



Toulouse, 1 September 2015

**Call for Papers
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SEMINAR**

Activism beyond borders: civil society and transnational networks

The Département des Langues et Civilisations (DLC) of Toulouse 1-Capitole University is organising a one-day international research seminar that will take place on Friday, 6 May 2016 on the theme « **Activism beyond borders: civil society and transnational networks** ». Papers will be delivered in English, French, Spanish and Catalan. They will be submitted subsequently to peer-review before being published in *Miroirs*, the online journal of the DLC: www.revuemiroirs.fr.

The seminar, which will be multidisciplinary, aims to gather together specialists of social, human and political sciences (law, sociology, history, political sciences, cultural studies) to discuss the dynamics at the origin of the transnational networks set up by various actors within civil society in parallel with state institutions, or sometimes in competition with them, when they take on prerogatives traditionally reserved to states.

At a time when the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, the court in charge of British intelligence, has just revealed state surveillance of Amnesty International, the strategic importance of civil associations in the international public sphere can no longer be denied. Globalisation and the creation of supranational bodies have had repercussions on the nature and forms of activism, which tends to develop transnationally, beyond borders. As Della Porta and Kriesi (1998) underlined, the displacement of decision-making places triggered new forms of mobilisation. Supranational institutions are no longer alone in claiming humanist and universal values, as has been made clear by the example of the European Union. Paralysed as it is by its indecision and double discourse faced with the tragedy of migrants in the Mediterranean and the economic distress of Greece, the EU opens a space for action to transnational networks. Such networks, cemented by a commitment which is both perceived and described as a moral imperative, based on the defense of human rights, are characterized by the use of direct action, countering the passivity of states and supranational instances and shedding light on the latent democratic deficit in some institutions.

Our research seminar will be an opportunity to analyse associations, cooperatives, committees, humanitarian NGOs, platforms, trade unions, movements, white movements, etc.. which are connected to sister associations abroad and bypass states. Those groups, which appeared in the 1960s and are particularly dynamic today, comprise transnational networks united by common values and discourses, producing tangible exchanges of information and services (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). We wish to study the modalities of collective action and the concrete impact of those activist entities created horizontally. We will tackle the issues around the running of transnational collaboration, the typology of actions (political lobbying, demonstrations, pickets,

promotion of culture, boycott, happenings...) but also the discourse fueled by an explanatory rhetoric which is associated with such actions and promote an attractive image of the mobilised entity. We will also analyse the common nature of the causes defended, the motivations of political activists and the acquisition of funding. José Mujica, the erstwhile President of Uruguay, declared that humans have to stop reasoning as 'nationals' and begin to think as a species and for that reason they need world governing bodies. Can states still bring solutions to the challenges of our era? Is the action of transnational networks a new and globalised mode of governing? What is the ambition of those networks? Where do they set the line between political and humanitarian commitment? We will tackle those issues thanks to the interaction of specialists from the geographical areas linked to the four languages used in the seminar.

We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers. We suggest the following topics for exploration :

- The numerous faces of transnational activism (political, cultural, environmental, philanthropic, religious, scientific, anti-racist, LGBT...)
- Representation, staging, use of symbols, rhetoric of justification and language of discontent in activist discourse.
- Concertation mechanism and creative potential : the gap with the traditional repertoire of collective actions.
- Ideology and militant practices in transnational collective actions.
- Responsiveness to current events, organisation of counter movements.
- Dynamics of claim-making and break with a norm of participation in the public sphere ; proselytism and the intentional 'acting together'.
- Subversion, provocation and unsettling potential of transnational action.
- Nationalism, identity feeling and categories in transnational networks.
- Empathy and identification : the role of emotions in transnational networks.
- Use of social networks and new technologies in transnational networks.
- Defense of human rights and international cooperation.
- Transnational activism as a means of democratic regeneration.

Brief proposals (c.250 words) should be sent to marie-violaine.louvet@ut-capitole.fr and michel.martinez@ut-capitole.fr by 31 December 2015.

Seminar organisers:

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