

CAPED!

Collectif de recherche
Action Politique et Démocratie

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CONFERENCE
May, 5 & 6th 2022

**Affinities, incorporation,
appropriation, melting-pot**
How to analyse the convergence of social
struggles

Affinities, incorporation, appropriation, melting pot: How to analyze the convergence of social struggles?

**CAPED Conference on the convergence of struggles
May 2022, Thursday 5th & Friday 6th***

The general objective of this CAPED Conference is to think "together" or simultaneously about the convergences of social struggles among progressives and conservatives alike. The last decade seems, indeed, to have been marked by a convergence of progressive struggles (ecology, colonialism, feminism, for example) on the one hand, and by a convergence of conservative struggles (such as the conspiracy, anti-mask, masculinist, and far-right communities) on the other. But are these two types of convergence similar? Are the mechanics of intergroup and inter-activist networking similar or is it more due to an optical effect that the similarities are seen? By dealing with these two cases, the Conference proposes to answer these questions at least partially.

Within progressive movements and the organizations that support them, the theme of the convergence of struggles at the global level, notably with the gatherings around the World Social Forums (WSF) and the need to "invent another world", has monopolized a good part of the activists actions of the late 1990s and 2000s. Thus, the issue of the convergence of struggles is not new. Several works have shown how these gatherings around the WSFs had not only been at the origin of several global protests (against the war in Iraq, for example), but had also strengthened the local struggles where the WSFs took place (as in Tunis in 2013) (Tarrow, 2005; Bandy and Smith, 2005; de Santos, 2006; Conway, 2013; Smith et al., 2014). Transnational networks have also taken advantage of these meetings to increase their presence on different continents (Via Campesina, World March of Women, International Indigenous People's Forum on Climate Change, etc.). Today, it seems that this injunction to convergence has nevertheless taken on other meanings.

Firstly, convergence seems to affect conservative movements as well. In North America, Europe and Latin America, specifically, the demonstrations of the years 2020 and 2021 concerning sanitary measures (including the wearing of masks) are a striking example of this form of convergence of people and groups that are, *a priori*, rather disparate, but that come together around an issue such as the pandemic. The anti-mask or anti-vaccine mobilizations, just like the conspiracy theorists, appear particularly heterogeneous, but nevertheless demonstrate a strong capacity for mobilization. However, this phenomenon does not appear to be merely conjunctural: before the pandemic, research pointed to increasingly strong and proven links between the far right and antifeminism (or the "manosphere") (for example Squirrell, 2017; Marwick and Caplan, 2018; Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2019, Hermansson et al., 2020). Similarly, the Yellow Vests movement in France seems to have taken analysts of social movements and protests by surprise, particularly because of the very high social heterogeneity of its composition and its initial indeterminacy on the progressive/conservative axis.

*The Collectif de recherche Action Politique et Démocratie (CAPED) brings together professors and students from four Quebec universities, active in sociology, urban studies and political science. For more information: www.capedmontreal.com

Although the sociology of social movements has focused for several years on capturing the convergences between activists and progressive organizations (Giugni, McAdam, & Tilly, 1999; Kruzynski, 2017; della Porta & Matoni, 2014; Chase-Dunn, Aldecoa, Breckenridge-Jackson, Herrera, 2019), how do we think about these affinities between communities that seem to be of a different kind? Two sub-questions emerge here: that of the dynamics of similar or dissimilar convergences between rather conservative or rather progressive nebulae; and that of the boundaries of these convergences (sociological, political, cognitive), which sometimes appear improbable.

Second, the scales of convergence - or the extent of it - seem to have changed. Since the 2010s and its aftermath (notably the financial crisis), there is sometimes talk of a return of the national level in mobilizations (Ancelovici, Dufour and Nez, 2016), as if convergence today no longer meant acting together on the global level (against economic and financial globalization), but rather converging struggles on the national level. It is indeed on this level, and at the local one, that the ecological movements are asking themselves the question of the necessary decolonization of territories, that feminists are reflecting on anti-racism and ecology, and that environmental and indigenous struggles are looking for mutual anchor points. Of course, questions of climate justice, or the issue of refugees, bring the transnational scale back into thinking and action; but what happens locally now seems to be at the forefront of protests. The pandemic period of the last two years has also reinforced this focus, limits the possibilities of travel between continents and brings the national executive power back to the forefront of political dynamics. How can we think about these convergences between different scales of action? Is the global always in the local (Dufour, 2013)? Is it today a forced withdrawal or rather a constrained continuation of the transnationalization trajectories of social movements (della Porta 2020; Conway, Dufour and Masson 2021)?

Third, these sometimes unlikely convergences raise the question of the political meanings that are carried or could emerge from them: does the ideological heterogeneity of conservative struggles blur the boundary between what is traditionally considered left and right? Observers point to the difficulty of reading recent mobilizations in terms of the traditional ideological categories used in the social sciences (hence the development of the Alt-Right concept, for example, see Hermansson et al., 2020). As an illustration, the activists of the Yellow Vests movement were demanding more tax justice from the French state and the lifting of restrictions on automobile mobility. In other words, what societal projects are carried by the current mobilizations (progressive or conservative)? More broadly, what are the partisan translations, but also the general political dynamics of these convergences?

We invite you to send us your proposals, specifying in which axis(s) your communication is:

- 1) A priori unlikely convergences (within conservative movements but also movements like the Yellow Vests)
- 2) The scales of convergences of struggles and their recomposition
- 3) The political (and cognitive) meanings of these convergences

Please send a paper proposal to Pascale Dufour and Alexia Renard (pascale.dufour@umontreal.ca; alexia.renard@umontreal.ca) by September 30, 2021.

Format: 500 words - please specify the field(s)/survey(s) or other empirical materials that will be mobilized.

Timeline

Submission of proposals: September 30th

Selection of proposals: October

Notification to guests: early November

Paper to be written by April 1st, 2022

Conference: May 5th and 6th, 2022

Practical information

The conference will be bilingual (with simultaneous translation): oral communications may be in English or French.

A publication in English is planned after the conference. For this reason, we will advantage proposals based on specific empirical research and we ask to write the paper in English.

Accommodation and meals will be provided by CAPED. Partial funding for travel is available for students and precarious workers.

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