

## open *movements*

### Open Movement series

#### “Fostering alliances across progressive movements”

[www.opendemocracy.net/openmovements](http://www.opendemocracy.net/openmovements)

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Special editor of the series: **Sabrina Zajak**, Professor at the Ruhr Universität Bochum, with the support of Simone Gomes. Please send your article proposal to [sabrina.zajak@rub.de](mailto:sabrina.zajak@rub.de), [brenobringel@iesp.uerj.br](mailto:brenobringel@iesp.uerj.br), [Geoffrey.Pleyers@uclouvain.be](mailto:Geoffrey.Pleyers@uclouvain.be), [s.ribeirogomes@gmail.com](mailto:s.ribeirogomes@gmail.com)

The breaking of alliances, cooperation and social ties, the failure to establish solidarity and support has become a feature of our time, fostered by populist movements that build on fear of the “others” and diversity to strengthen regressive societal projects.

Fostering cross movement alliance, converge on common targets and forge new visions and paths for emancipation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus constitute particularly urgent challenges for both progressive movements and actors at the local, national and global scales.

More than ever, the hopes for a better world lie in the capacity of progressive actors to forging alliances and working together across progressive movements. Alliances and collaborations are needed across movements’ sectors and topics, notably between movements and trade unions. They are also needed across countries and continents, around a common agenda to restore some of the welfare and democratic institutions, help to enforce existing ones (global law is very advanced in many respects) and support new ones.

Movements always and by definition consist of alliances and mobilization is always cross-movement. It was notably a core feature of the global justice movement, often referred to as “the movement of movements”. Historians remind us that cooperation between the so called “old” and “new” social movements has existed for a long time. More recently, the “climate justice movement” results of a deep confluence and strong alliance between social justice and some environmental activists. Together, they have pointed to the strong connections between environmental damages and social injustices and inequalities.

At the same time, cross-movement alliances cannot be taken for granted, as the different groups and actors are separated by different ideological positions, a diverse history and development, and are also partially subject to competitive relations. How such cleavages and differences are overcome is a key question with which this series will deal. It will forecast successful cases of alliances and collaborations between different kinds of movements and actors that focus on different topics. What makes alliance formation possible? What may hinder or difficult these alliances? How do they transform movements and actions, including through trade-offs and unintended consequences? This series aims to provide a platform to present and discuss reflection and research on the conditions under which movement alliances evolve, on the success and failure of cross-movement mobilizations at different levels - from local to global - as well as on various topics such as ecology, labour, economy, and urbanization.

This series gathers contributions presented at the international conference “Cross-Movement Mobilizations”, that gathered over a hundred of researchers and actors at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum from April 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 2017.

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### **Open Movements: for a global, public and accessible sociology of social movements**

open Movements is an online platform that publishes accessible articles on social movements and democracy around the world. It is a joint initiative of openDemocracy and the Research Committee on Social Classes and Social Movements of the International Sociological Association (ISA RC47).

Open Movements intends to "open up" social movements by publishing articles that connect social movements to broader social change, dialoguing and speaking from the South, and combining the local, national, regional and global scales. We also "open up" social movements studies by making it more accessible to a varied and global readership by favoring concise and clear manuscripts that steer clear from technical or academic jargon.

We invite scholars, activists and the public in general to submit critical and empirically-based outlooks on social movements and new expressions of social and cultural transformations.

We welcome articles that connect recent or ongoing movements or democratic issues with research based analysis. Article proposals length should be 2000-2500 words, in a clear and accessible English. Scholar jargon and theoretical debates should be avoided.

Visit our website to see our latest articles and view our submission guidelines.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/openmovements>

ISA47 Open Movements editors:

Breno Bringel, IESP-University of Rio de Janeiro

Geoffrey Pleyers, FNRS- University of Louvain

[brenobringel@iesp.uerj.br](mailto:brenobringel@iesp.uerj.br), [Geoffrey.Pleyers@uclouvain.be](mailto:Geoffrey.Pleyers@uclouvain.be)

## ISA47: Fostering Global Perspectives on Social Movements

The Research Committee 47 “Social Classes & Social Movements” of the International Sociological Association brings together hundreds of social scientists from all continents. It provides a unique platform to share and develop perspectives on and analyses of current, recent and past social movements around the world, as much the ones that strike mainstream media headlines as those that discreetly transform politics or daily life.

ISA-RC 47 has a particular interest in connecting the sociology of social movements with general sociology and challenges faced by our societies. The research committee was founded with the conviction that the study of social movements provides elements for a better understanding of specific social actors and society as a whole. As Melucci (1996:28) stated, social movements “show glimpses of possible futures, and are, in some respects, the vehicles of realization of these very futures”. Social movements are both products and producers of social change and society as a whole. They thus provide valuable empiric insights and sometimes innovative solutions to tackle with practical, political or epistemological challenges. Therefore, this Committee promotes approaches that avoid the traps of both “professional” sociologists’ hyper-specialization and movements’ organic intellectuals.

To foster global outlooks on social movements and society, we aim at avoiding as much methodological nationalism as methodological globalism by combining global issues with multi-site and multi-scale empirical fieldwork. Social sciences need to overpass ‘methodological nationalism’, understood as the presumption that the nation-state is an economic, political, geographical, social and cultural monolith, and that this monolith should be the unit of all social analysis. However, to take global dynamics and actors into account should not lead to sociological approaches that neglect actors, claims and challenges at the local or national scales.

To foster a global outlook also requires a better inclusion of actors, claims, cosmovisions and theories from the Global South and a combination of various scales of action and analysis (from the local to the global). It requires analyzing social movements, society and social transformations beyond national and regional borders, and from the scale of the individual subject to the planet.

The relations between researchers and social actors and their contributions in public debate are two other major epistemological concerns. The concept of social movement as historical actor and heuristic tool (Touraine, Melucci), the sociology of absence and emergence (Sousa Santos) and a sociology of action that fully takes into account actors’ reflexivity, practices and limits provide concrete ways to go beyond the dichotomy between research activism and a claim for axiological neutrality. To combine these perspectives fosters an approach that allows to learn from and with actors and to contribute to scholar research and public debates.

**openMovements** is the ISA47 online platform that aims at providing critical and empirically-based perspectives on contemporary social movements, those which threaten the democratic emancipatory project as those which promote a deeper democracy, movements which gain mainstream media headlines as much as those which discreetly transform daily life and/or politics, whether at the local, national and global level.

**Mailing-list:** isa47-socialmovements@listes.uclouvain.be

**ISA47 Facebook group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ISA47/>

### **ISA47 2014-2018 board:**

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