects of emotion are given license to the exclusion of all other possibilities” (Barbalet 1998:183). The separation obfuscates the fact that the confidence required to risk investment and transactions on the market, relies on considerable state support and financial guarantees in case of loss. The separation further serves to dismiss collective protest action or subordinate anger at injustice as “emotional” and “irrational” (see also Holmes 2004b).

Another example of how mobilized emotions are negotiated and suppressed in order to avoid the demeaning and dismissive stigma of “emotional,” is offered by Whittier (Whittier 2001) in a study about the movement against child sexual abuse. This movement, that expressively deals with emotions as a way to help survivors of sexual abuse to get along with their lives, strategically plays down the emotional part to appear more “rational” when publicly facing counter-movement claims that its members have invented their experiences.

The countermovement’s arguments have rested in part on depicting the survivor’s movement...as hysterical, unscientific, and built more on emotion than reason. Swayed by naïve or unscrupulous therapists, the argument goes, emotionally vulnerable women...come to believe that their parents committed horrific acts. This belief then renders the deluded ‘survivor’ hysterical, unreasonable, unable to cope with life, and overcome by irrational fear, grief, and anger.” (emphasis added, Whittier 2001 :247)

This example also points to the fact that a significant part of the goal of a social movement may, indeed, be about emotion work, as it constructs its own emotional culture in opposition to the dominant emotional culture of wider society (see Thoits 1990). Within the movement, emotions about oppression, abuse, shaming, are allowed to come forward without the risk of losing one’s face or being rejected as a hysteric.
Another prominent example of this can be seen where the feminist movement deals with patriarchy and the oppression of women by working on women’s fear, shame, and anger (Hercus 1999). Women who react with anger over gendered injustice accordingly may become subjects of corrective mechanisms, such as embarrassment and accusations of being too emotional or out of context. The feminist organizations instead support and promote women’s anger as a resource in protest against patriarchy.

As emotional subcultures, social movements not only provide social pockets of “deviant emotions” (Thoits 1990) as means of promoting action, or as an end in itself, they may also achieve change in the dominant emotional culture. The perspective of emotions consequently makes it possible to study not only the relationship between social movements and social change in terms of the knowledge produced, processed, and dispersed to wider society by movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1991), but also – and even simultaneously – the relevance of movements for the change and processing of emotion rules and norms in dominant emotional culture. Thus, the feminist movement when it promotes the righteous anger of women in the face of gendered injustice, also changes cultural perceptions of “female emotions” and asserts that women are also capable of and entitled to anger.52

Even more clearly, viewed through the lens of identity politics, movements that strive primarily for recognition can be said to move the boundaries of emotional culture as an integrated part of their achievements. For instance, the work of the gay movement to change the emotions of being homosexual, from shame and fear into anger and pride (Britt and Heise 2000; Gould 2001), is a process which is accompanied with a large-scale change of heterosexuals’ emotional evaluations of homosexuality from disgust and contempt, to, at least, more ambivalent feelings that may allow for acceptance, respect, and tolerance. Anti-racist and anti-colonial movements are other examples; though admittedly problematic and ambivalent as a strategy, meanings and attributes attached by the dominant culture to colonized people or to immigrants, with the effect of asserting their subordination through feelings of shame and self-contempt, may be reinterpreted and turned into affirmative difference as a source of pride and solidarity (Eriksson, et al. 1999). Eyerman shows how the cultural trauma of slavery is re-interpreted and negotiated from stigma to the shared experience of affirmative collective identity construction of the African-American movement (Eyerman 2001; see also Gilroy 1993).

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52 Historically, though this cultural representation still seems to prevail in some areas of social life today, anger is an emotion associated primarily with masculinity, see Stearns, P. N. 1994 American Cool - Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style, Vol. 3, New York: New York University.
The perspective of emotions may also illuminate why mobilization is not simply a matter of cognitive persuasion (see Text IV). If the framing of a movement strikes emotional chords in an individual, this is also partly due to that individual’s specific experiences and biography. Conversely, if s/he prefers to live in “cynical reason” (see also Gamson 1992; Wettergren 2005; Zizek 1989) this is because of his/her emotional attachment to everyday life as we know it, rather than a failure to see or understand issues raised by the movement. It is not irrational; it is a matter of safety and routine, painstakingly upheld in social interaction. Moral shocks (Goodwin, et al. 2001; Jasper 1998), i.e. events that stir up emotions, may be the crucial difference that singles out activists from non-activists, though this remains to be investigated empirically.

Given that some emotions in specific situated contexts clearly stimulate action (anger, resentment, hate, pride, confidence), whereas other emotions curtail or inhibit action (fear, shame, sadness), mobilization to social movements and sustained participation involve emotion work or emotion management as integral to all the activities (Flam 2005). Inwardly, emotions produced may be, for example, pleasure, joy, love, security, confidence, pride, hope, altruism, and sympathy. As with social integration generally, social movement groups and organizations achieve this purpose through collective interaction rituals, such as meetings, manifestations, parties, and so on, through which a shared experience and focus upon collective symbols is established (Collins 1990; Collins 2004). Outwardly, efforts may be concentrated on the mobilizing power of injustice frames, inciting righteous anger and moral shocks, motivating bystanders to get involved.

An emotion perspective on social movements may further contradict some established theoretical assumptions such as the influence of openings in the political opportunity structure on the rise of movement activity. Instead, as suggested by Gould (2001) in a study about AIDS-activism, narrowing or non-existing political opportunities spurred the gay and lesbian movement to go from inwardly directed emotion work and identity construction, promoting pride instead of shame and solidarity between gay and lesbian people, to outwardly directed political and militant activism fueled by righteous anger.

In fact, it was the very emotion work entailed in the construction of a proud gay and lesbian identity that made it possible for this group to perceive of themselves as a collective, whose rights had been violated. Anger was released after a series of events that indicated state failure to deal with AIDS, and specifically after a court ruling (Bower vs. Hardwick) that compared gay sex to “adultery, incest, and other sexual crimes,” denying homosexuals “the
constitutional right to engage in consensual, private sexual acts” (Ibid:147).

Gould writes that:

The new militancy grew quickly, delineating a politics that linked emotions such as indignation, anger, self-respect, fear of death and inaction, and grief to militant, confrontational AIDS activism. This new cluster of emotions prevailed over the previous evocations of pride about the community’s self-help, faith in the government’s goodwill, and stoicism in the face of death. (Gould 2001:147)

Through this example, it is also evident that righteous anger is achieved through the framing of injustice as socially caused. It seems to me that as long as trust in the authorities was upheld, and AIDS was considered a “natural” calamity that hit homosexuals particularly hard, stoicism was the dominant emotional attitude. When the AIDS epidemic was instead perceived as a social failure, and a result of contempt and disrespect for homosexuals, this incited righteous anger and militancy.

It should be evident from the examples above that the problem is not really to ask where to look for emotions in social movements, but rather to ask what aspect of emotion in social movements we want to study: as emotional processes and emotions fundamental to the very construction of collective identity and shared interest; as objects of collective emotion management; as alignments with, and/or revolts against dominant emotional culture; as coping or motivating emotions; as emotions contributing to the rise or decline of collective action, and so on. From a structuralist perspective, it could further be added that certain structural conditions give rise to emotions that may constitute the mobilizing impetus of social movements (Barbalet 1998; Collins 2001; Gordon 1990; Kemper 2001), without implying that collective actors simply react to these structural conditions. In this context, I must repeat that in accord with my reasoning in the first part of this chapter, it is my view that structural circumstances do not generate specific emotions, but emotional processes. It is only when these processes are recognized, identified, and classified according to our cultural scheme of emotions that they become specific emotions that may be judged important for collective action. For a social movement to rise, movement actors must further frame the emotional processes, create a social space, and mobilize networks for collective identification and interaction, and so forth.

Concluding reflections

In this chapter, I try to account for my perception of emotions. Inspired by various approaches, I try to advance a “post-structuralist” perspective upon emotions. Thus, I argue that emotions are contingent social constructs that
In this chapter, I have not engaged in a deeper discussion and presentation of various typologies of action, *inter alia* because of restricted time and space, but also because such a discussion is not necessary to advance the argument of emotion’s relevance for action regardless of whether it may be classified as “teleological”/“strategic,” “normative”/“value-oriented,” “expressive”/“dramaturgical” or “communicative” action, see Cohen, J. L. 1985 ‘Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements’, *Social Research* 52(4): 663-716. The point is that while all these types may involve emotional processes differently, and hence, perhaps analytically be referred to as different “emotions,” none of them precludes emotion. Neither should we assume that there is any purely “emotional” action type.

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7. Emotions and emotional culture in late capitalism – context and conflict

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss late capitalism from the perspective of emotional culture. This serves as an introduction to the analysis in chapter eight, but also to advance the general argument that emotional culture is itself an area of conflict that may have implications for the goals and strategies of social movements. If nothing else, the dominant emotional culture may affect the way that movement actors manage and display emotions in mobilization.

It is important to note that while I explore the possibility of a “gap” between what some call “spontaneous” or “authentic” emotions on one hand, and the dominant or prescribed emotional culture conducive to the market on the other, I do not argue that there are any “authentic” or “real” emotions (but as social constructs emotions may obviously be manipulated in various ways). My point is that the gap may be constructed through alternative discourses of emotion, opposing the dominant in terms of “authentic” contra “manipulated” emotions. The “gap” thus constructed articulates a lack of continuity between an imposed and increasingly conscious and self-reflective emotion management and the alternative emotional subcultures where emotion is constructed as “authentic.” In order to make my point, I first discuss the way that production in late capitalism seems to require a cool and detached emotional style, while simultaneously directing emotions to the sphere of consumption. Thereafter, I continue with examples of how the emotional culture of late capitalism is dealt with by two different applications of Durkheim’s theory and concept of collective effervescence.

Emotions in consumption and production

Emotional culture (Stearns 1994) in late capitalism is contingent upon the social construction of emotion and reason as opposite and contradictory phenomena. As argued by Barbalet (Barbalet 1998: 56-59) in non- or early capitalist conceptualization of emotions, “the difference between reason and emotion …

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64 The general social characteristics of “late capitalism” (or “postmodernity”) have been discussed already in the published texts (I-IV), and in assorted places in this book (for instance, chapter one). Moreover, the whole social scientific field of discursivity on the contemporary society and its implications for social structure, social relations, perception of self etc... is too wide to cover here, and I am not interested in, nor competent to settle the debate of the “post-or-not” society.

65 In the analytical construction of the “gap” as an incongruity between potentially antagonistic social constructions, I am grateful for the inspiration provided by Åse, C. 2000 Makten att se: om kropp och kvinnlighet i lagens namn, Malmö: Liber, in her analysis of the gap between the construction of femininity on one hand, and of the female police officer on the other.
is not between rationality and irrationality. But between what we now call ideas and action” (Ibid:58).

In Barbalet’s terms, as capitalism expanded, the market became “a pervasive institution,”66 thus defining the meaning of instrumental and rational behavior. The family – in pre-capitalism “a site of productive activity and collectively relevant symbolic performance” (Barbalet 1998:56) – became associated with reproduction and the nurturing emotions. In fact, it became the confinement of every emotion that was not instrumental to market rationality.

In addition to the nurturing and inward emotions…are those strong feelings which introduce orientations towards persons rather than commodities, and therefore turn aside the pursuit of market interests. Love, hate, fear, and anger are typical examples of such emotions. (Barbalet 1998:59)67

Meanwhile, emotions that did coincide with market rationality, such as confidence, envy, shame, and self-love were no longer called emotions but “attitudes” (Barbalet 1998: 59).

Barbalet’s argument is supported by Stearn’s (1994) historical study of the transformation of emotional culture from that of the 19th Century Victorian society to the culture of today. Stearns argues that contemporary American emotional culture is generally suspicious of all strong emotions, whereas passionate emotions, “good” and “bad,” were an accepted part of the emotional culture in the 19th Century. In line with Hochschild (1983), Stearns argues that the growing service sector promotes a mild emotional style as favorable in customer relations, and fosters a tempered “niceness” which presupposes considerable self-restraint, and secures smooth and frictionless social relations between strangers as well as family members. This general climate of “nice” and “cool” is disrupted by any strong emotional expression, be it anger, sorrow, joy, or happiness.

Stearns (1994) links the changes in emotional culture that began in the 20th Century to the rapid expansion of capitalism, in the course of which, capitalists became weary of angry workers and their strikes. But he also stresses not only the emotional culture in production, but the way that contemporary emotional culture helps to construct a consumer mentality. While emotions are tempered and controlled in the sphere of production, they are let out in the sphere of consumption.

66 “Pervasive institutions are those which color the operations of all others. Under these circumstances, action is entirely instrumental in realizing purposes which will not yield to the modification in the conduct of the action itself, but which is fixed by some principle external to the action. An obvious pervasive institution of this type is the market in capitalist society.” (Barbalet 1998:58)

67 Stearns however shows that anger in the Victorian society was fostered as a male emotion to be channeled into hard work (Stearns 1994).
Heightened consumerism poured new passions into the acquisition of things. Middle-class people, in sum, began to seek experiences and imagery that would allow them to use leisure safely to compensate for the growing stringency of their emotional life. Much leisure became deliberately separate from, almost deliberately antagonistic to, the norms of daily life. (Stearns 1994:272-3)

In late capitalism emotions may be expressed vicariously through e.g. the watching of a movie, or the thrills and excitement of an amusement park. Sorrow and anger are expressed in therapy or are channeled into working out the ideal fit body.

In the early 20th Century, the phenomenon of consumption for consumption’s sake was already commented in social theory and approached from, for instance, the angle of conspicuous consumption and leisure as a means to communicate social status (for instance Veblen 1994). In later developments of theories of the cultural industry, the centrality of amusement, pleasure, and seduction was also added. In the emerging American culture industry of the 1940’s, Adorno and Horkheimer observe that:

Amusement itself becomes an ideal, taking the place of the higher things of which it completely deprives the masses by repeating them in a manner even more stereotyped than the slogans paid for by advertising interests. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000:14)

Amusement, they argue, is social control, it is the means by which the masses are appeased and resistance is undermined. Amusement has a purgatorial, and hence, diluting effect on “genuine personal emotion in real life.” “To be pleased is to say yes.” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000:15)

Bourdieu, in his theory of social distinction, unites both the feature of consumption as a matter of social status and of pleasure. Bourdieu (1999: 365-71) uses the term “fun ethic” for a tendency that he observes among the “new middle classes” – the carriers of consumer culture and postmodernism. In contrast to the “old” bourgeois values of asceticism and duty, Bourdieu argues that the new middle class embraces a “morality of pleasure as a duty. This doctrine makes it a failure, a threat to self-esteem, not to ‘have fun’…pleasure is not only permitted but demanded on ethical as much as scientific grounds” (Bourdieu 1999:367). Bourdieu claims that this “fun ethic” parallels the expansion of consumer culture, encouraging a “consumer morality” and the production of good consumers.

The theme of fun ethic is also implicitly elaborated in Bauman’s writings (Bauman 1995) on postmodern morality. According to Bauman, contemporary individuals have become sensation gatherers in consumer culture, obsessed with the idea of ever new and more intense experiences. A life full of joy and thrilling experiences asserts a person as successful and privileged, protecting
him/her against the fear of existential insecurity, social exclusion, or redundancy. This lifestyle is inscribed in the body, and expressed through bodily fitness.

The postmodern body is first and foremost a receiver of sensations; it imbibes and digests experiences; the capacity of being stimulated renders it an instrument of pleasure. (…) It is not so much the performance of the body that counts, as the sensations the body receives in the course of the performance; those sensations must be deep and deeply gratifying – “thrilling”, “ravishing”, “enrapturing”, “ecstatic.” (Bauman 1995:116)

Attention, also, to the role of other emotions in late capitalism, indeed seems to have slipped in through the back door in consumer culture research, which is no wonder, considering the highly emotional triggers that underpin consumption. Consumer culture in late capitalist societies is reproduced and expanded through a complex interrelation of people’s “needs,” dreams, and “desires,” and the marketing industry’s capacity to incorporate and make use of a range of old and new scientific findings and theories about the human psyche, social behavior, identity construction, and so on, in order to capitalize upon these dreams and desires (Callister and Stern 1999; Ewen 1977; Featherstone 1998; Friedan 2000; Lury 1997).

For instance, in one of the earlier social scientific accounts of how advertising is constructed as a means of “social production” conducive to the needs of mass production, Ewen describes how the science of social psychology was introduced to the advertising industry as early as in the 1920’s (Ewen 1977:33-4). Through advertising, consumption as “social prestige” was enhanced and encouraged. Furthermore, the pursuit of social prestige through consumption and the production of needs to be satisfied in consumption presume that the prospected consumer is not satisfied with him/herself and the life s/he is living. Hence, the incitement of feelings of insecurity and insufficiency must also be monitored.

The use of psychological methods, therefore, attempted to turn the consumer’s critical functions away from the product and toward himself. The determining factor for buying was self-critical and ideally ignored the intrinsic worth of the product. (Ewen 1977:37)

Friedan (Friedan 2000) further accentuates the way that scientific, or semi-scientific inquiry of the emotions of modern housewives was at the centre of attention to the American advertising industry from the beginning of the 1940’s. Women, at the time when Friedan conducted her study (The Feminine Mystique appeared in 1963), were estimated to “wield seventy-five percent of the purchasing power in America” (Friedan 2000:28) primarily through their function as housewives. Gaining access to archives of business commanded
market research, Friedan found plenty of material: “The walls of a ballroom
two-stories high are filled with steel shelves holding a thousand-odd studies for
business and industry, 300,000 individual ‘depth interviews,’ mostly with
American housewives.” (Friedan 2000:27) The industry mapped American
women into three main categories: “The Career Woman,” “The True
Housewife,” and “The Balanced Homemaker.” Advertising concentrated upon
promoting and encouraging the second two categories on behalf of the first,
since the career woman was deemed “extremely ‘unhealthy’…from the seller’s
point of view” (Ibid:28). Friedan observes how the marketing industry invests
enormous resources into manipulating the emotions of women, inciting and
drawing on anxiety; guilt; feelings of insufficiency and self-critique; frustration
and boredom; devotion and loyalty; desire for self-development and creativity;
pride; pleasure; and joy. Indeed, Friedan points out, the motivational research
of the marketing industry had reached a much better understanding of the
mental and social reality of women, than most contemporary sociological and
psychological theory and research.68

From the perspective of communication theory and research, Callister and
Stern (1999) discuss emotions in advertising and marketing in more general
terms. “Emotional manipulations can…be used to gain and keep the audience’s
attention. Emotional responses produce arousal and, consequently, an orienting
response to the stimuli.” (Callister and Stern 1999: 23) In the advertising
industry, they argue, it is assumed that emotionally intense images attract
attention, multiply the chances that the image and message is stored in memory,
and result in a positive attitude toward the brand.

Given that a person is likely to be exposed to an average of 3 000
advertisements a day (Callister and Stern 1999:18) the amount of daily
domotional stimuli of various degrees of intensity, only from the source of
advertising, must be considerable. 69 And the efforts to engage the consumer’s
emotions can be expected to increase with increasing output of advertisements.

[El]emotional responses to advertisements play a critical role in the persuasion
process. Always searching for new, creative, ways to grab and hold attention, to

68 The motivational researchers must be given credit for their insights into the reality of the
housewife’s life and needs – a reality that often escaped their colleagues in academic sociology and
therapeutic psychology, who saw women from the Freudian-functional veil. To their own profit, and
that of their clients, the manipulators discovered that millions of supposedly happy American
housewives have complex needs which home-and-family, love-and-children, cannot fulfill. But, by a
morality that goes beyond the dollar, the manipulators are guilty of using their insights to sell women
things, which, no matter how ingenious, will never satisfy those increasingly desperate needs.” p 42

69 Callister and Stern do not refer to any source for this number, but presumably it is set for a person
in an American urban environment.
break through the advertising clutter, and to make appeals more distinctive and thus more persuasive, advertisers are turning in ever-increasing numbers to emotional strategies. Their goal is often to shock consumers and make them think. (Callister and Stern 1999:18)

From the point of view of production, things look a bit different. In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild (1983) presents her study of air hostesses and the theory of emotional labor. Apart from the emotion management and emotion work undertaken following the general emotional culture, Hochschild speaks of “emotional labor” to capture the way that the service sector sets its own feeling rules for its workers.

I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value. I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in private context where they have use value. (Hochschild 1983: 7)

Hochschild argues that when emotions are used for the purpose of exchange value, spelled out and prescribed by the emotional culture of the company rather than negotiated in private relations, the problem may arise that people increasingly adopt an instrumental stance toward emotions. Part of the use value of emotions is their signal function (see chapter six), but at work, one may be asked – like the air hostess who is insulted by a passenger – to disregard this function in order to do a good job. “Normal” emotional reactions are thus inhibited or confused, something that may have consequences for the way emotions are experienced in private as well.

In his critique of Hochschild’s theory, Barbalet (1998) argues that emotional labor can not be proven to be more emotionally depleting than any other labor, and that the level of job autonomy is instead the crucial mechanism that separates emotionally draining jobs from those that are not. He further argues that since emotion rarely comes out as a finished product, but is in fact “always in process,” emotions produce emotions; successful emotion management, for instance, may give rise to pride in one’s job skills. Emotional reactions to boring and repetitive work further engender coping responses from workers such as “ritual games” or “playful flexibility” (Wouters in Barbalet 1998: 181). This shows, according to Barbalet, that commodification of phenomena such as emotions is never complete because unlike other consumer objects the emotion

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70 In “Mobilization and the moral shock” (Text IV) I argue that the AMF “subvertisement” strategy is constructed precisely this way. The example indicates that the use of images (and music) targeting emotional processes and influencing behavior, is increasing, and social movement actors may be adopting this strategy as a way to signal their presence and as a means of raising awareness or, like in the case of AMF as a strategy turned against consumer culture.
of nice and friendly, i.e. the friendly smile, remains the property of the worker: “they continue to be possessed by those who have the... pleasing smile” (Barbalet 1998: 182).

These considerations are justified, of course, but in my view, Barbalet misses the point. Even if emotional labor does not affect emotion more than other labor, this does not belie the argument that emotions are increasingly in demand as a product in the service sector, and nor does it erase the fact that the service sector is expanding in the Western world, while the sector of monotonous industrial labor is diminishing. This means that in order to adapt to the job market, more and more workers have to learn to perform emotional labor. This, as argued by Hochschild, further entails a generally increasing level of emotion management on demand. As a result, we may live in a society where emotions are consciously managed on a daily basis to a much greater extent than in societies that do not commodify emotions. It must not necessarily lead to emotional depletion, but I argue below that it may lead to the popular experience of a “gap” between what people take to be spontaneous emotions and manipulated emotions. This, further, is a structurally produced conflict that may be articulated in a social movement.

If we move from the service sector in particular, to the general emotional climate of production in late capitalism in general, as Sennett (Sennett 1998) argues in *The Corrosion of Character*, we become aware that the present state of capitalism with its ideal of flexible organizations undermines the creation of stable identity constructions, long term social relations and commitments, solidarity, and care for others. It further gives rise to insecurity and anxiety as a permanent condition, as people are isolated with their fears of being the “next to go” when the company downsizes or reorganizes itself again and again. Most interesting for my argument here, is that the laid-off person who is declared redundant, is expected to shoulder the responsibility for his/her own fate and reframe the calamity in terms of an opportunity to show his/her qualities on the job market, in the search for new, insecure, short-term employment.

The flexible economy further favors short-term teamwork and networks as the desirable production unit (see for instance Lash and Urry 1987; Lee 1993). Stable coalitions at the workplace are broken up by new superficial constellations (Lindgren 2001). In this context of continuous re-organization and “flexibility,” emotions and emotion work of the employees become a central concern to company management (see for instance Poder 2004). The interest in emotions is not only motivated by the need to effect smooth transitions, emotions are also considered exploitable resources that increase the
efficiency of the workforce. For instance, it is argued that emotions such as trust and confidence may be mobilized to increase profit (see for instance Kramer and Tyler 1996).

Altogether, this condition favors workers who are able to be nice, volatile in their social relations, cooperative, optimistic, and prone to “move on” from project to project as well as stay cool when confronted by a dismissal. It demands a great deal of self-control to not react with disappointment, sadness, despair, or anger – or at a minimum, to avoid showing these feelings. While most people may still reason that these emotional reactions are “normal” given the circumstances, most people will probably also comply with the rules and realize that sentimental reactions are not “constructive” (or that such reactions diminish one’s chances of finding a new job).

In Sandlund’s (Sandlund 2004) study of the social organization of emotions in talk-in-interaction, “frustration” is observed as an outcome of the collision between the formal rules set by the context in which the interaction is situated (academic seminars) and what I suggest is an imagined “un-restricted” situation where the persons concerned would be able to freely express their feelings. In the specific cases analyzed, the respondents to critique are required to merely sit, listen to the other students’ comments, and not interrupt or defend themselves. But Sandlund shows that these rules are extremely difficult to follow, especially when the respondent feels misunderstood or unjustly criticized. “Frustration” here denotes the “anger-like” emotions that can be observed in the respondent’s facial and bodily expressions as well as occasional transgression of the rules; reactions that are negatively answered by the group and rebuked by the professor heading the seminar. These findings, if transferred to the “emotional labor” situation, or generally, to the prescribed emotional cool of late capitalism, indicate that persons might feel frustration piling up when forced to emotion management that is experienced as contradictory of the imagined “spontaneous” emotional reaction.

If the discussion above appears reasonable, then it can be concluded that emotions in late capitalism have a particular place for cultivation in the sphere of consumption, while in the sphere of production, reason and instrumentality are supposed to preclude (or control) emotion. The general emotional culture of Western society is “cool.” In the sphere of consumption, amusement and pleasure are cultivated through the fun ethic and the consumer morality. This is clearly a cultural tendency that runs counter to the early capitalist era that honored the ability to postpone pleasure, to display a high sense of duty, and to let the fruits of one’s labor pile up (Bourdieu 1999; Weber 1995).
Though I have not dealt explicitly with the family here, it is for reasons of limitation; the changes and development in the family institution and intimate life is a key component in contemporary emotional culture (see for instance Giddens 1992; Hochschild 2003). Some aspects may be pointed out however: for instance, the emergence of the “pure relationship” as a contemporary form of intimacy suggested by Giddens (1992) is “a transactional negotiation of personal ties by equals...a wholesale democratizing of the interpersonal domain” (Giddens 1992:3). It also means greater vulnerability and risk-taking since the pure relationship builds on “confluent love” which is “active, contingent love” (Ibid: 61-2) where mutual trust – based only on intimacy with no external support – is a key ingredient (Ibid:138). Lovers are supposed to maintain their autonomy and independence of one another, accepting that when love ends, they will part as friends.

Thus, on one hand, the pure relationship means that lovers may become more intimate and more vulnerably exposed to each other than ever, and on the other hand that they consider the relationship a “transactional negotiation.” Given that lovers may disagree on the point when love “ends” and when it is time to move on, the “pure relationship” seems to demand considerable emotional control. The parallels seem to be evident; both to the way that consumption presumes an ability to switch feelings on and off, and to the way that workers in the flexible economy are expected to deal emotionally with short-term, project-oriented employment.

These parallels are implicitly pointed out by Hochschild (Hochschild 2003) who rephrases the “pure relationship” in terms of “the commercial spirit of intimate life,” arguing that previously separate emotional codes for men and women in contemporary society are merging into a unisex emotional code, where women are taught to detach, cool down, guard their independence, and avoid commitment.

Cool modern [advice] books prepare the self for a commercial spirit of intimate life by offering as ideal a self well-defended against getting hurt. (…) The emotion work that matters is control of the feelings of fear, vulnerability, and the desire to be comforted. The ideal self doesn’t need much, and what it does need it can get for itself. (Hochschild 2003: 24)

This unisex emotional code, she argues, is consistent with the cool and controlled emotional culture of late capitalism.

There are many other aspects of the transformation of the intimate sphere in capitalism/the bourgeois society such as the search for self-identity and the

7 Stearn’s (1994) study as a matter of fact relies to a large extent upon advice to parents in their raising of children.
“narcissistic vulnerability” inherent to cultural disembedding (Ziehe 1989); the besiegement of the family (Lasch 1979); and the imperative of self-actualization and self-fulfilment (Giddens 1995) – the latter also connected to Bauman’s discussion (Bauman 1995) about the sensation gatherers. Though these theories will not be dealt with here, they underscore the complexity of the processes of change, and the interdependence of micro-worlds of subjective experience and identity, and the macro-world of cultural, social, and economic structures.

What is also important to note in this context is the ambivalence of these processes, for on one hand they contain possibilities and promises for the individual, while on the other hand they increase the strain and pressure on him/her. The fact that these processes are structured by the market also makes self-actualization, and freedom from the negative constraints of the social control and determination of pre-capitalist society, highly dependent upon the market and consumer culture. This ambivalence is at the heart of movements such as culture jamming – protesting consumer culture with its own means, and from subject positions which are highly contingent upon these market-structured processes of cultural disembedding, fragmentation, and individualization.

Post-emotionalism and collective effervescence

Building on Durkheim (Durkheim 1994) and Riesman (Riesman 1950), Mestrovic (1997) advances the idea of “postemotional society.” While some of the points he makes support all the above conclusions, Mestrovic is also of interest to my argument because his theory articulates the conflict I have suggested, primarily as an opposition between “real” emotions and “postemotions.” “Real” or “authentic” emotions, Mestrovic argues, are “spontaneous” emotions, and these can only be generated by the collective rituals of a “genuine community,” which is in turn reinforced through collective rituals, producing collective effervescence and solidarity (social integration) as suggested by Durkheim. Contemporary society, however, is too complex and fragmented, too pluralistic, too imbued with media representations and mediated already-cognitively-interpreted emotional experiences, for these preconditions to be met. Moreover, he argues, “postemotional individuals are too cynical and too skilled at deconstruction to ‘let go’ emotionally and experience collective effervescence” (Mestrovic 1997:119).

In postemotional society, Mestrovic claims, no emotional experience can take place without the cognitive assessment of its quality, intensity, or correctness. Stating with Durkheim that “social life of the first degree is
emotional, while social life of the second degree is cognitive” (Ibid: 104), he argues that a society that can no longer inspire collective effervescence in its members, is a society that can no longer sustain (“authentic”) emotions. The outcome is cynicism and passivity.

People, however, look for emotional outlets and ways to experience emotions collectively, which they find in constructed compensations; commercially and/or politically exploited second-order emotions that are not spontaneous and therefore not authentic. Lacking the “genuine” communal soil from where “real” emotions spring, are safely expressed, and acted upon, people anxiously look for external cues as to what to feel and express in various situations. They become increasingly “other-directed” (Riesman 1950). “Other-directedness” denotes the volatile, friendly, nice, happy, consumer-oriented, and politically correct contemporary personality traits that we have already touched upon above.

I believe Mestrovic’s theory about postemotional society contains the important observation that in contemporary society, not only the commercialization of emotions has brought about a more conscious relation to feelings, but also social processes such as fragmentation, pluralism, generally high levels of reflexivity, and an increasingly mediated culture. People increasingly do not know if others share and support their emotional assessments and hence, control themselves. The idea of “authentic” emotional reactions instead grows out of, and is sustained by, social interaction at a micro- or middle range level among the particular group/s of people with whom one identifies. Translating this into post-structuralist terms, the hegemonic discourse of emotion is cool, instrumental, and leveled out. But this dominant discourse coexists with a multitude of alternative particularistic discourses in which emotions are constructed and experienced quite differently.

This point is central in Maffesoli’s (Maffesoli 1996) reasoning about the contemporary as the “time of the tribes.” The neo-tribes are emotional communities centered on the maintenance of their own internal solidarity and shared aesthetic sense (i.e. what is good and right from the point of view of the community). The emergence of the neo-tribes in Maffesoli’s account marks the break with “modern” mass society and large scale collective consciousness/effervescence. Hence, while at the societal level there is disintegration and fragmentation, the neo-tribes represent compensatory, highly integrated micro-social universes.

Collins’ (2004) theory of interaction ritual chains further elaborates this argument. As we have seen (in chapter six), Collins argues that an interaction
SOME groups have more resources for carrying out their rituals than others, so that some groups have more solidarity and thus can lord it over those who have less; and... these ritually privileged groups have more impressive symbols and fill their members with more emotional energy. (Collins 2004: 41)

Accordingly, even if all social groups have their own IRs and draw from their own symbols, power and status is unequally distributed in between these groups. Although Collins is primarily occupied with the way that power and status is distributed within groups, IRs are stratifying mechanisms of inclusion.

72 This micro-version of collective effervescence would be to Mestrovic the same as surrendering to the fact that contemporary individuals resort to "magic" in place of "religion," i.e. privatized rituals and fragmented, isolated sets of beliefs and moral standards, see Mestrovic, S. G. 1997 Postemotional Society, London: SAGE. "If Durkheim is correct, the society’s collective effervescence is the real source of emotion and postemotionalism is located in the private, magical efforts to imitate this authentic emotion." (emphasis added, p 105)
and exclusion both within and between groups. Hence, we may draw the obvious conclusion that the symbols of these dominating groups are valuable to subordinated groups as well.73

Collins’ theory of the stratifying mechanism of IR chains, in its almost exclusive focus upon the way that these constitute and reproduce solidarity within groups – while less attention is given to the overall societal level of social (dis)integration – nevertheless may be taken to support the point I am trying to make: the emotional differentiation between groups is not only a matter of symbols, collective effervescence, and EE, but also of emotional cultures. While the dominant emotional culture postulates a certain emotional style, this culture is only partly accepted. In fact it may be contested by the emotional subcultures to which the individual belongs, and whose feeling and expression rules are embodied and perceived as “spontaneous.”

At this point, it may have been noticed that the difference between Mestrovic and Collins, in their application of Durkheim’s theory of collective effervescence and solidarity, is a difference in focus upon structure and agency – in Mestrovic’s macro-perspective, emotions and social integration are lost, while in Collin’s predominantly micro-perspective, they are alive and kicking. As a last point, I expand some upon Collins, and connect to both him and Mestrovic to discuss the occurrence of large scale interaction rituals and social integration in late capitalism.

Collins divides interaction rituals in the categories of formal (weddings, funerals, sports events, etc…) and natural (sociable gatherings, and so on)74 and in three categories of intensity: interaction rituals of the first order – face-to-face; second order – mediated or recycled; and third order – thinking. Collins suggests that mediated IRs are not capable of generating the same intensity as face-to-face rituals, because of the lack of sensory contact and bodily synchronization that occurs when people are gathered in the same place. Examining the way that rituals work when mediated through television, for instance, he asserts that television might generate some collective effervescence through the broadcasting of image and sound, but only if it successfully mediates the participation of those physically present – the crowd in the

73 If this line of argument is followed through, it leads to Bourdieu’s theory of cultural and symbolic capital and habitus, see Bourdieu, P. 1999 Distinction - a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, London: Routledge.

74 “We may refer to those interactions as ‘natural rituals’ that build up mutual focus and emotional entrainment without formally stereotyped procedures; and to those that are initiated by a commonly recognized apparatus of ceremonial procedures as ‘formal rituals.’” (Collins 2004:50) Natural rituals are spontaneous and un-reflected and occur both in small-scale, such as micro-social interaction, and large-scale, such as when large crowds gather spontaneously to protest political decisions or institutions, often thereby inventing new formal rituals and new sacred objects.
football stadium, or the audience in the television studio. The viewer may intensify the feeling of participation in the mediated ritual if s/he is able to share it with another viewer. Collins concludes that:

…it appears that large-scale, relatively formal rituals come off better by remote communication than do small-scale natural rituals. This seems to be so because large-scale rituals are working with established symbols, already build up through previous iteration of an IR chain. (Collins 2004: 62)

I believe it is wrong to dismiss mediated small-scale natural rituals of the kind that we see in soap-operas, reality dramas and the like. Our society is inundated with mediated IRs of every scale, either offering already established symbols, or inventing new symbols but in a mediated context. Mass media is by far the largest source of collectively shared symbols that exists today. Small-scale, face-to-face IRs may reinvent, transform, or reject these symbols, but it is not possible to ignore them.

Further, I argue that if large-scale collective IRs of the kind that give rise to collective effervescence at a societal level are less common today due to the fragmentation of the society in which we live, it is also clear that when IRs of this dimension take place, they are predominantly staged within the parameters of consumer culture. They are simultaneously staged as face-to-face rituals and mediated, second-order rituals.75 The collective solidarity and sense of morality that is the outcome of such events are more or less directly connected to consumption.76

Concluding reflections

In this chapter, I argue that the dominant emotional culture of late capitalism may be observed both in the sphere of consumption, and the sphere of production. The postulated “cool” of this dominant discourse, however, is opposed by multiple “privately” negotiated emotional subcultures, through which a “gap” is articulated between the social construction of “real” emotions pertaining to the embodied emotional styles of the subcultures on one hand, and the social construction of manipulated or “postemotions” on the other hand. This opposition in itself is a kind of resistanæ, but the “gap” is also a

75 In Sweden, one example that is sure to be recognized is the Eurovision Song Contest. The Olympic Games is another example, more generally recognized. In 2004, it was estimated that almost four billion people around the world watched the Olympics on television.

76 Bauman goes as far as claiming that the advertising industry is taking over the political function of setting the code of good or bad choices: “This code prompts one to treat the world as primarily a container of potential objects of consumption; following the principle of consumption, it encourages the search for satisfaction; and following the principle of consumer society, it induces individuals to view the arousal of desires clamouring to be satisfied as the guiding rule of the chooser’s life and a criterion of a worthy and successful life.” (Bauman 1999:76)
conflict that may be articulated in collective protest action and the formation of social movements. For instance, it may be argued that the autonomous spaces created by social movement actors are also spaces for strategic and semi-conscious cultivation of “spontaneous” emotions. This is indicated, for instance, in the fluid affinity groups observed by McDonald (McDonald 2002). Although McDonald’s purpose is not to study emotions, he makes frequent reference to feelings of friendship, respect, trust, and so forth. Another example where “real” emotions are instead constructed and expressed as vengefulness is offered by Peterson (Peterson 2005) in her study of militant groups and the infamous “black bloc”\(^7\) minority of the Global Justice Movement.

Further, while the fun ethic of contemporary society is considered by some commentators to be a sign of complete surrender, I argue that it may be turned against itself, so to paraphrase Adorno and Horkheimer, “to be pleased means to say no.” Social movement actors protesting consumer culture are well aware of the fact that they are struggling “on the terrain of desire.” Finally, the manipulation of emotions by the marketing industry may also be used as a strategy in mobilization and consciousness-raising. The last point has already been developed in my analysis of AMF visuals (Text IV). The following chapter offers an analysis where the focus is directed more generally to the emotional culture of culture jamming in relation to the dominant emotional culture of late capitalism suggested in this chapter. Thereby, I also analyze how the “gap” is articulated in culture jamming, and how the fun ethic is used as a means to protest consumer culture and the large corporations.

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\(^7\) The “black bloc” refers to the minority of usually masked activists that resort to violence and sabotage in the midst of the generally peaceful and non-violent demonstrations of, for instance, the Global Justice Movement.
8. An emotion theoretical perspective on culture jamming

In this chapter, I analyze emotions in culture jamming with the purpose of illuminating how emotion sociology may be useful in understanding contemporary protest and social movements in formation. In some ways, this analysis rounds off my general undertaking in attempting to understand the meaning of culture jamming. It draws from the findings/conclusions of the previously published analyses; it settles upon an emotion perspective as a fruitful theoretical “trigger” to illuminate the questions why culture jammers protest this way, what they achieve, and how they achieve it; and it indicates how an account of the role of emotions contributes to “bending” central concepts in social movement theory, such as collective action and collective identification; and finally, it integrates all my material on culture jamming; the interviews as well as the website information and data collected from texts and visuals produced by the Adbusters Media Foundation.

While emotions such as fun and joy are obvious and explicit ingredients in culture jamming, I argue that it is possible to identify a range of other important emotions, though the naming of these is, in my case, largely an arbitrary analytical task. Apart from “fun,” “irony,” and “humor,” the empirical material varies greatly with regard to naming key emotions; from the explicit elaboration of emotions such as “shame” and “rage” in Lasn’s book; through the unique statements about “fear” made by Bill from the Surveillance Camera Players; to the highly technical interview with Natalie from the Bureau of Inverse Technology, almost void of emotion words. Hence, the resulting emotion categories displayed in this analysis are biased toward the emotion words that do occur in one or several places, and which are used as sensitizing mechanisms to analyze the rest of the material. This process also has been guided by the theoretical assumptions and empirical findings in previous research into emotions and social movements. Following my general argument in previous chapters, there can be no doubt that there are emotional processes involved in culture jamming, but they may be accorded other names and other meanings than suggested here.

I have chosen to frame the analysis in the first part of this chapter in terms of the feeling rules and emotion work of culture jamming, where I analyze the aspects of emotional processes turned into objects of conscious or unconscious emotion management. In the second part, I look at how emotional processes named as emotional energy, and ensuing positive emotions, constitute the individual motivation and reward of culture jamming, while I
argue that they also presume the involvement of a broader collective identification process. Culture jamming may seem to be an individualistic protest form (in the sense of isolation) but it is not.

**Emotions, feeling rules and emotion work**

**Fun/humor and irony**

What initially comes to mind in the study of culture jamming is its use of humor and irony (Woodside 2001). Most culture jamming actions or products are indeed funny, and make bystanders/viewers laugh or smile, whether it is spoof-ads and uncommercials (Adbusters Media Foundation/AMF, Casseurs de Pub/CdP), the dramatic appearance of Reverend Billy, 78 the worshipping surveillance cameras (Surveillance Camera Players/SCP), or a street exhibition of the graffiti writer (Institute for Applied Autonomy/IAA). While fun can be seen as synonymous with enjoyment (Sandlund 2004), humor and irony are symbolic devices productive of emotions. It is true that humor and irony most often give rise to laughter or smile, but these expressions may not necessarily be connected to pleasure — there are many different kinds of laughter or smile (Critchley 2002). While humor brings fun to mind, irony seems to carry more ambivalent connotations. 79 Consequently, most jammers agree that they use humor and try to be funny, but the value of irony — and whether or not they also use irony — is more disputed. The AMF deviates in this matter, as they sometimes use less funny but more ironic images to get the message through. These images are more intended to “shock” the viewer than to make him/her laugh (Text IV). Humor, to the AMF, seems to be a dubious resource (Text II).

The groups I have interviewed do, however, embrace humor and recommend it as a useful instrument to protesters. “It’s a personal quality as much as a style of culture jamming, but all culture jammers obviously like irony and humor.” (Bill, SCP) The fun in culture jamming is appreciated both as a

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78 “Basically I have a Saturday Night Live character that I do another thing with. Saturday Night Live has been corporatized for so many years; they can not take a position. They’ve become emotionally frenetic, with no… Real humour has a kind of wisdom in it.” (Rev Billy)

79 Irony can be recognized in three ways: first, there is ‘the figure of verbal irony as meaning the opposite of what is said’; second, there is ‘dramatic irony as the discrepancy between expectation and result, or the discrepancy between the appearance of a situation and its underlying reality’; and third, irony denotes ‘a dominant dialectic mode of thought that permeates the text and thus makes it contradictory, or ambiguous.’ See p 8 in Wennö, E. 1993 ‘Ironic Formula in the Novels of Beryl Bainbridge’ Department of English Studies, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg. In my published texts, I have separated irony and humor according to the largely ad-hoc model that irony may produce also negative emotions, while humor is directly connected to pleasure. This way, it seems, is also the way that humor is separated from irony by the culture jammers. I now believe, however, that irony, satire etc in fact are best conceived of as sub-categories to humor. See Critchley, S. 2002 On Humour, London: Routledge. Humor then is a complex category that may embrace many different strategies and produce a variety of emotions.
personal quality and a personal need as well as a way to transmit the message and attract attention. “For us, it’s really critical to be able to approach people with a sort of humor.” (John, IAA)

Humor to me is essential, just personally necessary. Also it’s useful in getting media attention if you can make something funny and the media likes it. So anything you do, any kind of struggle, anytime you want to get the media’s attention you’re just trying to make something funny. (Ray, Rmark)

Though many culture jams appear not only funny, but also ironic, jammers are divided both in terms of their judgment about the usefulness of irony as well as their definition of what irony is. Irony works only in specific contexts, where the sender of a message and the receiver share cognitive and emotional schemata (Hochschild 1983; Wettergren 2003b; Wettergren 2005). Some jammers explicitly embrace irony; the clearest example of which is Natalie from BIT who says, “I do a lot [of irony]. That’s one’s best tool.” But Natalie also told me about her frustration when her projects are misunderstood, in the sense that irony sometimes misses its target, and is not detected by the audience. One example is the “Suicide Box” project in which the BIT installed a camera at the Golden Gate Bridge, recording people who jumped. When exhibited, the average of the suicide rate was indexed to the Dow Jones industrial average, ironically suggesting, “Inverse proportionality is predicted and may provide concrete measure of civic morality and character in the population.”

The interesting thing that happened with this project was people usually asked me what’s the correlation between the suicide rate at the Golden Gate Bridge and the Dow Jones Industrial average. The answer to that is absolutely none, why would there be! But I get that question over and over and over. And there is this very real cultural expectation that the Dow Jones Industrial average does somehow have this comprehensive representation of power (…) It’s absurd! The idea that the profitability of fifteen companies would somehow represent all of these other social issues is insane but of course it’s real. (Natalie, BIT)

As we see, the irony of this project was really the irony of “real cultural expectations” – i.e. a widespread and common discourse that suggests that the ups and downs of the market really determines people’s lives. Juxtaposing the socio-psychological trauma (suicide) to an economic index, the project was meant to expose the irony but was instead received as serious because the audience was unfamiliar with the much narrower critical discourse.

Hence, irony is not straightforwardly embraced by all culture jammers. For instance, while John from IAA and Ray from Rmark may agree that the

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80 The same goes of course for humor in general, though I would argue that the understanding of irony is contingent upon a more distanced, intellectual or cognitively elaborated relationship to its object.

outcome or the result of their projects seem to be ironic, they reject my
suggestion that it is ironic, because irony is connected to fakery.

I hate irony! No, I don’t hate irony… It’s [the police officer using the graffiti robot] ironic but it’s also true… Here’s the difference: We built this machine and this police officer actually used it. Which is very different than paying someone or finding someone to dress up like a police officer and have his picture taken using it. That’s the sort of empty kind of gesture that is meant to be kind of ironic but it’s fairly shallow and terribly easy to do… Insofar as irony is a source of humor it’s valuable to us, but when irony becomes a stance it gets really boring, really quickly. (John, IAA)

Hence, irony according to John is primarily fakery because the ironic composition – juxtaposing incompatible stances or objects – may be strategically constructed rather than coincidental. Ray, however, speaks about doing just that, but because what is constructed could really happen, it is not ironic:

I don’t think we use irony. We do things that are simple. Either… some of the things that we have sponsored like voteauction.com people really thought that it was a system that enabled people to sell their votes. That’s not ironic that’s just like lying. And then when it was revealed it was not ironic at all it was just saying that was false but it really happens. I think it’s more powerful to say well this is exactly what is happening in the world now, here it is, here is the picture… And not say “you know wink wink”, there’s nothing to wink about it’s like really very clear. (emphasis added, Ray, Rtmrk)

What is common to both these accounts of irony is that irony seems to be connected to the telos of an action, rather than considered a means to an end. If something is intentionally ironic, it is also not sincere.

The sincerity of the cause of culture jammers notwithstanding, irony seems to be an outcome of the “hide-and-seek” character of culture jamming, which often appears from the inside of a discourse but reveals itself as a critique of the very same discourse. In doing what the opponents do, just doing it a little bit more extreme, irony is produced as an unintended effect. Such a hide-and-seek game in itself demands insider know-how and expertise, and jammers tend to get their professional skills from the discourses they choose as targets. Being inside is, according to many of the interviewees, a good start for successful critique. They use the codes and signs of the dominant discourses to deliver critique against the very same discourses, simultaneously alleviating the tensions in their own sometimes paradoxical position (Text II, III). Irony handles contradictions. “Irony is the tone we strike when we can’t hang on and can’t let go.” (Hochschild 2003: 47) It is possible that the actions of culture jamming appear ironic because they reveal inconsistencies and hence, contingency of
objectified discourse. Critchley discusses humor in general from this perspective:

The incongruities of humour both speak out of a massive congruence between joke structure and social structure, and speak against those structures by showing that they have no necessity. The anti-rite of the joke shows the sheer contingency or arbitrariness of the social rites in which we engage. By producing a consciousness of contingency, humour can change the situation in which we find ourselves, and can even have a critical function with respect to society. (Critchley 2002: 10)

Fun is – as indicated in the initial excerpts – also perceived as an important reward in doing protest, making it meaningful for its own sake. I return to this aspect of fun as reward when I discuss emotional energy below; but for the sake of argument in this section, it is important to note that fun is not only a means but also an end. The interviewees readily acknowledge this, even if they seem to think that it makes them less “real” activists (Wettergren 2003a). “It’s very fun. (...) Obviously you get a significant reward. I think it’s important to realize that you’re doing this not for other people, but for yourself also. And it’s important to me, it has to be enjoyable, it has to be fun...” (Ray, Remark) The joy and pleasure of culture jamming is strongly advanced in AMF leader Kalle Lasn’s (1999) book Culture Jam. “It’s fun to wrestle with titans. It’s exhilarating to throw a mega-corporation like McDonald’s or Nike or Calvin Klein to the mat with the awesome momentum of its own icons and marketing hype...” (Lasn 1999: 130)

Humor and irony, furthermore, are empowering devices in the sense of increasing the security and self-confidence of participants in protest. When John from IAA talks about the necessity of humor, he adds, “Abby Hoffman talked about this, this idea that you can sort of disarm the opposition (...) if you approach in a fun and entertaining sort of way.” As a way to “disarm the opposition,” the humorous approach may thus be especially useful when jammers transmit their messages through face-to-face interaction on the street. Not knowing beforehand if they will meet opponents or sympathizers, humor is a safe way to move about; even opponents laugh. Smile or laughter further signals friendliness and sociability from the perspective of bystanders and activists alike.

You can see what I’m like, I’m funny, or to me, I have a sense of humor. I like people. I like to meet people…. I know that when we are performing [if people] are smiling or laughing I know they understand. A smile or a laugh means that they get it. (emphasis added, Bill, SCP)

The fact is that social movement actors in face-to-face situations are sometimes harassed and insulted by the public, as shown by Benski’s analysis of bystander
reactions to the manifestations of Women in Black in Israel (Benski 2005). While such attacks may be an effect of provocative messages, it is also clear that manifestations may disrupt the everyday routine of bystanders, which is in itself a provocations (see Garfinkel 1984). Hence, humorous protest lowers the risk of angry reactions, not only from opponents, but from people in general.

The Surveillance Camera Players (SCP) and Reverend Billy are in fact the two groups that most often seem to find themselves in situations where aggressive confrontation has to be channeled and where fear has to be managed. As explained by Bill from SCP, the advantage of humor is that the activists also enjoy themselves and in this sense overcome their fear.

Most people at first are afraid to do what we do. It’s amazing to me; I used to be afraid to do this too. When we used to perform in Washington Square Park, I was so afraid that I wouldn’t go there without a lawyer with us from the NYCLU. You have to show people not to be afraid. And once they see that they don’t have to be afraid, and that it is actually fun, they are won over for ever. (emphasis added, Bill, SCP)

Fun and humor have the functions both of reassuring bystanders and opponents that the group is non-violent, and dissolving fear in the activists (Flam 2004). Bill also told me that his group avoids big demonstrations or interacting with these regular kinds of activists because of the head-to-head activist-police situations that may arise. “One is at risk, physically, of being beaten up, sprayed, gassed by the police. And I don’t want to expose myself or the members of the group to that sort of abuse.” 82

So far, we can conclude that irony and humor are important symbolic devices in culture jamming, and that fun/pleasure is a prominent emotion upon which the very meaning of protest is based. From this, we may also derive a feeling rule stating that protest should be fun. In the embrace of fun, meanwhile, jammers seem to abhor boredom.

82 The other interviewees, too, tend to differentiate between their own groups and the groups that partake in the Global Justice Movement manifestations; but they give entirely different explanations for this. They primarily emphasize that what they do is funnier, more instantly rewarding, or is simply something that they are good at. This is not to say that they reject the Global Justice Movement; on the contrary, they aim at intersecting with it, providing techniques for its activists, or assist them in their efforts to reach the mass media (Text III) The Surveillance Camera Players is the only group who seemed to really reject being associated with the protesters of the Global Justice Movement, and the explanation given was the fruitless escalation of violence and fear between protesters and police. “We try to show the police] that not all protesters hate them. When the police come I am not afraid of it, I can talk to them and explain. That to me is a way of showing them we are not like typical protesters.” (Bill, SCP)
"Boredom vs. "liberation of desire"

Practically all the interviewees agree that humorous protest makes it easier to engage people. 

If the revolution isn’t any fun they aren’t gonna show up for it, you know, that’s like a cliché now… The bottom line is that one of the reasons that people get involved after these campaigns is that…there’s a sense that you’re doing something (…) of course, but also it’s a hell of a lot of fun. (…) So I think it’s really important if you want a broader movement that you can kind of engage that sort of energy and use it. (John, IAA)

According to the above excerpt, fun is a precondition for engagement, so obvious, that it has become a cliché. Given the fun ethic of late capitalism and consumer culture, this seems to be a logical and correct observation, but the importance of fun in culture jamming also has to do with jammers’ analysis of the specific field they are fighting on.

Controlling people’s desire has just become so important to the world economy. If culture jamming in one sense is hacking the media to get your own meanings across, then you’re in this sort of desire economy. That’s the terrain you’re fighting on. So if your politics isn’t about that, you sort of miss the boat. (Peretti)

The liberation of desire from corporate control, or put differently, re-gaining control of the means of providing pleasure, becomes a critical point of resistance, both because our culture celebrates fun and entertainment and because this celebration is shaped by and channeled into consumption. In the jammer’s understanding, a protest movement against corporate control and consumer culture has few chances of succeeding because it will always be more pleasurable to be a consumer and “follow your desire” than to resist consumption and “repress desire”. The point, then, is to show that resistance is not repression, but liberation of desire.

I think that some of the people who are in it for the fun of it, their point is that politics should be about a party, or should be about celebration. (…) It has to be about having fun too, it has to be about desire and desire being productive in this society and not just about the repression of desire. (Peretti)

People who are in favor of the advertising industry depict those who are against as sad people, they don’t like consumption, they don’t like life. I think it is very important precisely to have this joyful image and to say ‘It’s not consumption that makes me happy. So, I don’t like consumption but that doesn’t mean that I have to live like a Mormon.’ You have to disconnect the joy of life from consumption. (my translation, Vincent, Casseurs de Pub)

Corollary to this is a very strong incentive to avoid being boring, which in this context is the same as being “didactic.” “[W]hen we are engaging audiences with difficult messages…you don’t want to walk into a PhD student lab and say
‘you guys are making things that are killing people, and you ought to be…’ No one would want to do that.” (emphasis added, John, IAA) The interviewees emphatically reject what they perceive as heavy and boring ways to teach bystanders and audiences the right way to do and think. Interestingly, they exemplify this with the labor or communist movement, and they seem to draw upon a widely shared consensus in this judgment.

We don’t want to fight…give our sweat and blood for a political movement that means everyone has economic equality but no fun. …If you just say that economic equality is the main purpose of your movement then people will just point to the former Soviet Union. (emphasis added, Peretti)

“We don’t like the political types who are very very serious and always talking about ‘the proletarians’ and ‘the working class’…nobody likes that.” (emphasis added, Bill, SCP) The interviewees thus talk about a general cultural context that makes the serious and didactic way of mobilizing people an impossible option.

It seems to me that the post-60s [defines the political] as the heavy didactic, whiny "I’m right, I’m right I’m right, I’m correct, I’m correct, I’m correct" political talk. That has to be exploded, that has to be changed. People don’t have the patience for didactic heavy “let me teach you, sit still, let me teach you.” In a way it’s sad that that’s the case because I know that the abbreviated attention span has to do with the media. (Rev. Billy)

Reverend Billy’s point about the abbreviated attention span provides another angle upon the necessity to be funny; it’s not only an effect of communism rejected or reshaped as didacticism and repression, but also the effect of the way mass media shapes culture. On Reverend Billy’s website, this general approach of culture jamming is captured in a few sentences: “Don’t confront any workers with anger or moral superiority. Never be utopian, never recite the way things should be. Drama saves us, didacticism kills.” The choice to shape protest as something fun, to deliver critique in a funny way, is an adaptation to a cultural context where there is very little space and patience for complex messages.

Another aspect of the rejection of boredom may be the experience of a life surrounded by chain stores and shopping malls, as suggested in the following reflection made by Peretti:

Imagine growing up in a city where you’re surrounded by… malls and the social life happens in parking lots in front of the McDonalds, everything you consume is this mass produced thing, where there’s a billion other copies of the same hamburger produced… the things that you feel, there’s a sense of being spiritually detonating, culturally sterile, the sense that you want something

interesting to happen, you want some spectacle, you want something else.
Feeling that it’s McDonalds and Starbucks and the GAP and all these companies
telling you how to live and telling you what you want your life should be like.
You just buy into this and buy our products. There’s a sense of being just
incredibly…not oppressed by it, but just sort of dull by it, and wanting some
kind of excitement…. And not having it juxtaposed with like a gothic cathedral
or juxtaposed with some longer [lasting culture]… Having just that and nothing
else, it’s like we need to create something else. I think that makes you target
these multinational corporations, partly because they are the things that you see
around you that are just part of this drab landscape. (Peretti)
The feelings of being “culturally sterile,” “spiritually detonating,” feeling “dull,”
and the experience of a “drab” landscape, are closely connoted to boredom,
even a sense of depression. There also seem to be an implicit feeling of lack, as
expressed in “and not having it juxtaposed with a gothic cathedral…or some
longer lasting culture.” Peretti here seems to talk about a cultural experience
that lacks historical depth and above all an aesthetic sense. The liberation of
desire is then not only a matter of disconnecting from the fun associated with
consumption; it is about freedom from boredom and the lack of desire.

Fighting on the terrain of desire, doing creative protest against chain store
culture, means that fun and joy not only are tools to engage people, but also
must be real outcomes of protest, something that protesters feel and are able to
communicate. To topple the fun ethic, one has to internalize the fun ethic while
inserting a difference between sources of fun; there is commercially mediated
fun and there is self-empowering fun that confirms one’s own creativity and
autonomy. Through protest, there is also self-realization, as suggested by
McDonald (2002), the self is constituted as autonomous and liberated. Implicit
is also the differentiation of various kinds of fun; whereas the fun of consumer
culture is in fact boredom and entrapment, the fun of protest is “real.”

The secrecy code, commitment, and avant-gardism

The rule of avoiding being didactic, and instead using humor and irony, may be
interpreted as a message about a vanguard strategy when fighting on the terrain
of desire. A certain kind of elitism is implied by the secrecy code (Peterson
2001) among the culture jamming groups, apparent in the frequent use of fake
names and identities, and the strategy of the “bureaucratic front” employed by
some of the group (Text III). Though the interviewees were reluctant to

84 This is the strategy to reflect the way that corporations dilute personal responsibility by hiding
behind the corporation, primarily employed by the Ritmark, the Institute for Applied Autonomy and the
Bureau of Inverse Technology. Their websites imitate institutional or corporate websites and in some
of their actions – for instance talking to the media – they perform as “neutral” company
representatives. In a way, it can be argued that this strategy is also employed by the AMF who
reveal how many people are involved in each group, it was made clear that these groups are small (two to five persons) and organized around friendship – that they are rather exclusive; it is not easy to “join,” for example, the Institute for Applied Autonomy or the Bureau of Inverse Technology. Moreover, as John from the Institute for Applied Autonomy indicated in the interview, each participant is likely to be highly educated and skilled in terms of specific cultural and symbolic capital (Text III).

This exclusivity is bound to generate a certain level of commitment to the group. The secrecy code, Peterson (Peterson 2001) argues, organizes emotions and is thus productive of internal bonding and relations of trust, solidarity, and emotional intensity within the group. Through “ritual confrontation,” these ties are reinforced and confirmed. I will return to this point later. My point here is that the emotional intensity and collective identification of the culture jamming groups suggested by the secrecy code, indicates the commitment and strength of their conviction. Hence, the shape of collective action advanced in culture jamming emerges in the interviews as the only way that they can conduct protest. The interviewees are quite unanimously cynical and disillusioned about the political reality, especially in the United States (Text III). The political opportunities of forming broad and effective resistance in the present situation are perceived to be small. Ray from the Rmark rejects the very notion of culture jamming because:

They [the people who forward the idea of a “culture jamming movement”] create this illusion that something important is actually being done and it’s not being done it’s very small. Basically we have this enormous problem with corporate power and nothing is happening against it. And people shouldn’t think that something is happening because the only way that things will change is if everybody does something. (emphasis added, Ray, Rmark)

The jammers “do something” and they do it with a sincere belief that something must be done, a belief that reveals conviction and determination.

In her analysis of the secrecy of contemporary activist groups, Peterson (2001) offers numerous complementary interpretations of this practice. The code of secrecy, she argues, apart from organizing emotions and internal bonding, is a code of power that serves the function to control and organize information. This is, for instance, emphasized by John who says:

For our people we are a collective and that’s how we work to the point that we very intentionally have subsumed our individual identities to the collective identity. The name I gave you – John Henry – that’s the name we all use. It sort of guarantees that the work we do is focused on the collective identity model…

functions very much as a subverted marketing agency, or by Reverend Billy, though he imitates the nonconformist preacher.
We are looking for ways to control how journalists talk about what we do. If we do not tell them anything about ourselves, they cannot write anything. If they’re gonna write about it they have to write about the work because that’s all we’re willing to discuss with them. (…) And that’s a way of trying to control the kinds of messages that are eventually distributed. (John, IAA)

While secrecy is motivated to protect members of a group from outside scrutiny, it does not necessarily mean that the group engages in illegal activities; what is protected is generally the group autonomy “from the dominant norms and institutions of society” (Peterson 2001:112). The secrecy code further claims superiority and power with regard to the opponent; secrecy then is itself a message about a message that attracts the opponent’s attention and suspicions.

In relation to the social movement as a whole, the secrecy code claims distinction and may be interpreted as a kind of elitism. The political ‘secret societies’ appear to favour…an image of a close community of ‘elects’, emphasizing purity rather than proselytization, exclusivity rather than expansion…the political sect has a tendency to regard its role within the broader social movement struggle which it is part of as not so much an instrument within the broader struggle, but as a ‘living example’ for the struggle itself. (Peterson 2001:112)

In this self-proclaimed exemplary function, the secret group claims to show the right way to other movement actors. In the case of culture jamming, this can be seen in the distinction made between themselves and “real” activists, i.e. activists that are engaged in the same struggle as they are, but through more traditional means such as demonstrations, mobilization of neighborhoods and so on – a far less glorious and more long-term oriented work than culture jamming, according to Ray from the Rtmark (Text III). The humorous approach, seen from this perspective, is also an insurance against activist burnout – the jammers construct cost-effective resistance in terms of their emotional input; they use whatever personal skills they have and they make sure that they are having fun in the process.

I’ve just always been interested and always angry at certain things and always trying to do things, this just turned out to be something I can do. A way of expressing… I guess like I must have been egotistical enough that just joining a demonstration has never been enough you know I always wanted to be able to do something myself and have it make an impact and this kind of thing is something that two or three people can do. (Ray Rtmark)

The exemplary function is further seen in the explicit claims to avant-gardism in the field of collective action against multinational corporations, which is most clearly expressed in Lasn’s (1999) writings (Text I, II, IV).
In fact they [the Bush administration] are thugs! They’re WASPs who like went to Texas and became oil people and they’re just kind of the worst people who could be here right now, directing things. It’s very sad, it’s a very sad time. (emphasis added, Rev Billy)

These examples, I believe, point to a generally careful attitude toward expressions of anger in line with feeling rules about anger found in late capitalist emotional culture.

In contrast, in his book, *Culture Jam*, Lasn (1999) gives an entirely different account of anger. Its polemical purpose is to convince the reader to adopt an alternative framing of consumer culture. This effort embraces the liberation of desire, but also targets particular emotions, particularly anger, as a motivating force to protesters.

We don’t trust the reality of our desires anymore. We’ve grown cynical and afraid. We’ve forgotten what it feels like to get angry – how to do rage. We listen to that ultraconservative part of our brain that says: Hold back, be reasonable, things aren’t so bad. (Lasn 1999:140-41)

Anger in Lasn’s account is empowering. “Rage is a signal like pain or lust. If you learn to trust it and ride shotgun on it, watching it without suppressing it, you gain power and lose cynicism.” (Ibid:143) The power accorded to anger

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85 The interviews with Ray and Vincent were conducted about six months after the five New York interviews. Though I used the same interview model for these last interviews as I had used with the first, I was more aware of the emotion perspective becoming an important part of the analysis, and therefore emphasized emotions as a motivating force more, which may be the reason why I got some more responses in this direction.
here implicitly confirms contemporary attitudes about anger as disruptive and potentially dangerous, and it is precisely as a “dangerous” feeling, that anger is called upon.

Lasn also encourages the reader to confront, and though this is a general advice, he gives examples indicating that confrontation takes place between e.g. the consumer and the corporate representative. This stands in sharp contrast to Reverend Billy’s advice cited earlier: “Don’t confront any workers with anger or moral superiority.” One conclusion would be to say that it is easier to embrace anger and confrontation in a mediated context and the AMF often appear through mediated messages. The reality on the street on the other hand is such that none of my interviewees would be very long-lived if this was their attitude. On the other hand, Lasn does not say explicitly that one should express anger, but feel it and channel it.

I suggest that in spite of being much more tentative in expressing anger, anger as a motivating force may also underpin the interviewed people in their actions. What I aim at is the concept of righteous anger (see chapter six and Collins 1990; Collins 2004). Several scholars have identified righteous anger or moral anger as a motivating force in collective action (Barbalet 1998; Barrington Moore 1978; Gamson 1992). Its preconditions are that a group shares the experience of its values or sacred symbols as being violated, and that it is possible to hold somebody responsible for this violation, circumstances that we may call a shared injustice frame. The injustice frame is bound to moral anger or outrage at the social causes of the injustice. In social movement context, righteous anger thus underpins and motivates demands for social change. “There’s an anger, a rage-driven defiance, that is healthy, ethical, and empowering. It contains the conviction that change is possible... (Lasn 1999:143)

In case of culture jamming, the violation of our humanity by corporations is not an obvious matter, and corporations are rather abstract targets. Lasn’s book represents an effort to reframe both history and the present in terms that makes it possible for the reader to see that corporations are a threat to our humanity and that corporations can be held responsible, if not in and by themselves, through the fact that they are manmade.86 I want to suggest the conclusion that anger, in case of culture jamming, is highly present in precisely this version, but is a low-key, long-term emotion that is managed and expressed in humor and irony rather than aggression. As argued by Flam (2004), anger as the motivation of protest may be defeated by other emotions such as fear of repression, and

86 Lasn (1999: 157-163) emphasizes that corporations are nothing but “legal fictions” and machines that people construct and control. “The corporate machine” is another common concept used among culture jammers (see Text III and IV).
therefore may become channeled into humorous, ambivalent, and satirical protest forms that are difficult for the opponent to strike against or to prosecute.

In a culture of general unease with anger as a potentially disruptive and dangerous emotion, it is clearly not strategically wise to express it. Nevertheless, I suggest that righteous anger in the interviews is traceable in the way that the interviewees express indignation about how corporate power expands on behalf of democratic power. Even if Lasn is not explicit about controlling the expressions of anger, the way he advises the reader to use and watch anger as a motivating and framing force suggests that anger expressions must be negotiated in situations of confrontation.

**Fear and distrust**

Fear is primarily expressed by Bill from the Surveillance Camera Players, as seen in the extracts above. The talk about fear in my interview with Bill may have to do with the fact that the SCP also took a different stance vis-à-vis the question of opponent. Contrary to the other groups, they did not first and foremost address corporate power and consumer culture, but rather political and military power “that use fear to control people.” The other groups did not differentiate between political, military, and corporate power, the crux of the matter according to them is precisely that these powers have merged as one. Fear seems to be a negligible feeling among these groups. John from the IAA tells me about a few episodes when the IAA interacted with the police, but these are quite harmless events. Once a police officer used their graffiti robot to spray paint a wall, another time a security guard failed to connect the fresh spray paint with the odd group of people moving around with a funny robot.

Fear of opponents’ reactions however may range from fear of physical abuse, to fear of being registered, or fear of law suits. The latter seems to be the case with Reverend Billy, who in spite of frequently putting his body on the frontier through a range of provocative performances in the targeted stores, and who in spite of frequent arrests, seems relatively secure. He says, “They’ll arrest me, but I’m protected somehow.”

I get arrested two or three times a year. (…) now that I’ve been here a few years doing this project I have enough friends inside these media institutions, and they basically protect me. If Disney or GAP or something started a big law suit or whatever against me, they would have to do this with the media confrontation that exists here. (Rev. Billy)
The protection in question seems to be the fact that Reverend Billy is a “mediagenic” character. Bill from the SCP also claims that the presence of media has secured them protection from police interference.

When we started, the police were all over us. And every time that I would announce in public that we were performing, the police would show up in big numbers. Something changed. The reason is that we are constantly surrounded by microphones and cameras, and they’ve learned that we thrive on publicity.

(Bill, SCP)

Like, fear, distrust is not often mentioned in the interviews, but distrust in political authorities is implicit in the total lack of importance accorded to such institutions. Surveillance Camera Players and Casseurs de Pub are exceptions to the rule, the former because they consider it a political strategy by corrupt state institutions to appear powerless; the latter, apparently because it is part of a French political culture.

Generally, the American interviewees suggest that while American political institutions are in the hands of the corporations, in Europe, politicians are still, to some extent, independent from the market, or at least they appear to be so. “[I]n Europe you still have this idea that your politicians are important. In US, that’s increasingly not the case.” (John, IAA) “[B]ecause in US the corporations give the politicians their money to campaign, we are living under the burden of a completely corrupt you know system.” (Rev. Billy)

In the US, it’s really transparent that the government is trying to be purely a vehicle for corporate power and that’s all. It’s really a big effort to get beyond democracy. You see the same kind of things happening in Europe with the European Union, some of the implements of that, it’s a very commercial entity and the effect is to take away local power from all these governments that… are still democratic. Unlike in the US, like, a lot of European governments do have some democracy and do have some concept of democracy and I think that one of the functions of the European Union is to leave that power and to make it easier for corporations. It’s not a bad [world?], like the people who are doing that think that they are destroying democracy. They authentically think that by allowing corporations to flourish that will help everybody, that’s the direction to go [for happiness]. (Ray, Rtie)

One aspect of the theme of fear and distrust, is that some of the groups pointed out, in passing, that their websites were being monitored by the FBI and other state institutions.

We’ve got a lot of interest from the technical robotics group within DARPA, our website is very similar to DARPA’s website… We got some phone calls from DARPA from the division of lawyers who were very concerned with our use of their virtual identity. And if you look at our web log there is a handful of...

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47 The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is the central research and development organization for the American Department of Defense (www.darpa.mil).
people from them who keep coming. (…) They’re just snooping anything…
(John, IAA)

In this excerpt, John seems to reject concern about DARPA’s interest in the Institute for Applied Autonomy, by downplaying the perception of it as a threat. “They’re just snooping everything.” In the interview with Peretti on the other hand, where he describes the various culture jamming groups’ secrecy code, he mentions briefly that this secrecy may also be motivated by fear of the FBI and other such state authorities. While it is impossible to assess how significant an interest the US federal authorities take in these groups and their activities, it is reasonable to expect that keeping track of them has become more common after the 9/11. On the website of the Surveillance Camera Players, Bill has listed the number of “notable visits to this website” – i.e. national, local, and foreign government, state, military, and police institutions – between May 2000 and April 2004. This record shows a considerably increased number of visits after 9/11.88

The overall impression is, however, that the attention given to the culture jamming groups by corporate power and/or governmental authorities is limited, and rather a matter of routine. Yet, caution may be motivated, since the jammers sometimes push the limit of how far provocation can go before the bureaucratic front assumes the shape of a manager, a layer, or of security guards and police moving in to protect corporate property; in the cases of which, the reaction is pointed out as revealing signs of weakness, such as fear or anger, in the Other.

**Inciting fear, anger, annoyance in the Other (laughing at the opponent)**

The framing of the Other, i.e. the corporations or the corporations-politicians, asserts the culture jammers as sound, healthy, and peaceful but persistently challenging; while the Other is abnormal, hallucinating, potentially violent, sometimes losing control. Natalie describes the prohibition of bringing cameras into the Silicon Valley area where she worked as an engineer for some years. “You can’t take cameras there for fear that you’ll steal information,” she says, and continues, “They actually conceive of it [?] as stuff, as if it was something that you can come and take a photo of and take… It’s a real central hallucination, but it’s very real.” (emphasis added) As captured in this example, discourse about intellectual property and industrial espionage is turned around, given explanations rejected, and the whole idea that one can steal information is presented as a mental dysfunction, *a real central hallucination*. Reverend Billy

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88 [http://www.notbored.org/army.html](http://www.notbored.org/army.html), 24/1 2005
proceeds in a similar way when he dismisses his target, in this particular case, the Starbucks coffee shops. “They are a cult, they are a strange thing, they are not normal. They are so massive, that they persuade us that they are normal, they are not normal at all! They’re the bully on the block.” Thus asserting the Other as abnormal, the resistance strategy that is propagated by both Natalie and the Reverend is playing, making fun, and curiosity. “You play with them. You make them appear to be what they are. And then people, when that happens, they can defend themselves by making fun of them.” (emphasis added, Rev. Billy) Many of Natalie’s projects aim at bringing technology and technological discourse closer to the everyday experience of ordinary people, not only intellectually, but also practically, in terms of enabling people to try out and test things.

[M]y thesis is that it is actually working within a context of real material things. Getting your hands amongst it, it actually gives you the competence and ability to transform these things… So this [project] popularizes and enables people to fuck with it, playfully. (Natalie, BIT)

In the process of making fun of the Other, the jammers sometimes provoke angry responses. On these occasions, it is clear that emotional outbursts of e.g. anger are a sign of weakness and loss of control (Clark 1990). In one of his talks printed on the website, Reverend Billy describes the reaction of a store manager during a Whirl Mart action.89

Children, listen to me. Have you ever seen a Wal-Mart manager run out of his big box with a red face and a baffling orange tie — and actually take a city bus hostage? He screamed at the driver that she could not take our little church group on board.90

Anger, here, is in fact conceived of as a proof that someone has been moved out of balance, i.e. that sacred objects of the Other have been violated. In Natalie’s case, the anger she meets comes sometimes from bystanders or the audience, as in the case with her tree clones.91

What happened was that… this is a very simple demonstration you know kids come up and they are annoyed and angry and they say “these are clones but they don’t even look the same!” In this case — this piece was written about in four or five major publications like New York Times, Science News… In every case not one of the reviewers commented on the fact that the trees looked different. They were called spooky clones and weird science but not a single critic said “the trees are different why is that?”

89 A Whirl Mart action is one in which a group of people enter Walmart (or other shopping malls) and walk their empty shopping carts around without buying anything.
89 (http://revbilly.com/revsite/Writings/writings.htm, August 9, 2004)
90 The “One Tree” project is 1,000 genetically identical cloned trees: “And the punchline of putting all the clones side by side is that, in fact, here they are kept genetically identical and environmentally identical but they look different. It’s just that one material demonstrates that the popular understanding of the genetic code as the book of life… that obviously genes aren’t comprehensively descriptive, they aren’t determining what an organism looks like.” (Natalie, BIT)
In this excerpt, we see that the annoyance and anger that children displayed when the clones did not meet their expectations, was something similar to the reaction that Natalie wished to get on her clones. Provoking a reaction was actually the point of the project because it contradicted taken for granted expectations, suggesting: “[G]enes aren’t comprehensively descriptive, they aren’t determining what an organism looks like.” (Natalie, BIT) The failure of critics to see this, on the other hand, was frustrating to her. So whether we look at the detached technical reasoning around scientific data, facts, numbers, which the BIT engages in, or the hot-tempered expressive narration of Reverend Billy, they both refer to anger as something that happens to the opponent or the bystanders, while they – the challengers – manage to stay in control.

Fear in the interviews also appears in the context of something provoked in the Other, again it is Reverend Billy’s unyielding campaign against Starbucks coffee shops in New York that resulted in a memo warning the various shop managers about him. The memo was issued on April 24, 2000 and has the title “What should I do if Reverend Billy comes into my store?” Reverend Billy is proud of this, as he interprets it as a display of fear of his person that has moved the Starbucks management to such measures. The memo describes Billy, his outfit, his comport, and how he initially just chats with people. Then,

He works the crowd with an affirming theme but gradually turns on Starbucks. Toward the end, he’s shouting. Then the Reverend’s supporters hand around anti-Starbucks leaflets. After that, he heads out the door. According to a store manager, he may stand on your tables.

Billy now says he performs the memo. “That’s culture jamming, you use them [Starbucks], their fears to define who they are.” (emphasis added, Rev. Billy) An interesting component in this is that Reverend Billy may actually be feared among Starbucks Shop managers, not because he is violent or physically threatening, but because he is disturbing, loud, and shows violent emotions. It may be felt as at least an unpleasant experience for a shop manager to have to deal with a man who stands on tables and shouts. Reverend Billy disrupts the smooth flow of consumer-service relations.

Altogether, the provocation of emotional reactions in bystanders and opponents may be interpreted as “place-claims,” i.e. as “messages about where one wants to stand” (Clark 1990:305). When jammers succeed in getting angry or fearful responses from opponents, their social place is elevated in relation to the opponent. They control their own emotional balance, while the Other is out

of balance. When they express sympathy or negative evaluations of the “abnormal” Other, they further claim a superior place. In relation to bystanders, they primarily seek to promote mutual understanding and laughing together, both as a way to achieve a sense of equality, and as a way to control the way the message is received; thereby also indicating their own superiority by symbolically ceding place.

So far, I have tried to approach mainly the interviews from the analytical categories of emotions and feeling rules. We have seen that the fun ethic is a very prominent part of culture jamming, but it differs from dominant culture in asserting protest against consumer culture as a source of fun. Fun is the process and outcome of doing culture jamming as creative protest acts. They construct counter-symbols as empowering and consciousness-raising. Fun is also a way to disarm and laugh at the opponent, overcome fear, attract attention, and diffuse anger. Anger is present in the form of righteous anger, but is channeled in humor as well as expressed as indignation and in the reframing the Other as abnormal. What we can obtain from the interviews, above all, is an account of the emotional culture of culture jamming as it is practiced and applied in various hands-on contexts. Lasn’s book *Culture Jam* completes this picture, however, with the ritual becoming of a jammer. It is in this initiation context that the feeling and expression rules of culture jamming, and above all the emotion work involved, clearly appear (Taylor and Whittier 1995).

*Emotion work of becoming, emotion work in process*

As already mentioned above, the book *Culture Jam* differs from the interviewees in the sense that it explicitly calls on emotions, specifically anger, as part of culture jamming. The book appears as a hybrid between movement manifesto and self-help literature, taking the reader in a ritualistic manner through the several steps of becoming a jammer. Accordingly, it can be argued to address the emotion work involved in becoming a culture jammer. Its starting point is that the reader belongs to a diffused community of passive consumers whose “authentic” emotions are repressed and mutated, and who suffer from a range of psychopathological symptoms. Yet, under the surface, lurks the true human nature, “This instinct to be free and unfettered is hard-wired into each one of us. It’s a drive, as strong as sex or hunger, an irresistible force that, once harnessed, is almost impossible to stop.” (Lasn 1999:xvi) The road to becoming a culture jammer in the AMF version passes through shaming or the acknowledgement of shame when confronted with one’s submission under corporate rule. The social marketing campaigns of the AMF that aim at
The goal of this workshop is to spark a dramatic personal mindshift that will change the way you relate to corporations. Once you’ve experienced this shift, you’ll feel ashamed for having been so docile and subservient for so long. Your days will be charged with a new sense of autonomy and mission. You’ll derive immense pleasure from tussling with corporations, putting them in their place. You’ll train yourself to always take the position of power, to be mindful of the fact that you are a human being and the corporation is merely a legal construct your species thought up. (Lasn 1999: 146)

The workshop focuses on cognitive reframing of the nature of corporations and one’s relation to it, but is underpinned by the previous chapter (the first chapter of the summer section) that exhorts the reader to release anger and use it as a driving force in protest. The anger that Lasn calls upon is righteous anger, and therefore is closely connected to the cognitive assessment of shared norms and values being violated; norms and values that Lasn has tried to single out in the previous sections of the book. The workshop contains ways to deconstruct the bureaucratic front of corporations, to make the individuals behind them accountable, to make corporations targets for demands for structural change.

Culture Jam makes apparent the emotion work necessary to become a culture jammer, and shows how this is closely associated with cognitive reframing. An injustice frame becomes a motivational frame only when accompanied by adequate emotion work, if this new knowledge is to result in action. Emotion work is therefore a central part of a movement’s effort to mobilize, motivate,
and keep its participants (Flam 2005). Above, I argue that fun and righteous anger are important emotional features of culture jamming emerging in the interviews. In *Culture Jam*, we witness how these central features may be established and internalized: from celebration of the fun ethic in consumer culture, to unease with the emptiness, guilt and contradictions of it; through shame when considering oneself part of it, to pride in assuming an autonomous position toward it; and celebration of “authentic” fun and joy as an outcome of doing unexpected and subverting things with it. The process is also said to involve a certain amount of suffering.

Interrupting the stupefyingly comfortable patterns we’ve fallen into isn’t pleasant or easy. It’s like crawling out of your warm bed in your dark room one December morning at five A.M. and plunging into a tub of ice water. It shocks the system. But sometimes shock is what the system needs. It’s certainly what our bloated, self-absorbed consumer culture needs. (Lasn 1999:107)

The outcome, however, of the mindshift or perceptual shift that Lasn talks about, is the ability to see things differently. The feeling of difference – a sense of superiority – is illustrated by Vincent:

[A friend of mine said] ‘It’s better to live enlightened and sad than to die a happy idiot.’ I found that very funny. There are people who have huge cars, huge houses, I guess they are very happy, it’s their thing. [If I destroy their illusion] I make them unhappy. You can’t give them a solution if they are blocked. Personally I know that I couldn’t stand to live like that. (my translation, Vincent, CdP)

I suggest, in this context, that not only does culture jamming entail an emotion work, but that this emotion work, though in many senses consistent with dominant emotional culture, is underpinned by and results in “deviant emotions.”

Thoits (1990:181) defines the concept of emotional deviance as referring to “experiences or displays of affect that differ in quality or degree from what is expected in given situations.” One of the structural conditions for experiencing emotional deviance is subcultural marginality. There are also other structural conditions that may give rise to emotional deviance, but in these contexts, the deviance is often experienced as unpleasant. In the case of subcultural marginality, the sanctions of dominant emotional culture against deviant emotions are resisted and become a motive for organizing or becoming engaged in social movements. “Shared deviant feelings may be crucial in the

93 Other structural conditions mentioned by Thoits are: multiple role occupancy, normative and non-normative role transitions, and rigid rules governing ongoing roles and ceremonial rituals. In many cases, the experience of emotional deviance is unpleasant and gives rise to self-reflective feelings of shame or guilt, and it seems women experience this more often than men (Thoits 1990).
transformation of similar others into counter normative peer groups, deviant subcultures, and social movements.” (Thoits 1990:190)

In Culture Jam, Lasn draws on feelings of slumbering anger, discomfort, and unease that he assumes already exist because consumer culture so violently represses “human nature,” but the becoming of a culture jammer also means redefining and reinterpreting one’s feelings in ways that foster protest. These feelings are deviant from dominant emotional culture because they reject consumer culture as a source of pleasure and fun; they connect personal and private mood disorders to external repression rather than individual inner mental states; they turn their anger upon corporations and the mass media; and above all, they breach the sacred objects of the “nice and friendly” emotional interaction of consumer and service relations. As seen in Vincent’s excerpt, being a culture jammer also means that one feels superior.

Emotion work in this respect however, I suggest, is continuous and ongoing, not something that you do once. It is part of the culture jamming projects, and is reinforced and confirmed by them. Reverend Billy’s description of the feelings of not buying (during a Whirlmart action) serves as an illustration:

We each took a shopping cart and walked silently and slowly in an unbroken line up and down, down and over, pushing our empty carts through endless canyons of products. Sometimes the line got split up, by a real shopper, or a curious child, or a near convert but the line always reformed, rejoined, moving randomly, inexorably toward what? Toward the sex of our church picnic, children, toward the mouth frothing, eye rolling, religious fervor of sheer not shopping. About 30 minutes into the imitation of an anti-consumerist zombie – you in fact become an anti-consumerist zombie! Staring straight ahead, wheeling your empty cart, the products on the shelves start dancing hard, the colors on the labels bleed, the celebrities on the packaging begin to snap at you with their bleached teeth. It turns out that the products are very thin skinned! They are upset! And very easily shamed.34

As a ritual confrontation, the action described in the quote shows how emotional intensity is enacted and shared by the participants. In Lasn’s account, the emotional culture pertinent to culture jamming appears more clearly at odds with dominant emotional culture, because the book contains idealized situations and idealized emotional features. As we have seen in the interviews, what we can call the emotional subculture of a movement is negotiated when it is played out in real contexts and face-to-face interaction, playing down certain features, such as anger, while emphasizing others, such as fun. Next, I deal explicitly with the dimension of fun and joy in culture jamming, from the theoretical perspective of interaction rituals and emotional energy. In so doing, I also

34 http://revbilly.com/revsite/Writings/writings.htm, August 9, 2004)
refine my argument that culture jamming may be the visible top of an iceberg in terms of collective solidarity and identity.

**Emotional Energy, Pride, and Group Solidarity**

In chapter six, Collins’s concept of emotional energy (Collins 1990; Collins 2004) is discussed in connection with my argument that emotional processes energize action. To Collins, emotional energy is primarily a positive emotional process that one can “have” more or less of on different occasions. It is a feeling of confidence, courage to take action, boldness in taking initiative. It is a morally suffused energy; it makes the individual feel not only good, but exalted, with the sense of doing what is most important and most valuable. (Collins 2004:39)

It is the individual’s gain from interaction rituals in which solidarity is the outcome for the collective.

Jammers seem to be very proud of what they do. A fundamental component of culture jamming is the idea that human beings share a capacity toward ingenuity and creativity (e.g. Lasn 1999, see also Text I and II). This picture is often contrasted to the way that consumer culture provides ready-made concepts that either shape or impose themselves upon spontaneous creativity. The act of protest is conceived as something that creates and reinforces autonomy as unpredictability and refusal to follow consumer impulses or incitements. The interviewees express this in ways such as, “We sort of intervene with the corporate imagination…(...) [and] have them elaborate their own ridiculous position.” (Natalie, BIT)

What culture jamming does in these stores is it gums up the work, they can no longer predict, we’ve been glitch on their screen. So it’s important to make what they are doing less predictable. (...) *We are not consumers* (...) I am here in America right now, but *I am not in their plans*. I am thinking actively about how to make their charts inaccurate. I want to make their marketing programs inaccurate. (emphasis added, Rev. Billy)

Lasn (1999) emphasizes the ideas of every individual as an artist/creator, and the meaning of a full life as one in which emotions flow freely and creatively. He speaks about “ecstatic feelings of oneness with the world” as the peak experience of “real living,” motivating culture jammers “to take daily leaps of faith, or of courage – acts that take them outside *market-structured consciousness*” (emphasis added, Lasn 1999:106). Culture jammers, according to Lasn, are willing to take big risks and act boldly, and their acts are *authentic*, i.e. true. Hence, the notion of *real, authentic, spontaneous* and so on, is repeatedly contrasted to consumption, corporate power. The feelings associated with this sense of autonomy, seem to
be pride, confidence and boldness, i.e. the feelings that compose emotional energy.

In terms of EE-seeking, the notion of fun and joy seem to be closely connected to the jammers’ evaluation of a project, more than the judgment of efficiency in changing the system. The differentiation that jammers tend to make between themselves and “real” activists further emphasizes this point.

It’s much more rewarding than demonstrating. [Or other] forms of political activism, I mean the problem is that you know the most useful kinds of activism aren’t the most glorious. What I’m doing is basically education at best, maybe a little bit of online organizing sometimes (...) I think the people doing real activism are the ones who are on the street organizing people, trying to mobilize neighbourhoods to do things, or workers in companies, you know union organizers and those people those are the ones who are really doing the essential work, the absolutely necessary work and it’s not the most glorious work. (Ray, Remark)

My point is that culture jamming to its adherents, is perceived to render more EE than other protest forms. Yet, larger protest organizations and large gatherings such as big demonstrations ought to be more EE-generating than culture jamming, if one follows Collins’ argument that IRs become more intense when many people are physically gathered at the same geographical place, sharing the same mutual focus.

Collins (2004) argues that face-to-face gatherings are vital to the success of an interaction ritual, as the mutual entrainment that brings about a shared focus upon sacred symbols is also a physiological process involving the actual sensory systems of physical bodies. This physical co-presence in an interaction ritual belongs to what Collins call the first order circulation of symbols. However, he also argues that high levels of EE can be upheld also through second order circulation of symbols, in which individuals re-circulate the symbols in other contexts and groups than the original, or through the mediation of television and so on. The third order circulation of symbols involves the solitary individual and his/her thinking or acting alone in relation to sacred symbols. Whether we speak about first, second, or third order IRs, it is still a matter of interaction, i.e. even our thoughts are conceived as social interaction, and the reference point from which we generate EE is a shared identity, a group that instigates collective effervescence around values and sacred objects.

Now, most culture jammers do not lack first order IRs in the sense that all the groups are made up of two or more persons (but rarely more than four five). The relevance and influence of the group must not be underestimated, however. These groups are, as I argue, characterized by internal bonding and strong commitment. It is likely that EE may be more intensely generated when
there is a group performing a ritual confrontation than when a single jammer acts alone. But the groups, I argue, while being exclusive and elitist, are also inclusive and open by orientating their actions toward a broader mediated collective identification. Provided, then, that we have small groups that are scattered widely but never meet, they are able to feel solidarity with each other and generate certain levels of large-scale collective EE through second and third order circulation of the symbols created.

The innovation and dispersal of symbols is itself an activity that generates solidarity and EE because it includes an imagined and internalized community of the like-minded that will admire and acknowledge the meaning of these symbols. The way this works, I suggest, is analogous to the way that Collins claims that intellectuals generate EE:

It is intellectuals’ experience in the network of intellectuals that constitutes them as intellectuals, and shapes the contents of their thinking…The very motivation that causes some intellectuals deliberately to withdraw from interaction, spending long hours or years alone with their manuscripts, is precisely their deep internalization of the intellectual field as the framework of their minds. They withdraw precisely in order to concentrate on the creative action that will get them into the centre of the intellectual attention space; and they get their emotional energy from the reinforcement that comes to them in putting sentence by sentence on the page, viewing their own moves by the standards of a field they know from inside. (Collins 2004: 357-8)

Mediated collective identification and hence “individualized” collective action may function this way, and I suggest that this also enhances understanding of how individuals can be said to connect to a social movement or mediated networks of collective identification through, for instance, life politics. Individual culture jammers, while they may feel less energized due to the lack of first order rituals, still can derive large amounts of EE if their projects gain reputation in the wider community, as in the case with Peretti’s Nike Email (Text III).

Culture jammers, acting alone or as part of a group, derive emotional energy from the internalized imagined network community of like-minded, loyal groups, and activists, the existence of which is confirmed and reinforced through the second order circulation of symbols. These symbols are recognized, admired, and respected. This reference point makes the production of symbols that oneself or one’s group engages in, a process loaded with EE. There is a release of energy when a new project goes public; the more it succeeds to transgress boundaries or violate sacred symbols of dominant discourse, in a clever and funny way, the more it is celebrated.
While successful actions expose the target to ridicule – at best provoke responses that reveal anger or fear in the opponent – the jammers do not need “success” to keep up the shared belief that they are creating at least momentary mental “free zones” and autonomy through these actions.

Living in the moment, pursuing the authentic gesture, living close to the edge – call it what you will – when it’s genuine, it’s the force that makes life worth living. It is also what consumer capitalism takes away from you every time it sells you brand name “cool” or this month’s rebel attitude. (Lasn 1999:106)

The symbols created by culture jamming are not commercial, and the physical and mental spaces they occupy represent opportunities to think and act differently. “I refuse to let my life be reduced to its commercial dimension. I exist by the meaning that I have given to my life and that’s how I will feel pleasure and joy of life.” (Vincent, CdP) Accordingly, a sense of autonomy is aroused by shared feelings of pride and superiority. If nothing else, EE is the reward of culture jamming, but the high level of EE also reveals that culture jamming is not an isolated protest form. On the contrary, it is capable of generating EE because it is supported by far-reaching and mediated collective identification.

Concluding reflections

In this chapter, I categorize emotional processes in culture jamming in terms of specific emotions as well as in terms of emotional energy and solidarity. My primary aim is to illustrate how the sociology of emotions may be useful in understanding contemporary protest and social movements in formation.

Thus, I argue that the dominant emotional culture constitutes the basis for the emotional subculture of a movement, and a reference point of its continuous emotion work. In culture jamming, we see an adaptation to the dominant fun ethic associated with a good life in late capitalism, both in the embrace of fun and pleasure as necessary ingredients in the experience of protest, and as ways to connect with bystanders. Even if the adherents would not feel that fun is personally necessary for them, they perceive their chances of reaching out in the mobilization against consumer culture as small, if they were to do it in the “communist” or “didactic” way. The embrace of the fun ethic as a cultural adaptation does not mean, however, surrendering to the dominant emotional culture. It means subverting it; claiming that real fun and liberation of desire come from the creativity of inventing counter-symbols and using them to expose the abnormality of culture in late capitalism. It also means a certain extent of denial of emotional stimulations as merchandise, but the denial is reframed as liberating. A possible cultural experience of a gap between
dominant and privately negotiated feeling and expression rules that I discuss in chapter seven, is articulated in culture jamming in this re-interpretation of the fun ethic and the difference asserted between the “manipulated” emotions of consumption and the “authentic” emotions of protest.

The rejection of boredom and the theme of liberating desire are closely connected to the experience of late capitalist consumerism and the expansion of chain stores, creating a “drab” and sterile landscape. But they also reflect the way that the mass media and information society diminish the attention space of people that culture jammers try to engage, thus requiring more spectacular measures to break through with a message. Humor and irony is the medium chosen by culture jammers, but in this context, it deserves to be mentioned that other movements use other emotional triggers, such as the Environmental or Animal Right’s movement’s dispersal of images of suffering or slaughtered animals, and so on. (While it is often argued that humans become “numb” to these kinds of upsetting images, it is a question for the future if we may also become “numb” to humor?) The AMF, furthermore, also employs such unpleasant images (Text IV). In any case, social movement actors are involved in a competition for attention that is becoming increasingly tough, and may require increasingly emotion-triggering devices.

Righteous anger – which is said to be a strong motivating force of protest – I argue, may be perceived in the indignation about corporate expansion in the mental and public spaces, on behalf of the inherent and active creativity of human nature as well as the human rights to freedom of expression, information, and desire. But in accordance with dominating feeling and expression rules about anger, this emotion is downplayed and channeled in humor and irony. The expression of anger as a central ingredient in the liberation of emotions is most accentuated in Lash’s book, while it is explicitly warned against by Reverend Billy, whose manifestations are all basically carried out in physical face-to-face environments. This leads me to conclude that the more mediated the message, the more anger is expressed. The reason for this is, of course, to avoid conflicts and aggressive confrontations, which would undermine the purpose of culture jamming.

Another aspect of anger avoidance, which I think is seen in the fact that most interviewees do not even talk about anger – and if they do, they do it reluctantly – is that the general emotional culture is so cautious about this emotion, that it is simply ignored. The implications for protest are interesting; it may mean that very sparse expressions of anger, or any other passionate emotion, are enough to cause aggressive or defensive responses from opponents and
bystanders, as seen in the measures taken by Starbucks managers against Reverend Billy. Apparently, Reverend Billy is perceived of as being a highly unpleasant and potentially violent person, judging from the instructions to the store managers. In fact, having witnessed one of Reverend Billy’s performances, I suspect that the reverend’s costume accords him substantially more space for emotional expression than would be awarded to the average person. Religious fervor may be bracketed in the dominant emotional culture of late capitalism, at least as long as it does not interfere with consumption.

The emotion work that practitioners may submit themselves to deviates from the ordinary emotion work of dominant emotional culture in the sense that it demands emotional and cognitive reframing that posits the “normal” as “abnormal,” and the transfer of emotions from consumption to the production of protest symbols. On the surface, culture jamming may merely look like an ironic twist to consumer culture and the ruling fun ethic, but I argue that culture jamming groups are sincerely committed to the cause. While not all groups in this study press as heavily on “authenticity” as the AMF does, they all embrace a truth claim to various degrees. At a minimum, this truth claim is a matter of subjective coherence and sincerity of intentions; culture jamming is really about trying to do something, not only pretending to. At a maximum, the truth claim advanced by Kalle Lasn in his book, is that the “mindshift” of culture jamming is like waking up from a dream, or recovering from years of drug abuse; it’s seeing the world as it really is, and what consumer culture and corporate power really do to people.

Finally, I have argued that culture jamming entails significant rewards in terms of emotional energy, derived from the collective effervescence in the ritual production of protest symbols. Drawing on Collin’s reasoning about the rewards of solitary intellectual work, I argue that culture jammers also relate to a larger community of like-minded, who share the same diagnostic framing of late capitalism and information society, and celebrate these symbolic manifestations. My point in this reasoning is to illustrate how, in the context of late capitalism and information society, collective identification may be mediated rather than the result of face-to-face gatherings. Collective identification then may be seen as fluid, yet constitutive of solidarity and emotional energy, and thus bridges the difficulties posed by individualization and fragmentation as dominant cultural processes. Accounting for emotional processes makes is possible to discern this displacement or adjustment to the phenomenon of collective identification. It also means that a culture jam may be seen as collective action, in spite of its being performed in small groups of a few people, because it is inspired by virtual
collectives. Mediated large-scale collective identification may be weaker than large-scale face-to-face rituals. If so, this weakness is compensated by the emotional intensity of the small, often semi-secretive and quite exclusive culture jamming groups. Through these groups emotion work and ritual confrontation is enacted. Such a group is autonomous in relation to the other groups, yet all these groups move on the same battle field. They share the same basic assumptions and they recognize and relate to each other. Hence, the existence of these groups does not exclude mediated large-scale collective identification; they reinforce it. Perhaps they even presume it.
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Moving and Jamming

The present compiled dissertation explores culture jamming as a social movement in late capitalist information society. Culture jamming embraces groups and individuals practicing symbolic protest against the expansion and domination of large corporations into public and private life. International social movement research mostly focuses upon well established movements that are traditionally organized and directed against conventional political institutions. Studying culture jamming as a social movement therefore entails implications for social movement theory and research. Furthermore, attention is directed to emotions in culture jamming. It is thereby also argued that social movement research generally may have a lot to gain from incorporating emotion theory.

Data consists of texts and visuals from the organization Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF), and seven interviews with culture jammers from other groups. Analysis is carried out in five separate studies presented in text I-IV (previously published). Text I maps the AMF along the lines of narrative, organization, ends, means, and strategy. Text II analyzes some nodal points in the AMF discourse and its inherent tensions. Text III analyzes culture jamming as political activism based on four of the interviews. In text IV the AMF visuals are analyzed from the perspective of emotions and mobilization. Chapter eight brings together the seven interviews and the AMF material into an analysis of emotions in culture jamming.