CONTENTIOUS CITIZENS

CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

PAUL HILDER WITH JULIE CAULIER-GRICE & KATE LALOR

Paul Hilder

Paul has worked on democracy, civil society and governance around the world, in particular in Europe and the Middle East. Previously co-founder of openDemocracy.net and policy director of the Middle East Policy Initiative Forum, he also established the Transforming Neighbourhoods programme at the Young Foundation. He is now campaigns director of the global activism network Avaaz.org, which has over a million members worldwide.

Julie Caulier-Grice

Julie joined the Young Foundation in January 2007. Since then she has been working on needs and civil society and social innovation. Previously, Julie worked at the Social Market Foundation where she focused on education policy, co-authoring Fade or Flourish: how primary schools can build on children's early progress. Julie read history at Christ's College Cambridge and graduated in 2004.

Kate Lalor

Kate read English Literature and Politics at the University of York where she was a dedicated environmental campaigner. After graduating in 2006, she immediately took a summer internship at the Young Foundation where she undertook research for this paper and helped develop the First Political Memory project. Since September she has been working as a financial journalist.

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SUMMARY

SUMMARY

This paper traces the story of campaigning for progressive social change from its origins in the late eighteenth century through to the present day, analysing a range of British campaigns from Chartism to MakePovertyHistory, and international efforts ranging from MoveOn.org in the US to the "coup de text" in the Philippines. It concludes by assessing the danger and promise of campaigning today, and how it may develop in the near future.

Social campaigning (as distinct from campaigns used in warfare, politics or business) covers the very diverse **practices used in civil society for advocating change to decision-makers** – often through public mobilisations or the staging of popular demands, but also through less obvious processes of lobbying and elite organising. It plays a vital role in publicly identifying social problems, proposing ways of tackling them, staging competing claims for the good society, and encouraging association, volunteering and active citizenship.

Campaigning's past

Campaigning depends on opportunities for civil society association and the influencing of power. Freedoms of association, assembly, speech and claim-making have been carved out over centuries, often through political struggle.

Two approaches have run in parallel through history:

- The "inside track" of elite organising and lobbying on behalf of the excluded, or to raise the profile of neglected social needs.
- The "outside track" of popular mobilisations and social movements which *actively involve a wider public* in making claims on power.

We identify four different contexts for social campaigning: isolated issues, sustained campaigns, wider social movements and social-revolutionary moments. The first pair involve seeking specific policy changes; the latter two demand broader transformations of society.

Between the early eighteenth century and the end of the twentieth century, new campaigning tactics were tested, disseminated and refined - and now form the standard toolkit for any would-be campaigner. Familiar tactics including public assemblies, special purpose associations and organisations, street marches, petitions, civil disobedience, electoral interventions, lobbying and symbols of identity or affiliation, were largely invented in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries campaigning evolved in many directions – through trade unions and the wider labour movement, religious organisations, and other organised interests, from farmers to small business – some using the 'weapons of the weak' (like the Luddites smashing machines) and increasingly making use of the new mass media and other forms of communication.

In the 1960s a new wave of movements came to the fore, organised around feminism, environmentalism and civil rights, leading to the invention of new techniques and tactics, many of which were focused around the media. Some of these campaigns increasingly sought to organise consumers, and later shareholders, against the growing power of global business.

Campaigning's present

During the 2000s social campaigning has evolved rapidly, becoming more ubiquitous and facing new threats. Campaigns such as MakePovertyHistory illustrate the power of the media and new technologies in supporting mass mobilisation in the name of progressive social change, and point to a new set of approaches involving: *coalitions* which bring together civil society organisations and other social intermediaries in a framework of

loose consensus and common effort to work for one or more shared goals; *network-centric campaigning* which is driven by distributed individual actions, sometimes supported by interactive platforms, backed by relationship management tools and email lists, and generally tolerant of diverse voices.

However, as the case study of MakePovertyHistory shows, this new toolkit can bring with it new problems as well as old ones in new guises. Some are the traditional problems of coordination, control and commitment[1]. Others are problems of legitimacy, sustainability and effectiveness:

- How can progressive or sustained campaigns be built in an environment of media moments, celebrity dependence, and tabloid petitions?
- Who writes the script of the campaign, choosing and framing actions and deciding what counts as success?
- How can you target decision-makers most effectively in the era of network governance and where campaigns can take place at the level of the local, national and global?
- Where does the balance lie between single-issue campaigns and political parties and others addressing broader strategic issues facing societies?

There are also challenging new trends – like the growing use of ersatz campaigns by corporate interests seeking to benefit from the halo effect of civic campaigning; or the growing collaboration with politicians and governments (for example over debt or climate change) which brings both benefits and dangers; or the restrictions on campaigning that have been introduced in the UK, for example, as part of the reaction to real or perceived threats from terrorism.

As in the past, too, campaigning tools have been used by groups with very divergent values and views. In this decade in the UK one of the most successful groups has been the lobby of drivers, organised in huge non-governmental organisations (the AA and RAC). One offshoot almost brought the country to a standstill during the fuel protests of 2000, and groups of drivers have made more use than any others of new devices like the BBC's Action Network and No 10 petitions.

[1] Bennett L.W. (2003). "Communicating Global Activism" *Information, Communication & Society*, 6 (2), pp. 143-168.

In parallel an important new trend is towards campaigns that are directed as much to changing public behaviour as they are towards decision makers: these are prominent in and around the environment (including campaigns to persuade motorists to give up their cars) and health. In some respects these represent a partial return to the pre-modern emphasis of religious movements on changing people rather than seeing formal politics as the primary route for change (a tradition that was also strong in the nineteenth century when temperance movements flowered in many cities).

Campaigning's future

Campaigning is neither the only course of action available to civil society, nor uniformly the best. It has been substituted by or combined with association, mutual aid, service delivery, media strategies, electoral politics, unruliness, even political violence and revolution to effect progressive social change. But social campaigning remains a distinctive reminder of popular sovereignty, and of the power and unity collective social action can generate.

Despite the recent boom in campaigning, we should be wary of current campaigning practices, namely celebrity endorsed or media-driven campaigning, professional civil society organisation efforts, and occasional massive and spectacular mobilisations of discontent. If social campaigning fades and fragments, it can degenerate into conflict and interest group politics, making it more easily dismissed or marginalised by centres of power in states and corporations, in turn breeding widespread dissatisfaction and hindering social progress. State and market institutions suffer too when their credibility and responsiveness is not renewed through social challenge and debate.

We can see three scenarios unfolding in parallel today:

- **The undertow of individualising social trends slowly triumphing** over civil society organisations, leaving campaigning at best fragmented into marginalised interest groups.

- **Existing institutions being renewed through energy, innovation and collaboration**, as has been happening with some churches and with the Service Employees International Union over the last two decades in the USA and Canada.

- **New civic mediating institutions emerging and providing fresh roots for sustained campaigning** at the local, national and global level.

Campaigning has always been messy, rough, and argumentative. It is the grit that keeps the smoother world of electoral democracy fair, and it is the currency through which societies talk to themselves honestly about their virtues and their vices. This report seeks to describe what's happening – but also to suggest some potential remedies, including better ways of protecting campaigning for social change and better ways of building up civil society's capacity to campaign, ranging from the role of schools in supporting new initiatives and new social infrastructures.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

Looked at one way, social campaigning for progressive social change is in trouble, its legitimacy and effectiveness under threat.

The global social justice mobilisations that began in the late 1990s were plagued by conflict and collapsed after the World Trade Centre attacks of 11th September 2001, which provided a shot in the arm for the paternal state and aroused fears about "non-state actors". Since then, the war on terror has encouraged many countries around the world – authoritarian and democratic, from Ethiopia to the UK – to place new restrictions on civil society campaigning. Competition too is strengthening – from reactionary social campaigning to tactical co-option by governments and cross-dressing by large corporate brands. As campaigns have multiplied and become routine, decision-makers' responsiveness has sometimes weakened. Some 17 million people around the world who marched on 19 February 2003 to protest against the Iraq war were ignored. The anti-poverty revival of MakePovertyHistory blazed only briefly across the media. In this context, it is not surprising that 61% of people in England do not even feel they are able to influence local decisions on issues that affect their daily lives – and the sense is worse for national or international decisions[2]. Although campaigning has become part of the mainstream, its ability to shape the good society is in question.

Viewed through another lens, however, civil society campaigning in the twenty-first century is more widely-used and legitimate than ever before as a channel for voice and social change. Even though election turnouts and party membership are falling in many countries, threatening to hollow out the representative democratic process, participation in civic campaigning is rising fast to fill the vacuum. Between 1974 and 2000, the number of people in Britain who had signed a petition rose from 23% to 81%, and more than twice as many had attended a demonstration – up from 6% to

[2] Kitchen, S; Michaelson, J; Wood, N & John, P (2006) 2005 *Citizenship Survey: Cross Cutting Themes* London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

[3] Cited in The Report of Power: an independent Inquiry into Britain's democracy, March 2006.

13%[3]. One recent UK study found that the public believe that lobbying the government on policy change is the most economic use of charitable money[4]. Single-issue campaigns are quietly being won almost every day, and many celebrities and newspapers campaign as a matter of course. And, membership of new campaigning civil society organisations has also grown, even if that membership is often of a typically passive nature.

These light-and-shade stories both contain truth. "Campaigning" is a multifaceted concept. It appears in arenas of life which have little in common, at least on the surface. To take just three examples, we speak of military campaigns in which armaments and troops are marshalled; viral marketing campaigns, under which a brand or idea is spread from person to person; and political campaigns, which are now expert in deploying the press release, the photo-call, the billboard, the targeted mailing. All attempt to use power to change behaviour.

The campaigning we are concerned with here uses some parallel methods and metaphors. But it involves people who are outside formal structures of power and authority trying to influence the decisions of those who are more powerful – either individuals, those in government, global bodies or big companies.

It is also true that even the narrowly defined form of campaigning outlined above can be employed by actors beyond the third sector. Campaigning is seized upon by governments and corporations seeking to harness its tactics or fashionable aura for their own purposes. Campaigning is always open to co-option, because it is simply a set of practices which can be turned to a very wide range of ends.

This paper traces the story of campaigning for progressive social change from its origins in the late eighteenth century through to the challenges of the present day, focusing on high profile campaigns such as MakePovertyHistory and assessing how it may develop in the near future. What follows is very much a personal view on the state of and prospects for social campaigning, drawing on research and also on my own experience (most recently with the new, global campaigning network Avaaz.org). For our purposes here, "social campaigning" will be taken to mean **a set of practices used in civil society for advocating change to decision-makers** – often through

[4] NPF Synergy.

public mobilisations or the staging of popular demands, but also through less obvious processes of lobbying and elite organising.

Michael Edwards has helpfully analysed three different understandings of civil society today: first, the sphere of **associational life** (including voluntary and community organisations, trade unions, political parties, faith-based organisations etc.); second, a **normative vision of the good society;** and third, **the public sphere** of deliberation and social dialogue[5]. Edwards' normative definition of civil society provides us with a basic compass for understanding what "progressive social change" might mean. We can define this as developments contributing to the growth of the "good society", measured in human terms and with regard to civil rationality, rather than through the market system. Values of happiness, respect, togetherness and mutuality, freedom and equity typically feature in such visions. Another basis for judgment would be loose public consensus, such as "solving social problems in ways that are considered good by the majority of citizens". But this criterion would be mired in a multitude of delicate issues, including tradition, the definition of the political community, and majority-minority dynamics. Visions of the good society differ importantly in the detail. Progressive social change will continue to be a question of judgment, often involving trade-offs between claims.

To fully understand how civil society campaigning can contribute to progressive social change, we need to view these three elements of civil society together with the decision-making process. This may be summarised in a sentence: **civil society organisations campaign for social change, based on their normative visions; a flourishing public sphere helps to sift their claims, and decision-makers respond with actions leading toward a shared "good society".** Although this ideal has seldom if ever been achieved, it can help us to understand the history of campaigning, to identify present-day barriers to progress, and to map out future directions.

"The social is political"

Social campaigning is about the gathering and use of influence in order to shape power – whether that influence is based on popular voice and mass numbers, a compelling social argument for change, or both. As such it is always political in nature. We need to acknowledge that political activity is not confined to formal parties or representative institutions. The feminist social movement in the latter part of the twentieth century used "the

[5] Edwards, M. (2004), *Civil Society*, Polity: Cambridge.

personal is political" as one of its rallying-cries and many quintessentially political issues such as electoral enfranchisement, environmental protection and global social justice were first placed on the public agenda by civil society, not states or parties.

From its inception, **social campaigning has been entwined with politics**. The historical review below shows this clearly. Campaigning has always drawn its energy from identifying and channelling social claims and targeting decision-makers to achieve change. Social campaigns have played a key part in many processes of democratisation and political transition. The relationship between campaigning by political parties and civil society campaigning is accordingly close in many societies. Indeed, the awareness is growing that modern parties, in their efforts to capture the commanding heights of the state, have often lost touch with their roots in civil society. The Young Foundation recently proposed reforms to the British political party system that would see parties re-grounded in civil society through social action for public benefit[6].

Through campaigning and other activities, civil society has offered the main independent challenges to organised centres of power – the state, and increasingly corporations and the media too. By doing so, it has helped to bridge the gaps that often open up between social needs and public priorities, and our institutions' tendencies toward self-interest or failures to respond in a timely and appropriate fashion.

One argument is that as the state, the market and other institutions have become more responsive to a diversity of social needs, challenges from civil society campaigns have themselves become obsolete; that civil society campaigns are too often unrepresentative of the people, or their arguments are based on faulty premises. An associated argument from the technocratic camp is that, through the optimising of service delivery, choice can supersede voice (a similar argument in business claims that consumers 'vote' with their purchasing choices). In opposition to campaigners, elected politicians sometimes argue that big issues should be resolved at the ballot box, not through marches, boycotts and protests.

There are fragments of truth in all these arguments, but they are in general both dangerous and untrue. While civil society campaigners do need to maintain and improve their linkages with representative democracy and guard against the danger that network effects can exclude the poorest from

[6] Mactaggart, F. Mulgan, G. & Ali, R. (2006) *Parties for the Public Good* Available: http://www.youngfoundation.org/Parties_for_the_Public_Good.pdf.

raising their voices, civil society campaigns play a vital and irreplaceable role in building the good society. Our institutions will never be perfectly responsive, and social campaigning will always be necessary – to publicly identify social problems and propose ways of tackling them, stage competing claims for the good society, and to encourage association, volunteering and active citizenship. As Geoff Mulgan writes in *Good and Bad Power*,

> "A state that can act as a servant requires a people that is also willing to take and use power for itself. The history of democracy is therefore never simply a story of pacification and passivity; instead it is bound up with the histories of social protest and moral persuasion in which social movements have claimed to better represent the interests and spirit of the people than their supposed representatives."[7]

From the campaign to abolish the slave trade to the Global Call to Action against Poverty, civil society campaigning has transformed lives. But innovation is certainly needed if it is to achieve more of its promise in the evolving social landscape of the early twenty-first century. There are questions to be answered about the consumerism of single-issue campaigning by civil society organisations and the emphasis on media visibility, about how institutional interests can be reconciled with the maximising of public benefit, and about the typically passive role of memberships.

For several decades commentators have predicted that the combined impact of globalisation and the new communications networks will encourage the parallel growth of a few very powerful global brands and a much richer diversity of smaller, more local or specialised organisations and products. This phenomenon is well established in culture and the media (and has now been labelled as the "long tail" phenomenon). A similar pattern looks increasingly likely in the world of campaigning too.

There is also a serious risk that the tools of social campaigning are becoming captured by the relatively powerful – in part a less predicted effect of the emergence of a more knowledge-based society. This has also been exacerbated by the decline in institutions which previously represented the poor, and, in part too, an effect of the enormous power and wealth wielded by the new ultra rich philanthropists like Bill Gates in fields like health and schooling, many of whom are adamant that they, not beneficiaries, should control how money is spent.

[7] Mulgan, G. (2006) *Good and Bad Power*, Penguin Books: London.

Even the substantial success of the MakePovertyHistory campaign in 2005, examined closely, reveals some of the tensions that now surround much campaigning, including the closeness to government, the role of celebrity and the media, and the relative failure to harness the potential of locally based activism.

Nonetheless, campaigning is on the rise around the world, and the historical and international comparisons throughout this paper remind us of its transformative potential. What is more, its institutions are being renewed, from local campaigning coalitions like London Citizens to networked associations like MoveOn.org and Avaaz.org or tools like Pledgebank.org. After tackling issues in the legal, political, social and media environment for campaigning, we conclude by recommending some directions for research and support, fertile areas for technological or organisational innovation, and issues in the legal, political, social and media environment. The next decade may see the consumerist campaigning model developed over the last half-century mature and fragment. Alternatively, we may see new civic and participatory forms of campaigning leap up, with civil society organisations helping to join the dots. I believe that the second path is worth exploring. The contentious citizens of the past can offer us some illumination on the way.

2 A HISTORY OF CAMPAIGNING

Timeline of campaigning		Social and political changes
	Origins of campaigning	
1640s - 50s: English Civil War, Quakers		
1398: English Peasants' Revolt, Lollards		Legal space for assembly, association, claim-making and the press opens up
1640s - 50s: English Civil War, Quakers		Pamphleteering
1760s: John Wilkes, political protest and non-voters' assemblies		Urbanisation, industrialisation, rise of non-conformism, eventual abolition of slavery
1760s - 70s: American independence movement		
1783 - 1833: British campaign against the slave trade		**1817:** Seditious Meetings Act **1819:** Peterloo Massacre, repressive Six Acts **1824:** trade union public activity part-legalised **1832:** Great Reform Act
1815 - 1832: British reform movement, counter-mobilisations		
1838 - 1848: Chartist movement in Britain		Counter-revolutions - but legal space gradually being carved out across Europe
1848: Year of revolutions in Europe, collapse of the Paris Commune		Co-operative economy, term limits, secret ballot, powers of citizens' initiative & referendum
1876 - 1896: US populist movement		**1906:** British Labour Party founded
1888: Match Girls' strike **1889:** Great dock strike, Argentinian Civic Union	**20th Century**	
Early 20th Century: Campaigns for the emancipation		

of workers and women, building of social federations and labour unions, conservative counter-campaigns

1916 - 1947: Campaign for Indian independence

1909 - 1965: US civil rights movement

1968: Revolutionary movement in Paris, Berlin, Italy, Mexico, USA, Poland, Czechoslovakia...

1960s - 1990s: New social movements, non-governmental organisation campaigning, consumer activism

1980s - 2000s: Revival of activist organising (Service Employees International Union, London Citizens) vs growth of lobbying (Stonewall, Friends of the Earth)

1990s - 2000s: Global social justice movement, Jubilee 2000, anti-capitalist violence

1998 on: MoveOn.org mobilises millions online in US

2001: Philippines 'Coup de text' deposes Estrada

2000 - 2005: Colour revolutions

2003: Global marches against the Iraq war

2004: Dove campaign for Natural Beauty launched

2005: MakePovertyHistory

2006: Number 10 e-petitions

Rights of socially excluded groups gradually improving, francise won, social democratic parties organise and win some power

Consumerism of causes

Colonialism starts to decline. Right-wing appropriates social campaigning tactics, from fascism to traditional conservatives. Mass media used for propaganda

Individualism and consumerism. Decline of federations, trade unions and organised religion. Routinisation between non governmental organisations and power centres. Middle class dominance of campaigning. Globalisation

Social network power

Coalitions, flash movements, media campaigning and celebrity culture, the internet, mobile organising. Local organising on the rise again. New wave of international campaigning

'War on Terror' crackdown in the West and worldwide. Campaigning becoming ubiquitous; co-option by power centres

2 A HISTORY OF CAMPAIGNING

2.1 THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL CAMPAIGNING

The oldest social movement we know of may be the Jewish rising and exodus from Egypt, led by the prophets Moses and Aaron. Popular mobilisations and revolts appear across cultures. In 206 BC the Chinese commoner Chen She realised that his contingent of conscripts would miss a rendezvous due to heavy rains and therefore face arbitrary punishment. They revolted and were soon joined by thousands from the countryside; there were other uprisings around the region as the news travelled and generals began to defect. Before long the Chin Empire had collapsed, more through an idea spreading like wildfire among the people than by violent revolution. Yet most authoritarian dictatorships (for instance, ancient Persia or the Mayan culture) show little sign of such campaigning practices, even at their collapse. Although social campaigning is a powerful idea in its own right, it tends to flourish only where it becomes effective.

This is because although social campaigning may originate with grievances, **to become strategically viable, campaigns depend on the possibility of affecting power** – either by disruption, or where power becomes partially responsive, by seeking to influence its decisions. This became possible in Roman, and to a lesser extent Greek antiquity, when civic participation entered mainstream political culture through practices including public assemblies and selection by lot. In the following centuries,

social campaigning, though still in its embryonic stages, was given further impetus by Christian ideas of human equality and of a direct connection to truth and justice. Such discourses helped to seed social change campaigns in the following centuries. Think of the Lollard priests working with Wat Tyler to raise the English Peasants' Revolt in 1398, in which up to 100,000 marched on London against a poll tax; of the Anabaptists and Levellers during the English Civil War, and the Quakers who have contributed to wave after wave of social campaigning since.

The modern story of social movements and campaigns to which we now turn is usually presented as resulting from the transformations of eighteenth century Europe. But these older examples of social campaigning are united by common threads which connect them to the present day. They originated in **social exclusion**, and the **failure of decision-makers to govern well or meet public needs**. They **challenged rulers by making claims about the good society**, referring to **popular sovereignty or natural law**. They tended to involve **contentious gatherings** or **large mobilisations**. Their goal was some kind of **social change**. And while violence was seldom far away, it was used typically to display strength in support of demands, rather than to seize power directly.

2.2 THE BIRTH OF MODERN CAMPAIGNING

The conditions for modern social campaigning probably developed first in England and America, alongside the revolutionary ferment of the late eighteenth century. Social historian Charles Tilly suggests the 1760s as a turning point, pointing to disciplined displays of popular solidarity for John Wilkes' parliamentary campaign by non-voting workers in London.[h] Crowds stopped carriages and forced the privileged occupants to shout "Wilkes and Liberty" in support of this campaigning editor returning from exile in France. He won high office from prison and later supported American independence as a Member of Parliament.

Making space for legitimate dissent

The Wilkes court cases established the first precedent for the right of British periodicals to report and criticise government actions. His supporters, accompanying him in droves to the polls, expanded electoral processions

and public meetings into mass declarations of support and converted delegations and petition marches into opportunities to fill the streets, instead of simply sending a few petitioners to make humble requests for redress. At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, the instigators of the American Revolution were using tactics of public assembly, local association, boycott and direct action (for example in the Boston Tea Party) to raise their claims.

Tilly describes the norms prevailing until then: only legally recognised bodies – guilds, religious sects – had collective rights of public assembly, the presentation of grievances and claims on authority. Any other form of collective action presuming to speak for the people or using such methods infringed on the prerogatives of Parliament. Mobilisations were acted against through the Riot Act and the apparatus of the state, in particular when they involved alliances across local boundaries. Members of the ruling elite, however, had wide license to associate, assemble, campaign and make public shows.

So it is no accident that Wilkes' supporters used his election as an opening to seize some of these elite-licensed tactics for wider public availability. The key feature of the transition to the modern age of campaigning is **the opening up of contested but legal space within which social campaigns, public claim-making and symbolic displays acquired political standing**. They were recognised – albeit grudgingly – as a permissible (even justifiable) channel for popular voice. An evolving repertoire of campaigning tactics – **public assembly, special purpose associations and organisations, street marches, petitions, civil disobedience, electoral interventions, lobbying and symbols of identity or affiliation** – became generally available over time, thanks to the dismantlement of state barriers and social dissemination and adoption.

Different kinds of campaigning

Two approaches run in parallel through history:

- The "**inside track**" of elite organising and lobbying on behalf of the excluded, or to raise the profile of neglected social needs.
- The **"outside track"** of popular mobilisations and social movements which *actively involve a wider public* in making claims on power.

The two often combine, for good reason. Public mobilisations need to privately communicate with decision-makers, to overcome their fear of the crowd and persuade them to listen. Those who get access to the corridors of power tend to find their arguments carry more weight when they can point to mass support, provided this is not seen as a threat requiring repression.

It may be useful at this juncture for us to distinguish between four different contexts in which social campaigning has been used since the late eighteenth century – isolated issues, sustained campaigns, wider social movements and social-revolutionary moments. The first pair involve seeking specific policy changes; the latter two demand broader transformations of society.

1. People may come together to campaign on a single, **isolated issue** (e.g. asking to repeal a particular law). When that issue is resolved or otherwise laid to rest, the organisation often dissolves.

2. **Sustained campaigns** are similarly focused, but are carried forward over a long period of time - sometimes over decades, as with the campaign against slavery – and require more of an institutional infrastructure.

3. **Wider social movements** tend to be more extensive and distributed in their organisational landscape, with greater emphasis on individual action and affiliation. They may also focus on more issues, and encompass many campaigns as well as developing alternative forms of social and economic organisation.

4. **Revolutionary moments** such as 1848, 1968 or 1989 are openings in the constitutional order when people rise up in many places, express comprehensive dissatisfaction, and demand change.

The latter two forms of campaigning can shift social values, attitudes and systems, often by presenting a vision of the good society which at first seems utopian. But revolutionary moments tend to be followed fairly rapidly by the reestablishment of law, and seldom achieve all their expressed goals, because they do not in themselves provide an institutional framework for progressive social change. That would require either taking political power, or sustained social campaigning. In 1848, for example, the Chartists made one last surge, started to talk more openly about revolution – and disintegrated. The international moment shocked Europe and may have

shifted it over time toward democracy, but it was directly successful almost nowhere and provoked heavy state crackdowns.

Sustained campaigns

The **campaign to abolish the slave trade** was arguably the first popular movement for policy change sustained over decades, and demonstrates the interaction of campaigning's inside and outside tracks clearly. In the late eighteenth century Britain had become the main slaving nation, transporting an estimated 3.4 million Africans between 1700 and 1810. In 1783, the first English abolitionist organisation was founded by a group of Quakers and their petition carried to Parliament by Sir Cecil Wray. In May 1787 the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade formed, with Quakers and the Clapham Sect of evangelical reformers at its core: but the dissenters could not become MPs. The Anglican Thomas Clarkson built a network of local abolitionist groups around the country, campaigning through public meetings and the publication of pamphlets and petitions. The movement reached out to the new industrial workers in the urban Midlands and north, and even women and children became involved.

Clarkson enlisted the MP William Wilberforce, who led the campaign from inside Parliament, demanding that it take responsibility for the practice and lobbying for a legislative ban. With his tenacity, public profile and position in the Commons, Wilberforce was a vital link to power. After seeing his first motion defeated in 1788, he continued to propose it for 18 years. The Slave Trade Act was finally passed in 1807, and slavery itself was abolished in the British Empire in 1833.

Yet without raising awareness and public mobilisation, Wilberforce's efforts might never have borne fruit. When Clarkson visited Manchester in the first year of the campaign, a petition was signed by nearly 11,000 – then over a fifth of its population. Celebrity and the arts also played their part. When potter Josiah Wedgwood joined the abolition committee, he produced a cameo of a kneeling African slave in chains with the words "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" The cameo – inlaid in gold on snuff-boxes and set into bracelets and hairpins – became a viral message and common rallying cry.

Wider social movements

Despite these achievements, social campaigning repeatedly had to carve out

its place in society afresh. Britain was in a state of unrest after the Napoleonic Wars, with half a million soldiers demobilised, unemployment soaring and street protests rife, the authorities feared revolution. The Seditious Meetings Act of 1817 forbade closed meetings planning to directly influence the government, but tolerated open gatherings for parliamentary reform. So these became the avenue through which public energies were channelled.

The formation of the **Stockport Union for the Promotion of Human Happiness** in 1818 was a milestone for campaigning political unions, its name indicating its breadth of mission. In 1819, it sent 1400 men and 40 women marching to a reform meeting in Manchester with "all the regularity of a regiment, only they had no uniform", three abreast, with banners and stewards. 80,000 in total assembled that day at St Peter's Fields to call for parliamentary reform and for free trade – protectionism was raising the price of grain for the poor. The event became known as the Peterloo Massacre: when magistrates read the Riot Act and sent in the yeomanry, five reformers were killed and over 300 injured.

Later that year, Parliament at Westminster passed the Six Acts to repress social campaigning. But the popular current of change and democratisation was too strong to hold back. In 1824 public activity by trade unions was partly legalised, and the Reform Act to broaden the franchise followed in 1832. During the first half of the nineteenth century, social campaigning became a widely-available practice in Britain, as a licensed space was carved out within the state and in the public realm, a growing repertoire of tactics and institutional forms was developed, and different social groupings took them on (also for conservative ends – for instance, in mass mobilisations against Catholic enfranchisement). This evolution happened faster in Britain than anywhere else in Europe, perhaps because the vehicles of revolution and war were moving more swiftly on the continent. Britain embarked instead on a cycle of social mobilisations met by inadequate response, which stirred up further campaigning and further partial reform – a cycle apparent to this day.

When the 1832 Reform Act failed to give the vote to the workers who had mobilised to demand it, a new movement began to brew. It converged with reactions against the anti-welfarist New Poor Law, and became **the Chartist movement** with the publication of the People's Charter in 1838 – a petition for universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, annual parliaments and other measures, originating in proposals by the London Workingmen's Association.

An umbrella National Charter Association established in 1840 soon had over 400 branches, building on previous workers' groups. It organised 2 million signatures to a petition in 1841 for the release of Chartist prisoners, and 3 million – over 20% of the nation's entire population – to a petition for the Charter in 1842. Chartists also organised mass demonstrations and even counter-parliaments – General Conventions of the Industrious Classes – during the decade leading up to 1848. Their Charter was addressed to "The Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament Assembled". This neat piece of rhetoric makes clear that parliamentary sovereignty depends on popular sovereignty, and that petitioners need likewise to address their fellow-citizens to win mass support.

Revolutionary moments

1848 saw one of the first international "revolutionary moments". Popular mobilisations sprang up all around Europe after uprisings in Paris and Lyon, using the now-international symbols of Liberty Trees and Liberty Caps, as well as marches, committees, songs and popular militias. The Paris Commune was established, and failed. Democratic transitions took place in Switzerland and the following year, in Denmark. For a fuller understanding of these events we would need to delve into kinds of counter-elite organising, subterranean Europe-wide networks of civic-republican revolutionaries that had been growing for decades, including freethinkers and freemasons, Poles, Finns, Brits and Italians, as well as narratives of international solidarity being developed by figures as diverse as Mazzini and Karl Marx.

One thing is clear: social campaigning fades and revolution is confirmed at the point where the power of the state is taken over permanently. Although it shares a borderland with political campaigning and can on occasion be entrusted with some decisions of state, civil society cannot seek to take over the seat of government and remain itself. Rather, its function is **to influence, challenge, harness and tame power from below** – to grow both the space of civil society and the state's ability to serve it.

This is nonetheless precisely how social campaigning slides toward revolution, when basic elements of democracy – responsive decision-making, the universal franchise, and licensed spaces for campaigning – are missing. Take the Civic Union founded in Buenos Aires in 1889 against the backdrop of a lively culture of demonstrations and Argentina's lack of

formal democracy. The Union promptly staged a demonstration with 30,000 participants, but when it went on to mount a popular rebellion, it failed as politicians who had encouraged it did a deal to change the government. Not for the first time, the campaign's inside track was working at cross-purposes with its outside track.

Another example is the mass rural Populist movement in America in the late nineteenth century, which developed a parallel co-operative economy and trained 40,000 public speakers to tour the country. Becoming a political party, it helped enact not just term limits and the secret ballot, but powers of initiative, referendum and recall which gave social campaigning more direct access to certain powers of the state. But the Populists' prescriptions for the good society were far from perfect, and the movement faded fast after throwing its weight behind William Jennings Bryan's unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1896, becoming entwined with racism in places like North Carolina.

2.3 TWENTIETH CENTURY: FLOURISHING, DISSEMINATION, CORRUPTION?

Much of the repertoire of social campaigning had already been developed by the mid-nineteenth century. The history of the early twentieth century is therefore less about innovation in campaigning than about flourishing and dissemination. Many of its stories will be familiar; from mass civil disobedience organised by the Indian National Congress, to the direct, non-violent actions of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). But the twentieth century also witnessed the use of campaigning tactics by reactionaries seeking to advance their particular values and views. Here we seek only to shed a little fresh light on a couple of examples.

Gandhi and ethics in social campaigning

The **campaign for Indian independence** holds a significant place in the twentieth century history of social campaigning. Influenced by Buddhism, Jainism, the teachings of Jesus and his own Hinduism, Gandhi became convinced of the power of non-violence, arguing in 1921: "Given a just cause, capacity for endless suffering, and avoidance of violence, victory is certain." He made a distinction between non-active pacifism, which he regarded as "rank cowardice" and non-violent resistance, calling the latter *Satyagraha* or

"truth-force". One of his major contributions was to **clarify the value of ethics in social campaigning**. Gandhi believed that "self-rule" and "holding firmly to truth" was necessary.

Congress and the Muslim League, the elites who provided much of the campaign's inside track, called for constitutional reform and home rule in 1916. Meanwhile, by focusing on the outside track of change and mobilisation at the grassroots, Gandhi was able to connect politics to the daily lives of the poor and thereby help turn an elite campaign into a wider social movement. Practical campaigns included boycotting foreign cloth and spinning one's own and the Salt S*atyagraha* or Salt March of 1930.

The British tax and monopoly on the sale and production of salt was a grievance which cut across geographic, ethnic, caste and religious lines. As he walked the 240 miles to the coastal village of Dandi, Gandhi was joined by thousands of followers. The day after he arrived, he defied the law by picking up a lump of natural salt from the Dandi shores, declaring "with this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire". Gandhi, along with 60,000 other protestors, was eventually imprisoned. The march, with its tactics of mass mobilisation, civil disobedience and non-violence, came to global attention and marked a new episode in the struggle for Indian independence.

Thereafter, civil disobedience and non-violent assemblies became common; imprisonment a badge of pride. These ideas and energies colonised the Congress Party and independence was finally achieved in 1947. Gandhi's vision of the good society remains further off; but it has acted as a regulative ideal, shaping developments from the recent *panchayati raj* reforms of local democracy to the less clearly progressive tradition of Indian protectionism.

Direct non-violent action and the American civil rights movement

The American civil rights movement fought an even longer struggle against racial discrimination, succeeding in winning equal treatment and the vote only in 1964 and 1965. The NAACP campaigned through legal cases from 1909 onwards, removing the legal justification for "separate but equal" education policies through *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954. Meanwhile the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were already applying the tactics of non-violent direct action in the fight against racial segregation and the "Jim Crow" laws of the Deep South. In 1947, inspired by Gandhi's campaigns

of non-violent resistance, CORE members set about on their "Journey of Reconciliation" – the first of what became known as "Freedom Rides" – in an attempt to end segregation on interstate travel.

But segregation remained widespread and the NAACP was promptly banned from states like Alabama. So people started to take direct action and use civil disobedience to bring about change. Churches, local grassroots organisations and larger umbrella organisations and networks provided energetic institutional support. NAACP officer Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to white passengers in 1955 triggered the Montgomery Bus Boycott, led by Martin Luther King, which succeeded after over a year of efforts. The NAACP, CORE and Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC) played an instrumental role in co-ordinating and directing freedom rides, sit-ins, marches and other protests which culminated in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The march brought together civil rights, labour and other progressive organisations, and over 200,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial where King made his "I Have a Dream" speech.

After President Kennedy's assassination, Johnson oversaw the passage of the Civil Rights Act which outlawed segregation and prohibited discrimination on the basis or race, gender or religion. Yet informal inequalities and racism continued to plague US society, triggering race riots in Watts and elsewhere. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders called for reforms in employment and public assistance to black communities, warning that the United States was moving toward separate white and black societies. Meanwhile, the less widely-supported and more violent Black Power movement had picked up the baton.

The civil rights movement has inspired generations of activists and helped shape non-violent, direct action campaigns since, including campaigns for equality between the sexes, equality for indigenous peoples and the campaign for nuclear disarmament.

Campaigning against progress

Social campaigning against progressive social change was also a prominent feature throughout the twentieth century. At the beginning of the century Billy Sunday, an American professional basketball player-turned-evangelist, led revivalist meetings that reached millions, preaching

for muscular Christianity and against the labour movement: "America is not a country for a dissenter to live in".

Rudy Koshar has documented how on a more microscopic level, the flourishing associational life of the German university town of Marburg (one organisation for every 63 people by 1930) acted as a fertile breeding-ground for Nazism through "the unplanned propaganda of daily social life". In Britain, groups ranging from the environmentalist-masonic Kibbo Kift to the national-socialist Blackshirts ran social campaigns featuring rich association and visions of the good society combining conservative and regressive agendas. Juxtaposed with Gandhi's work, these examples cast light on the importance of the normative frame of civil society, as well as the common failures of the public sphere and the media to sift claims adequately.

The power of social federations

Meanwhile, for decades **trade unions had been organising millions of workers to demand their rights and call for wider social change.** UK milestones included the Match Girls' strike and the Great Dock Strike in 1888 and 1889 and the formation of the Labour Party in 1906. A wave of industrial organising and community unionism swept the USA in the 1930s alongside the New Deal. It was in this context that Saul Alinsky started to develop practices of broad-based community organising to build effective coalitions across class, confession and race, making use of religious as well as labour solidarities. His Industrial Areas Foundation went on to train professional organisers and develop the practice of dialogue and personal encounter in organising. Today it is flourishing, its chapters helping to organise over a million people in Baltimore and other cities across the US (and offshoots like the Citizen Organising Foundation in the UK).

Theda Skocpol has praised **the big social federations which underpinned American civil society** in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as the Odd Fellows, the Elks and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Even by 1955, she reports that "more than two dozen very large membership federations enrolled between one and twelve percent of American adults apiece. Rooted in dense networks of state and local chapters that gave them a presence in communities across the nation, major fraternal groups, religious groups, civic associations, and veterans' associations predominated". These organisations were heavily involved in campaigning and lobbying at national and local level. For instance, the generally conservative American

Legion drafted, lobbied for and helped to implement the G.I. Bill of 1944, "one of the most generous and inclusive federal social programs ever enacted". Skocpol explains how the broad base of these federations - cross-class, cross-state, cross-partisan, participatory – encouraged them to adopt universal values of fellowship and community service; thus could a conservative social infrastructure give birth to surprisingly progressive social reforms.

2.4 NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE RISE OF MANAGERIALISM

1968 saw a global revolutionary moment when traditional power structures were challenged. Utopian students took over the streets in the Latin Quarter of Paris, and workers led wildcat strikes and factory occupations around the country. West Berlin saw massive demonstrations against Vietnam and the West German government. Italian society surged onto the streets. In Mexico, student demands for civil liberties led to strikes and demonstrations of 100,000 or more, and hundreds of deaths. In the US anti-Vietnam protests accelerated, Che Guevara became an icon, a Poor People's March hit Washington, and riots hit every major US city after Martin Luther King's murder by white supremacist James Earl Ray._Polish dissidents united, organised meetings, demonstrations and petitions, and won their first foothold. Reaction was rapid. De Gaulle won a confidence referendum by a landslide. The popular mobilisation of the Prague spring in Czechoslovakia was stopped by Soviet invasion. Richard Nixon beat Hubert Humphrey for the US presidency.

Individualisation, consumerism, alienation

1968 marks a wider set of social transformations gathering pace earlier in the decade, which by the following decade would produce a new landscape of campaigning in the West. **The drivers of this transition included individualisation, consumerism and the service economy, social delocalisation and the rising importance of the media**. These developments fed back into public awareness of a new social environment. Governmental failures such as the Vietnam War helped accelerate the decline of deference to the old order. *Soixante-huitard* historian Alain Touraine described 1968 as the beginning of new kinds of struggle, whose first aim would be to "reveal what forces and social conflicts are operating in this new type of society, still too new to be aware of its nature and its problems".

These changes disrupted older social structures – not just the norms and frameworks of conventional authority, but also commonly-held visions of the good society, and the associational support provided by religious and membership organisations and mass labour unions (many of which were found wanting in their response to new social claims by excluded groups such as minorities and women). This infrastructure was not swiftly replaced. The new social movements that sprang up – for feminism, gay rights and environmentalism – tended to be very effective in achieving public profile through the media and other forms of spectacle, and in winning widespread adoption for their ideas and claims. But they tended to focus at first on developing an identity and critique and articulating new solidarities[9].

Furthermore, the experimental forms of association and social infrastructure being developed, from women's groups to autonomous communities, tended to be fragile, schismatic and trickier to channel into collective political efficacy than their predecessors. Currents of utopian liberationism drew them away from practical engagement with centres of power, which long remained baffled by them. The new social movements thus tended toward social performances and interaction with the media.

These factors came together to give civil society organisations an increasingly central and prominent role in late twentieth century social campaigning. Special purpose associations like the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade were important in fostering, organising and anchoring social campaigns and connecting them to power. But their campaigning had tended to root itself in active, well-organised outside tracks of popular mobilisation and public displays of collective will. This relied in turn on lively associational life, combining local roots with national networks.

The consumerism of social causes

By the 1960s, the social trends were moving toward individual self-expression, imagined communities of identity, and the power of the broadcast media (then able to send a single public spectacle or statement into almost every home in the country, even if only a small number of people were involved in creating it). Many people had become disillusioned with hierarchical social organisations; but they also recognised that the new, ultra-distributed social movements risked being ineffective. This is the context in which we must understand the tremendous growth in numbers of civil society

[9] Cohen J.L. (1985) 'Strategy or identity: new theoretical paradigms and contemporary social movements' *Social Research*, Vol.52 pp.663–716.

organisations during the late twentieth century, making claims for more causes and constituencies than ever before.

The story of **Greenpeace** shows this shift clearly. It began in 1971 with a small boat of activists and journalists sailing into north Alaska to "bear witness" and campaign against US nuclear tests there. Since then, Greenpeace has pioneered non-violent direct action and eye catching stunts to win media and public attention for its longer-term campaigns. It helped end US and French nuclear tests, won the moratorium on whaling, achieved the protection of the Antarctic from exploitation, and formed opinion on issues from climate change to genetic modification. Today there are 2.8 million people around the world who financially support its activities, although few of them know each other in that capacity.

Just as consumer products became segmented to appeal to a multiplicity of demands, so **civil society organisation led campaigning tailored itself to the new individualism, extending the market in the consumerism of causes**. This worked well in terms of organisational logic and public impact. Charitable trusts, foundations or a growing number of wealthy individuals could seed-fund these operations, often then sustained through direct mail advertising which created sometimes large, albeit passive constituencies. These national and international campaigns became more managerial, beginning by hiring professionals for a national office, acquiring profile through the media, sustaining funding through direct marketing and fundraisers, and lobbying government as much as businesses would. National governments and media were meanwhile becoming more responsive to claim-making through these avenues.

While there were still civil society organisations with mass memberships (such as the Sierra Club in the US or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the UK) and lively local operations (as with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), these were the exception rather than the rule. Social currents were flowing in the opposite direction. Few civil society organisations had more than tens or hundreds of thousands on their mailing lists, or gave their memberships much of a voice in campaigning.

However, by working with the grain of social trends, consumer campaigning became one of the big success stories of the late-twentieth century. In the US, Ralph Nader was joined in Washington DC by hundreds of young activists – "**Nader's Raiders"** – who helped him investigate government

corruption and corporate malfeasance and publish dozens of campaigning books. Nader's organisation, Public Citizen, helped achieve the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Freedom of Information Act and the establishment of bodies including the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as well as winning countless single-issue campaigns. In the UK, Michael Young helped establish ***Which?*** magazine and its charitable parent the Consumers' Association engaged in similar advocacy campaigns, while promoting informed consumer choice through product tests and the exposure of inferior products and services. *Which?* is currently campaigning on excessive bank charges, and in coalition with others on companies advertising junk food to children. It has recently won a partial ban on such television advertising, and continues to fight for a 9pm watershed.

Where excluded minorities raise claims of identity and equal rights, the outside track of a new social movement and the inside track of a civil society-led campaign have often interacted effectively. The gay rights movement in Britain is an excellent example, as the chronology below makes clear. After twin crises of AIDS-related social stigmatisation and government repression through Clause 28, the institutional vacuum was filled with the establishment of a quietly effective pressure group, **Stonewall**, alongside a rainbow of social movement claim-making – from gay media, polls and Pride marches to radical direct action.

Stonewall became one of the most successful British inside track campaigns ever through precise targeting of key centres of power: particularly the Labour politicians who would form the 1997 government and enact the legislation they were demanding, but also the European Court of Human Rights. It was run as a tightly-managed pressure group operation, and even the degree of movement-lobby interaction apparent in the timeline above was exceptional in the late twentieth century.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR GAY AND LESBIAN RIGHTS IN THE UK

1987

- Final National Lesbian and Gay Conference collapsed in factional in-fighting.
- **Pink Paper founded.**

1988

- **Section 28 came into force** on 24 May, forbidding the 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities: 10,000 protested in London and 15,000 in Manchester, echoed by international protests. Lesbians abseiled in the House of Lords and got into BBC1's newsroom while Sue Lawley was reading the Six O'clock News to protest.

1989

- **Stonewall Group set up** – named after the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York, operating as a lobbying and pressure group to oppose Section 28 and other blocks to equality for lesbians and gay men. Founder members include actor Ian McKellen.
- Stonewall organised first lesbian and gay receptions at all three main political party conferences.

1990

- Direct action group Outrage! set up after murder in London of gay actor Michael Boothe.

1991

- Government persuaded not to prevent lesbians and gay men from adopting or fostering.
- Press Complaints Commission ruled in favour of **Stonewall Vs The Daily Star**.

1992

- London hosted the **first EuroPride march**.
- **First opinion poll** on attitudes to equal rights and age of consent.

1993

- Stonewall launched first challenge to European Court of Human Rights on age of consent.

1994

- House of Commons voted to reduce gay male age of consent to 18, not 16.
- **Outrage! 'outed' eight bishops.**

1995

- Gay Times went on sale in John Menzies high street newsagents for the first time.
- **200,000 people attend London Pride** in the East End's Victoria Park.
- Rank Outsiders and Stonewall launch campaign against the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces.

1997

- **Labour wins the British general election**; a number of openly homosexual candidates are elected as MPs. Labour Government recognised same sex partners for immigration purposes.

1998

- **Big majority of MPs vote for an equal age of consent** - blocked by the House of Lords.

1999

- On 30 April, a bomb exploded in Soho gay pub the Admiral Duncan, the third in a series of bombs targeted at minorities by a lone extremist. Three died and several were injured.
- **The ECHR overturned the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces.**
- Over 30,000 Stonewall supporters sent the government 'Repeal Section 28' postcards.

2001

- **Age of consent reduced to 16.**
- Stonewall launches Citizenship 21 Project to encourage communities experiencing different kinds of discrimination to work together.

2003

- **Repeal of Section 28.**
- New regulations make **workplace discrimination** against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals illegal.
- **Civil Partnership Bill** proposed in the Queen's Speech.

Professionalisation of Social Campaigning: elitism and limited access?

There are several critiques of the rise of a bewildering plurality of civil society campaigns. Theda Skocpol has argued that "more voices are not the same thing as increased democratic capacity". She notes a **trend toward elitism in the membership of civil society organisations and financial and media dynamics**, with a correspondingly negative impact on democracy and equality, and points out that:

> "Most of the new women's associations tend to focus on reproductive rights issues, women's health issues or on issues of special concern to middle-class employed career women. These concerns certainly enrich public discussion. Yet women's associations are no longer speaking so avidly on behalf of broad social supports for families, children and communities. And with women's organized voices muted, such causes – of vital interest across class lines – no longer have the saliency they once did in US democracy."[10]

Many have observed that the specialisation of civil society organisations segregated by issue and passive membership systems, makes it harder for people to find paths to civic action. Without the entry route of general association for sociability or mutual aid, people cannot graduate as they might have previously to learning about and engaging in civic action and cross-issue campaigning. Without large-scale participation in the outside track of their campaigns, civil society organisations have to rely on their arguments and the media, leaving decision-makers freer to pick and choose.

It is curious that the new social movements born through 1968's opposition to the liberal-capitalist order have created such a consumerist campaigning landscape. This certainly has many benefits. Organisations like Stonewall or Greenpeace do regularly win battles and achieve positive social change on their issues. But there are concerns that such organisations can be more focused on visibility than on achieving real social change, that their analyses are flawed, or that they fail to invest sufficiently in more difficult tasks such as individual behaviour change or the countering of conservative social campaigns such as the British fuel price protests of 2000 – which arguably did more to retard the achievement of the UK's climate change targets than anything Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace have done since to support that

[10] Skocpol, T. (2005) 'The transformation of American civic democracy', *Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen* Post No 90.

goal. Civil society campaigns have also sometimes become depoliticized to the point where they are barely recognisable as the descendant of late eighteenth century campaigning, or routinised through the mechanical repetition of dubious tactics such as emailing the Prime Minister. This is not simply the fault of legal restrictions.

In his *Rules for Radicals*, revolutionary pragmatist Saul Alinsky told the sixties utopians that neither breaking the system nor low-income organising could achieve their goals: "Organisation for action will now and in the decade ahead centre upon America's white middle class. That is where the power is." Certainly the evidence on civic activism suggests a significant shift away from the autonomous organisation of low income and working class communities towards campaigns more dominated by the university educated and people with access to elite networks.

Today as in the past all campaigns have sought, as Charles Tilly put it, to demonstrate their:

- Worthiness – the moral authority of the cause
- Unity – their ability to coordinate diverse interest
- Numbers – the scale of their support (through demonstrations and other means)
- Commitment – the intensity of their commitment (for example through hunger strikes)

Yet campaigns have always been diverse in their routes for change. Some have **directly** put pressure onto decision makers, whether in government (through marches and petitions) or companies (through consumer boycotts, which can be traced back to the eighteenth century boycotts of slave-produced sugar).

Some campaigns have achieved influence **indirectly**, by altering the climate of public opinion, encouraging research or influencing the media presentation of issues. Modern campaigning methods are both in some respects more targeted – able to direct messages and pressure onto particular legislators, or companies worried about their reputation – and more focused on the indirect, encouraging fashions in ideas.

Some of the most important campaigns of recent years, however, are no longer directed solely or even primarily at the commanding heights of power – instead they are directed at **changing the public themselves**, encouraging less car use, more recycling, healthier lifestyles or more sustainable tourism. In this respect perhaps civil society is returning to some of the norms of much older religious movements which ignored the state altogether.

In the next chapter we explore in more detail both the possibilities and the pitfalls of these new methods.

3 CAMPAIGNING IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

3 CAMPAIGNING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Over the last few years, social campaigning has evolved rapidly, becoming more ubiquitous but also facing new threats.

This chapter assesses the evolving social, legal and political environment today, and the nature and implications of four main currents in campaigning:

1. The role of celebrity and the media
2. Government co-option and "corporate cross-dressing"
3. Coalitions and networks – technology and social innovation
4. The growth of international campaigns and local action

We begin, though, with some stories from the recent and spectacular mobilisation of MakePovertyHistory in 2005. Among them are delicate episodes which are not yet widely understood, but illuminate these broader trends.

3.1 LEARNING LESSONS FROM MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) was established as an international umbrella in September 2004 by Oxfam, ActionAid and Debt Aids Trade Africa (DATA, established by rock star Bono). GCAP had three core anti-poverty demands for 2005: "drop the debt, trade justice, more and better aid". National coalitions and campaigns were then established. MakePovertyHistory was the UK campaign, bringing together hundreds of non-governmental organisations, faith groups, trade unions and social networks. It became one of the most innovative and prominent national operations: the Gleneagles G8 summit in Scotland on 6 July was a key decision-making target for the global campaign, and the UK operation proved particularly good at mobilising celebrities and accessing government and the media.

GCAP's universal symbol was the white band, and over 4.5 million wristbands were sold in the UK alone – corresponding to 7.5% of the population, and raising considerable sums for member organisations. 225,000 people attended the MakePovertyHistory Edinburgh demonstration on 2 July. Rock star activist Bob Geldof decided at the last minute to organise a follow-up to LiveAid on the same day to build support for the campaign's goals and public awareness of the "Gleneagles moment". Live8 was a set of ten concerts: one in each of the G8 countries, one in South Africa and one hastily arranged with African musicians at the Eden Project in Cornwall. An estimated 1 million people attended Live8. Almost 30 million watched on television. GCAP claimed to involve 38 million people in actions in over 75 countries[11].

Filmmaker Richard Curtis, a friend of British Chancellor Gordon Brown, helped convene and resource MakePovertyHistory through the Comic Relief organisation, and drove its saturation media operation. He devised the "click" adverts in which a panoply of celebrities (from Kate Moss, Brad Pitt and Scarlett Johansson to Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu) clicked their fingers every three seconds to mark the death of a child, and hammered home the simple message of 30,000 dying from poverty every day. Its counterpart was the Africa Snaps adverts, featuring Youssou N'Dour, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Seun Anikulapo Kuti, seen by an estimated

[11] Holland (2006) "Mainstreaming Africa" in *Global Civil Society* 2005-2006 Sage: London.

20 million people in 15 African countries.

The MakePovertyHistory media operation achieved awareness with 87% of the population – saturation point – and directly reached 72% of adults, it being estimated that each read about the campaign over 30 times. The advertising equivalent value of this "earned media" is estimated conservatively at hundreds of millions of pounds. The campaign even became part of the news agenda, as well as driving deeper coverage and debate[12]. Particularly on Africa, perceptions of irretrievable governance failure, corruption, conflict and famine were disrupted for a period in favour of the possibility of practical improvements. UK minister Ed Balls has followed Gordon Brown by **describing his government as playing the role of the global social justice movement's inside track**:

> "Jubilee 2000 and MakePovertyHistory would regularly surround the Treasury building with a ring of steel, with bells and whistles and trumpets and megaphones. And we would ring our international partners in other G7 governments and say: 'there are not just thousands of postcards arriving, but now they have surrounded us and blockaded the building'. And before the big international meetings we would call Jubilee 2000 or MakePovertyHistory and say, 'isn't it about time you surrounded the Treasury?' So we can ring up our international partners and urge the case for progress."[13]

MakePovertyHistory was one of the most successful and popular media campaigns we have ever seen in the UK. The recent fashion for social campaigning is largely attributable to its impact on the public mind. Any serious "lessons learned" exercise must nonetheless also note difficulties and identify scope for improvement.

1. Leadership, goals and strategy: who owns the script?

MakePovertyHistory focused the lion's share of campaign energy on the Gleneagles summit. One of the most critical decisions in the campaign would therefore be how to judge and respond to the G8 communiqué. Feedback to supporters and decision-makers about successes, knock backs and objectives remaining to be accomplished is a critical element of any campaign to demonstrate efficacy, sustain commitment and win further victories.

[12] http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/docs/measuringreachofmph.pdf (2006).

[13] Political Opinion Former Interviews, The Sheila McKechnie Foundation, 2005 Available: http://www.sheilamckechnie.org.uk/files/Research2005.pdf.

The most widely-heard response to Gleneagles was an exhausted Bob Geldof's: "On aid, 10 out of 10. On debt, eight out of 10. On trade … it is quite clear that this summit, uniquely, decided that enforced liberalisation must no longer take place. That is a serious, excellent result on trade … mission accomplished, frankly." Bono added, "the world spoke and the politicians listened". However, the global coalition's official response seconds earlier from chair Kumi Naidoo told a very different story: "The people have roared but the G8 has whispered. The promise to deliver [more aid] by 2010 is like waiting five years before responding to the tsunami." Nonetheless, the message heard by most of the public and millions of supporters through the media was that of the celebrities, and it was a **message of demobilisation**: the leaders have responded, time to go home.

Many commentators and non-governmental organisations thought that the G8 conclusions mixed big advances with compromise and failure, as is usually true of intergovernmental summits. Economist Jeffrey Sachs described it as "an important, if incomplete, boost to the development prospects of the poorest countries". The canniest approach for achieving anti-poverty goals might have been to announce battles won, decry failures to respond in other areas, and stress vital next steps – particularly on trade justice, where Geldof's diagnosis was off the mark, and key decisions would not in any case be taken until the WTO ministerial in December. Eventually, Geldof delivered a revised progress report and called G8 follow-through "good on debt, okay on aid and ugly on trade"[14].

MakePovertyHistory would never have won the profile or policy battles it did without celebrity support, in particular from hyper-campaigners Bono, Geldof and Curtis. They established the campaign in the public consciousness, came up with key strategic innovations, and won unparalleled access to decision-makers. Who could blame them if they felt they owned the script? They were the inside track, the Leadership. Likewise, who could blame other campaigners and civil society organisations for feeling that the campaign marked a significant missed opportunity?

2. Drawing the line between civil society and the state

One campaign insider told a hard-left journalist that UK government demands for endorsement of the G8 communiqué had "followed weeks of pressure on some non-governmental organisations to 'clear delicate stories with the Treasury'", and attempts by a former Oxfam policy chief

[14] www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200606/s1675266.htm.

turned Downing Street adviser "to pressure leading NGO officials 'to refrain from criticizing the Government[15].'" This may point to a general challenge about how those in the inside track of social campaigning interact with government decision-makers and vice versa.

As we have seen, the UK government tended to portray itself as part of the inside track of the campaign: it was lobbying other governments to come onboard, enlisting MakePovertyHistory as its public pressure wing. This description reflected reality to a considerable extent. Where decision-making is complex – as in intergovernmental systems – the interests of social campaigns and sympathetic participants in the decision-making process often align. UK ministers and officials were also linked to key inside track campaigners through personal friendships, shared values and goals, and past experience. Following a long tradition of elite organising, these connections were indeed often closer than those between the inside and outside tracks of the campaign.

However, at key moments the tactical interests of decision-makers and campaigners can diverge. That is one very good reason why the two roles should ultimately never be confused. As the host of the G8 summit, the British government needed politically to claim major successes and paint things in the best possible light. Having claimed to carry the inside track of the campaign to the heart of power, it wanted voices outside to reinforce its message of victory. Yet it would have been in the campaign's interests to send a (truer) message of partial success, and embolden the public to apply further pressure. It is likewise in the interest of governments to keep the state-civil society distinction clear: they are responsible for hard decisions involving tradeoffs and limited resources, so need to avoid arousing false expectations. The dance between social campaigning for progressive social change and sympathetic decision-makers is an intricate one, in which each partner needs some leeway.

3. The dangers of consensus and conflicting demands

The details of policy also matter. There were significant divergences both *between coalition members* and *within governments* over how anti-poverty goals could best be achieved. The report of Tony Blair's Commission for Africa, on which Geldof also sat, made the same top-line claims as MakePovertyHistory; but some of its proposals were contested bitterly by coalition members. The Commission certainly informed the G8 communiqué

[15] Hodkinson, S. (27 October 2005) "Bono and Geldof: "We Saved Africa!" *The Independent.*

more intimately than the MakePovertyHistory platform. This is not the place to arbitrate a legitimate but difficult debate about means and ends in the struggle for global social justice, in which basic facts are heavily contested. But it is striking how little effort was devoted to clarifying these questions publicly during the course of the campaign. **While part of the logic of a coalition campaign is to avoid the tyranny of a detailed consensus, this leaves decision-makers great scope in their response, and can facilitate co-option.**

At a minimum, some two-way dialogue between the inside and outside tracks of campaigning is essential for accountability, intelligence, strategic coordination and sustained mobilisation. It is generally agreed that there were not enough voices from the Global South involved in the planning, framing and operational management of the GCAP/MakePovertyHistory campaign, or indeed in its public face (almost all the Live8 musicians were white, which sent an inadvertent message about where political agency lay). Ex-Number 10 spin doctor Alastair Campbell reflected: "Regardless of whether it was or it wasn't, people felt this was a two-way dialogue[16]". But as with government by focus group, that feeling could not be sustained for long in the absence of authentic dialogue.

4. Demobilisation and burnout

The campaign achieved spectacular reach with its one-to-many media strategy and consumerism, reinforced by the use of viral symbols of solidarity like the white bands. But it failed to consolidate that reach sufficiently for the longer term, in part because the only social infrastructure it could draw on to sustain campaigning was that of member organisations. The focus on passive, consumerist gestures such as going to Live8 or buying white bands did little to help build collective efficacy. Indeed, scandals broke out around the bands, and an effort was made to sell Live8/MakePovertyHistory wristbands stamped with the logos of global fashion brands including Hilfiger Denim – despite its parent corporation's involvement with anti-union sweatshops.

Campaigning to put an end to millennia of poverty in just one year may have been a fiction, but it was a valuably mobilising one. **Yet an adequate legacy materialized neither in the form of effective social infrastructure for a sustained anti-poverty movement, nor in progress toward the goals.** Many campaigners speak of demobilisation and burnout after Gleneagles.

[16] Campbell, A. (20th February 2006) 'Alastair Campbell: A Technophobe no more', *The Guardian.*

The failure in September to achieve a realistic routemap toward achieving key Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and **the collapse of the WTO Doha Development Round in Hong Kong in December** followed. Neither of these events was targeted by public mobilisations anything like as significant, although Oxfam presented a petition of over 10 million signatures for fair trade in Hong Kong – 80% of them from developing countries. Phil Bloomer, an Oxfam campaigns director, reported: "In meetings with senior negotiators in Hong Kong, it was shocking to find that, despite all the rich-country rhetoric about changing the rules to make trade a positive force for poverty reduction, the EU and US had reverted to type – they were there to get as much for themselves as they could. This was a genuine surprise to me, even as a veteran campaigner. The result was a profoundly disappointing text and a betrayal of development promises by rich countries[17]."

In some respects, **MakePovertyHistory's race to Gleneagles followed the classic pattern of revolutionary-moment campaigning** identified earlier. It had a utopian dimension, and lacked lasting institutions or frameworks for dialogue between inside and outside campaigning tracks; it contained conflicting demands, made a big noise and faded fast.

An independent evaluation found that MakePovertyHistory's **new media operation** was a key channel for the campaign's outside track, providing information accessed by millions of people and participatory avenues through which over 800,000 people sent messages to decision-makers over the year[18]. Almost half a million people subscribed for email updates, coming disproportionately from outside the traditional social campaigning constituencies. Richard Curtis, impressed by the US MoveOn.org model of online organising, had helped champion and support MakePovertyHistory new media through Comic Relief. There was a dedicated new media steering committee – which, almost uniquely, has continued to meet through 2006.

Media coverage was the main driver of online activity and new media actions. Already after Gleneagles, halfway through the year, media profile plummeted, and the campaign as a whole appeared to start winding down. It switched from "popular" emails signed by celebrities to policy-led communications which had less impact, meaning almost no further growth after 6th July. The evaluation also notes that there was almost no use of more horizontal new media tools such as blogs and social networks. Technological best practices were not always followed, only a budget of £20,000 was allocated to new media, and there was no cross-disciplinary campaign group in which more

[17] http://www.maketradefair.org/en/index.php?file=wto_phil.htm.

[18] *2005: The Year of Make Poverty History. Available: http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/docs/mph-lookback05.pdf.*

network-centric initiatives could be developed.

Two particularly significant new media opportunities were missed in the course of MakePovertyHistory, largely due to strategic difficulties rather than daily operational overload. The first mistake can be explained simply: **at the beginning of 2006, when MakePovertyHistory was wound down, it destroyed an email list of almost half a million people who had mobilised to take an interest in anti-poverty campaigning.** Why was this done, when it appeared to run diametrically counter to building the reach and capacity of the anti-poverty movement for the future? The answer may lie ultimately in the politics of the coalition. Many member organisations were fearful of repeating the experience of the Jubilee 2000 coalition for debt relief, which took on a life of its own. They joined MakePovertyHistory on the condition that the coalition would run *for one year only*, to be fully dismantled by the beginning of 2006. This time limit was then written into the email privacy policy.

The participating coalition members hoped that the MakePovertyHistory list would be encouraged to migrate to swell member organisations' supporter bases for the future. But this process was begun only in December 2005 and succeeded in migrating just 10,448 people – 2.2% of the original list. Just 30,000 (6.4%) then opted into a newly-created MakePovertyHistory list. Almost 450,000 people (disproportionately from non-traditional social campaigning constituencies) were lost into the ether[19].

The second missed online opportunity was local organising. The new media steering group considered proposals to build a grassroots action toolkit based on tried-and-tested methods. It would have offered MakePovertyHistory supporters ways to find each other in their own city, town or village, to get together to organise collective local actions, and to coordinate travel to major demonstrations in London or Gleneagles[20]. This had been one means through which Howard Dean's 2004 US presidential campaign took off. A distributed, locally-rooted social network of activists grew beyond Dean headquarters' command-and-control, giving it momentum it could never otherwise have picked up[21]. This approach is simply an update of the old organisational model of local chapters, albeit better suited to the new social age through cellular processes of self-organisation.

The idea excited some interest. It could have enabled the supporters of

[19] Raymond, D. (2006) *Make Poverty History New Media Review* Available: *http://www.bond.org.uk/pubs/campaign/mph/mph_new_media_exec.pdf.*

[20] This proposal was first developed by Nick Buxton of CAFOD. I became one of those advocating it to the MakePovertyHistory steering group.

[21] Trippi, J. (2004) *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* Harper Collins: Canada.

hundreds of member organisations all around the country to find each other and cooperate locally through their shared affiliation to MakePovertyHistory. But it was never adopted. Insiders suggested three different fears at work: the possibility of losing control of the organisation-supporter relationship if local activist networks were to develop; worries about larger non-governmental organisations benefiting disproportionately; and fear of the campaign gaining fresh life beyond 2005. This may prove to have been a classic case of narrowly-defined institutional interests working against larger progressive social change.

So, a few vital opportunities were lost for local cross-fertilisation and association, grassroots organisation, two-way dialogue and further energising the campaign. The one-year guillotine seems particularly curious because coalition members in fact did rather well on profile-building and actions taken through MakePovertyHistory. Oxfam estimates it recruited 50,000 new supporters, while the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and ActionAid recruited 20,000 and 8,700 new members respectively[22].

What do these interweaving stories from the 2005 GCAP/MakePovertyHistory campaigns tell us? They show that civil society campaigning is still a powerful tool in delivering progressive social change: an effective media campaign, coupled with celebrity endorsement can achieve visibility and mobilise popular support. While these are positive signs, civil society campaigning in the twenty-first century is facing some serious challenges.

3.2 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AND CELEBRITY

Media and the public realm

In any campaign there are questions about how, when and whether to seek media attention. This depends partly on internal capacity, but also on where politicians, the media and public opinion stand on an issue. Sometimes media coverage will mobilise widespread latent sympathy; sometimes it will do rather more to arouse opposition, in particular where an issue is complex or controversial. Stonewall lobbied behind the scenes rather than in public for the Civil Partnerships Act, because it knew that politicians were already sympathetic, the public was split, and there was the possibility that others would use any coverage to mobilise a considerable counter-campaign. Similar issues may include asylum-seeker rights and prisoner rehabilitation.

[22] Raymond, D. (2006) *Make Poverty History New Media Review* Available: http://www.bond.org.uk/pubs/campaign/mph/mph_new_media_exec.pdf

In theory, the public realm is a cradle for social campaigning: it provides ways for people to learn about the existence of campaigns, to discuss which are worthwhile, develop their arguments and begin organising to support them. The period leading up to the English Civil War was notable not just for the Long Parliament, but for an explosion in pamphleteering unleashed by changes in the political and technological climate. It brewed up in an international network between Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, Leiden and Amsterdam; in 1641, the year before the war, 4000 pamphlets were published. Many historians trace the birth of the modern public realm as an independent space of civil society deliberation to the pamphlets, periodicals and coffeehouses of the eighteenth century[23]. Thomas Paine, son of a Quaker corset-maker, became a celebrity in this age of revolutions and campaigns when his republican *Common Sense* sold some 150,000 copies in 1776 and shaped the US Declaration of Independence[24].

The perils of broadcast and multimedia

But in 1926, the populist American Catholic priest Father Charles Coughlin got his first radio show on America's Columbia Broadcasting Service (CBS). He began with a children's programme, moving swiftly onto politics and economics. When CBS sacked him for attacking the government and capitalists like Henry Ford, he started his own radio network, winning audiences estimated at up to 40 million people. Fundraising was a core activity, with most of the money going to found a series of campaigning organisations. Coughlin formed a National Union for Social Justice in opposition to Roosevelt's New Deal, backed a third-party presidential candidate in 1936, established a Christian Front, and campaigned against Communists and Jews in one breath, even publishing the forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and opposing US support for the Allies in the Second World War[25].

Coughlin's work is a disturbing milestone in the evolution of **media-enabled campaigning**. It parallels the broadcast propagandism of totalitarian Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. It forms a bridge between the rural cooperative Populist movement of the 1880s and a more recent nexus bringing together right-wing talk radio, the growth of the US conservative grassroots movement and the campaigning media operation of Fox News, through which messaging explicitly drove reporting.

As the media have grown more sophisticated, diverse and omnipresent,

[23] Raymond, J. (2003) *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

[24] Paine, T. (1776) *Common Sense*.

[25] Tilly, C. (2004) *Social Movements, 1768-2004* Paradigm Press: Boulder.

their social power has surged. Robert Putnam's research has suggested that television viewing is powerfully correlated with the collapse of civic activism in the US[26]. Guy Debord, philosopher of Paris 1968, wrote in *The Society of the Spectacle*: "Spectators are linked only by a one-way relationship to the very centre that maintains their isolation from each other. The spectacle thus unites what is separate, but it unites it only *in its separateness*[27]". Debord mystified more than he clarified. But being "united in separation" describes not only mass one-to-many broadcasting, but also aspects of today's proliferating and segmented media. What broadcast and multi-media share is a failure of the public realm, a lack of lived "togetherness" and horizontal dialogue.

With broadcast, the transmission belt from messages to their dissemination and adoption became more direct. The part of the media in filtering and shaping public issues has begun to exceed that of politicians and broader civil society, both through editorial decisions and even more importantly, through general social effect. **In a multi-media environment, the individual is re-empowered by offering them the widest media menu they can imagine.** Yet these choices often tend to connect them to like-minded people and separate them from those with whom they could effectively debate[28].

Multi-media reinvigorate social campaigning, for which partisan spaces are a useful tool. But it compounds the fragmentation of civil society, making broad based collective action more difficult, confirming for some the view that social campaigns are competing expressions of partisan self-interest. The consequences of media fragmentation for mobilisation range from the polarised civic campaigning of the USA in the early twenty-first century to the role of ethnic radio in the Rwanda genocide (though media like the BBC, GlobalVoices and openDemocracy.net often seek honestly to bridge such divides). A related problem appears in local media, which are quite often monopoly institutions. They can conduct their own, often-longstanding campaigns of support or opposition to local decision-makers, which then colours their responsiveness to local civil society campaigns.

The role of celebrity: charisma, populism and media visibility

Ask any teenager, reader of celebrity magazines, or analyst of media markets: **the biggest engine of the media is pleasure, not reason**. Modern media analyst Todd Gitlin has rediscovered Georg Simmel's turn-of-the-century

[26] Putnam, R.D. (2001) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* Simon & Schuster: New York.

[27] Debord, G. (1967) *The Society of the Spectacle* Available: http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/

[28] Sunstein, C.R. (2001) *Republic.com*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

analysis of "a secret restlessness", a "helpless urgency" that "originates in the bustle and excitement of modern life" – making us "search for momentary satisfaction in ever-new stimulations".

Gitlin writes, "Evanescence is the rule … Sentiment is as fitful as coverage. The salience of an issue spikes dramatically, then sinks just as dramatically[29]". Our demand for novelty and succession of temporary feelings has generated a media torrent, producing and swirling around brands and celebrity characters. In the torrent **celebrities are one of our most constant references, a modern equivalent of polytheism's gods and heroes.** They surface through both talent and accident. But we choose them as landmarks in the chaos, carriers of feeling to reflect humanity through images and stories, their flaws also mirroring our own.

This is the social context in which "the CNN effect" arose and then faded in the 1990s, stirring public opinion through campaigning editorial decisions to support worldwide grievances shown on screen, and mirroring the dynamics of the revolutionary moment in more virtual media moments. This is the tide which MakePovertyHistory was designed to surf for a few months through the vehicles of celebrity and media visibility. This is why campaigners have focused so much on achieving visibility in the media and increasingly, on celebrity endorsements.

Occasionally celebrities instigate their own campaigns, as Bob Geldof did with LiveAid. More often they become involved at a later date as endorsers, participants or ambassadors, lending their credibility and visibility to causes ranging from breast cancer to the campaign against the Iraq war. Actor Ewan McGregor travelled to Malawi for UNICEF to meet AIDS orphans and produced a diary and film clips for publicity in the UK. Some celebrities however, choose never to share their personal brand in this way. Others approach the function with a sense of public responsibility, and are informed not just by personal contacts but also by information and discussion in the public realm.

Given that the majority of social campaigns are for the public benefit, any endorsement is often good. But priorities matter and focusing publicity on one cause can obscure another. In such a system, worthy but unpopular or stigmatised causes may be deprived of the oxygen of publicity. They can also spread much more quickly once adopted. Until Princess Diana's endorsement of the Terence Higgins Trust, progressive campaigning around

[29] Gitlin, T. (2001) *Media Unlimited* Metropolitan Books: London.

AIDS was marginalised[30]. When she died, many of her causes faced crisis.

Curiously, although there are hundreds and thousands of high-value celebrity brands with broad social reach, **only a few have wide social reach when it comes to social mobilisation, and tend not to be the Hollywood stars.** At the beginning of 2005, a MORI poll question in the UK about who would be most likely to inspire respondents to volunteer found Geldof top at 35%, followed by comedian Lenny Henry, runner Kelly Holmes, TV presenters Ant and Dec, the Prince of Wales, singer Robbie Williams and chef Jamie Oliver[31]. This pattern may be because endorsements are viewed as a questionable activity for celebrities, with the public cautious about their motives and ethics, and because social campaigning is a smaller part of contemporary human life than celebrity media.

The gleeful scrutiny of celebrities' flaws and mistakes has only reinforced their visibility, while doing little to humanise them. Their role as ethical exemplars or political leaders generally remains in the background, for a variety of reasons. **Celebrities can be unreliable, undermining or hijacking the cause.** Fashion model Naomi Campbell wore fur after participating in a campaign against the fur trade for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). By contrast, strategic celebrity-campaign matchmaking can be very effective, particularly where links are made with the celebrity's personal story. Indeed, some of the more successful celebrity campaigners have been those like Bob Geldof, Jamie Oliver and Lance Armstrong whose public profiles flow at least in part from their history of campaigning. Campaigning rhetoric about social change is increasingly intrinsic to the success of some stars, particularly in musical traditions such as hip-hop and rock. Authenticity matters.

Celebrity **chef Jamie Oliver's** recent **"Feed Me Better"** campaign to improve school dinners in Britain was in fact launched through a TV documentary. **It tapped into a latent reservoir of public opinion by dramatising a low-profile but powerful social need and giving it focus in the politically sensitive period before the 2005 general elections.** Over five million people visited the site and at its peak, over 200 people were signing the web petition every minute. 116 MPs signed a cross-party motion in support. The government established a new School Food Trust and pledged £280 million to improve the quality of school meals. Oliver's honest public persona was reinforced by his exemplary work in the documentary, as he worked in school canteens struggling to produce healthier food and to get the kids

[30] Bowers, L. (2002) *Campaigning with Attitude*. Available: www.payback.org.uk

[31] The MORI poll, commissioned for the Year of the Volunteer (CSV), 2005 Available: http://www.csv.org.uk/News/Press+Releases/Press+Releases+Geldof.htm

to eat it. This helped marginalise a quiet undertow of criticism about his business interests.

The tradition of campaigning investigative journalism has often been carried out through television documentaries or newspapers – take the Washington Post's exposé of Watergate. Many media outlets, in particular the quality newspapers, have cut their ongoing budgets for this kind of activity. Recently, **campaigning media have used a more populist and personal style** – for instance through Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, Michael Moore's output, and books like Naomi Klein's *No Logo*. The sixties environmental movement received an enormous boost from Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* about the impact of pesticides on the environment and bird populations.

The British tabloids now routinely run petition campaigns on populist issues – *The Sun* alone has campaigned for causes from increasing funding for children's hospices (180,000 signatures) to tighter controls on immigration (over 1 million). *The Independent* has re-launched itself as a campaigning quality newspaper. Sometimes campaigning takes place through the medium of drama: Ken Loach's TV drama *Cathy Come Home* (1966) brought serious social problems around poor housing and family welfare into the public eye, and within two years the charity Shelter was launched.

Celebrity campaigning clearly interlocks with the rise of more personalised politics. Style and aesthetics matter more and more in political communication and in this way politics can be seen to be adopting the logic and the personnel of entertainment. For example, the Labour Party's electoral victory in 1997 did seem like the culmination of a successful social campaign with celebrity endorsements and parties at Number 10. But the government's legitimacy could have been undermined when those celebrities disavowed it.

As ideology takes more of a back seat in politics and unexpected snap decisions that could not have been anticipated in any manifesto come to the fore, older leadership criteria of civic virtue and charisma are being revived. This has its dangers, among them the decline of organised lobbies against domestic economic inequality. The best ways to achieve social progress are not always advocated by the most charismatic and popular voices. Pessimists criticize the modern media age in terms similar to those used by social elites to criticize economic democracy in the early twentieth century, deploring a blind and scattered consumerism of the crowd, a

populism dissolving all norms.

Yet this misanthropic surrender is far from justified. Acts of goodness are themselves charismatic, even if charisma is no guarantee of goodness. The central role of feeling in the media torrent reflects the centrality of emotion and fellow-feeling to human nature and flourishing societies, and this opens up opportunities for campaigning and progressive social change alike. Our hunger for the good society is emotional before it is rational. Amnesty International's "Protect the Human" campaign message is carried by a range of ordinary faces and voices, some of whom just happen to be celebrities.

Feeling, like campaigning, has many possibilities: it is no guarantee of social progress. It will continue to require rational analysis of problems and objectives, effective social organising, and appropriate responses on the part of decision-makers. There is no fundamental reason why we should not be able to build a society in which the public realm operates better; in which worthy citizens and even politicians can acquire more of the aura of celebrity, without being overbalanced by it; and where, instead of flickering momentarily on and off our screens, sustained campaigns for social change begin to resemble a more participatory version of the television soap operas which have held the public's allegiance for decades. But we are some way from this in today's social, political and media environment, as is clear from the following story.

"The revolution will be televised"

On Sunday 28th November 1999, Jim Wallis of the Sojourners Community in Washington DC preached a rousing sermon about the Jubilee 2000 campaign to assembled campaigners and worshippers in Seattle. The next evening, 30,000 people marched to the convention centre where the WTO ministerial summit was being held. They surrounded it with a human chain, according to one organiser composed of "Sunday school teachers and steelworkers, Indian fisherfolk, Korean farmers and South African trade unionists", all calling for cancellation of the debts of poor countries[32].

At 05.00 the next morning, the radical Direct Action Network took over key city centre intersections near the convention. They were joined by thousands of other marchers who began street parties and teach-ins. Late morning saw tens of thousands begin a permitted march organised by the AFL-CIO union umbrella. Many diverted to join the carnival zone, which was

[32] http://www.jubileeresearch.org/jubilee2000/news/wto0212.html

now preventing WTO delegates from reaching their hotels. At midday, "black bloc" anarchists began to smash shop front windows, set dumpsters on fire and turn over police vehicles. Despite attempts by other protesters to quell the violence, the police fired tear gas into crowds later that afternoon, and the evening saw running battles and the use of rubber bullets.

Images of the **"Battle for Seattle"** were seen around the world. The mass peaceful mobilisations were relegated to a sideshow. Public sympathies were split: signs of excessive police brutality emerged. But repeated violence at summits during 2000 and 2001 further marginalised the anarchists, and the 9/11 attacks were decisive in this.

This story features three interlocking problems in contemporary social campaigning, particularly around the global social justice movement: **media frames, utopian rejectionism and state repression.** It is a complex analysed forcefully by Todd Gitlin in a study of interactions between the media and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) from 1965-1970[33]. Gitlin had campaigned against the Vietnam War as president the SDS in 1963 and 1964, but became disillusioned by its tactics as it drifted closer to extremist groups like the Weathermen. He explains how the mass media became the main vehicle for disseminating the SDS campaign and lobbying for its goals. **The media "frame" gave sensational direct action and disruptive performances much more attention than any other form of campaigning.**

The SDS therefore began to focus on such activity. But the media continued to present them and their demands as socially marginal. Indeed, the poses they struck helped trigger state repression with substantial public support. **They left behind the business of seeking reform by practical, measurable means and moved toward a utopian-revolutionary rejection of wider society. This negative interaction between the news media, a small group of "spectacular activists" and the security apparatus squeezed more mainstream and progressive campaigners out of the public eye.** Strategies of this kind tend only to make sense in societies where the space for peaceful protest or freedom of speech is severely curtailed. Even in such cases, "non-violent conflict" has proven to be one of the most effective strategies.

Jubilee 2000 succeeded in its goals by using public mobilisations tied to media events in the context of a sustained medium-term campaign

[33] Gitlin, T. (1980) *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, The University of California Press: Berkeley.

for clear and achievable demands, underpinned by social infrastructure built over a longer period of time by coalition members. It communicated with decision-makers through inside track lobbying, and succeeded in persuading governments to cancel £36 billion in debt. By contrast, while the demand for new, spontaneous forms of self-organisation without leadership – described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as "multitudes"[34] – led to some creatively edgy social innovations, it hardened into a utopian and self-denying ordinance which left the movement faceless and glimpsed in the media mostly through acts of violence.

Debord argued that oppression will continue "until dialogue has taken up arms to impose its conditions on the world", and his words inspired 1968[35]. Yet we saw in 1848, 1917 and much of the twentieth century how civil society can extend the public realm, but cannot directly hold the executive. While dialogue can take responsibility and lead to decisions, it cannot ultimately govern: we need representatives and states to hold the ring, through occasionally-swift executive decisions and a monopoly of legitimate violence. **But we can make government base its actions on a fairer public dialogue through which power and society shift,** and bring it together with civil society in the public realm. As the radical writer George Monbiot has said:

> "All campaigning is hard work, and exploiting the media is just as hard as any other aspect. We've tended to neglect it in the past, and then wonder why no one comes to our actions. Our movement needs specialist media workers just as much as it needs specialist tree-climbers. The more there are, the more clearly our message will come across, and the more people will be attracted to our cause. This is how small rumblings turn into earthquakes. The revolution will be televised, but that doesn't mean that it won't also be live[36]."

3.3 GOVERNMENT CO-OPTION AND "CORPORATE CROSS-DRESSING"

Governments and companies are increasingly rubbing up against social campaigning, even borrowing its clothes and tactics. To some extent, this shift is testimony to the growing popularity and glamour of this kind of collective action, and it can widen the scope for influencing and working with these power centres. But it also presents fresh challenges, including competition, accelerated campaign fatigue, and a loss of clarity in the public

[34] Hardt, M and Negri, A (2000) *Empire*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass.

[35] Debord, G. (1967) *The Society of the Spectacle*. Available: http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/

mind about what civil society campaigning actually is and how it can change collective decisions. **Social campaigning can be choreographed against the public benefit by the powerful.** To navigate these borderlands, clear norms are important.

"Corporate cross-dressing"

Thousands of prams, seemingly self-propelled, roll like cars down a multi-storey parking spiral, through a Chinese street, along a dirt track, into a supermarket. A voiceover intones, "In the next 20 years, the world will grow by one and a half billion people. Feeding this appetite for energy will take innovation, collaboration and conservation. We've begun creating this new era of energy. Will you join us?" The logo of Chevron flashes up with a strapline reading "Human Energy™". Elsewhere, six-storey advertisements in airline terminals read, "Exactly 0% of passenger jets can be fuelled by wind, solar or nuclear energy. So what's the alternative?" Both direct the reader to a web URL, willyoujoinus.com, which combines a public discussion forum with a series of similar advertisements and short briefings.

The advertising campaign presents itself as the beginning of a social campaign. **Chevron offers willyoujoinus.com not just as an extension of the public realm where people can learn and deliberate, but as a vehicle for global collective action.** It invites people to join it in tackling the problems of global energy and the environment. It appears scrupulously fair and balanced; it is easy to forget this is a space designed and curated by one of the big players in world energy and environment. It takes time to realise what is missing. The rhetoric advocates collaboration to achieve collective goals. Yet the editorial content omits anything more than tangential references to collective or state action.

Issues of regulation, international agreements, compulsory cap-and-trade systems and carbon taxes are raised only by participants in the debate, whose comments appear in a forum which does not facilitate sustained, threaded discussion. Detailed summaries by the independent Aspen Institute take an "on the one hand – on the other hand" approach, which leaves the reader at something of a loss. All this tends to individualise participants and disperse their energies, rather than to encourage collective action or shape decisions. We are told optimistically: "As demand grows, we will need more fuels from more sources. The good news is that there is a world of energy all around us. Help spread the word."

[36] Monbiot, G. *An Activist's' Guide to Exploiting the Media*, Available: http://www.urban75.com/Action/media.html

Chevron, of course, has a long history of lobbying against adoption of the Kyoto agreement and compulsory regulation of emissions in the US. Their initiative should not be dismissed. It includes some serious participants and raises awareness of key issues in a way which is not simply self-interested. Chevron may take more socially responsible steps in future, and both industry innovation and individual behaviour change matter enormously. **But this is neither a fully public discussion nor a social campaign – and by seeming to provide these things already, it could make it harder for them to emerge and flourish for real.**

Dove's Campaign for Natural Beauty likewise began with an advertising campaign, this one featuring women whose bodies did not fit the beauty industry's stereotype. The campaign has focused on body image and self-esteem, seeking to counter the rise of eating disorders as well as to sell products. It has become quite interactive, including lively discussion forums which include mutual aid advice and in which participants often express their thanks. Over a million people voted on whether models were "Oversized" or "Outstanding", "Wrinkled" or "Wonderful". The business finances the "Dove Self-Esteem Fund" supporting educational programmes in the UK and Canada, a "self-confidence" partnership with the Girl Scouts in the USA, and other workshops and panel discussions.

Dove's latest "Evolution" advertisement shows the makeup and computer manipulation leading to the ideal images on billboards, and finishes: "No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted – Take part in the Dove Real Beauty Workshops for Girls." So, while marketing its products, it is conducting an effective campaign for progressive social change. Yet the ultimate goal remains profit maximisation, not the maximisation of progress. The Campaign for Natural Beauty has attracted massive public awareness and support. But thus far it has focused on attitude and behaviour change, steering clear of the structure of the fashion and beauty industries. Its attachment to a single (albeit mass-market) brand also keeps it sequestered. Its social potential would soar if the campaign were extended to all the parent company Unilever's brands, or horizontally across the industry; if more control of the script were given to its supporters; or if it started helping women to make demands of magazine editors and advertisers. But this would be uncharted water for Unilever's business model. We may yet see a "Real Campaign for Real Beauty" emerge from civil society, and be sued for infringing a Unilever trademark.

Government co-option

Governments have been conducting this kind of behaviour change campaign for decades, not least through public education. The British "Dig for Victory" campaign in World War Two encouraged everyone on the home front to grow their own vegetables, and transformed formal gardens, lawns and sports pitches for the purpose. But this was a war of total mobilisation in which the line between civil society and the state was blurred. More recently, **the British government has been experimenting with the language and tactics of social campaigning to support its argument that the state and civil society are not in a zero-sum game, but can support and reinforce one another.** Examples include the "Together" campaign against anti-social behaviour, the "Respect" agenda, and the "Together We Can" campaign working across government to improve responsiveness and co-operation with civil society. These campaigns mainly combine public messaging with the dissemination of new practices through state institutions like the police. More rarely, they have helped to support active citizens or the third sector to act in ways which are more recognisable as social campaigning. One test of their civil society basis will come if they ever start to make life more uncomfortable for their architects in government.

The use of social campaigning by governments and elites in less democratic countries is murkier terrain. Capacity-building and technical assistance has been provided by foreign governments and private individuals to civil society organisations and networks involved in a number of regime change efforts, from Otpor's mass non-violent toppling of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia through the Colour Revolutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon. Such assistance has been carefully restrained and seldom decisive: no such movement has been successful without strong domestic support.

Already in 1990, American newscaster Ted Koppel was describing television as "Revolution in a Box". Its impact in the Colour Revolutions cannot be discounted. Popular non-violent regime changes in Georgia and Ukraine were followed by a March 2005 coup in Kyrgyzstan. Led by southern elites, this "Tulip Revolution" used similar tactics to its predecessors but mobilised smaller numbers, and was tainted by mass riots in the capital Bishkek. By November 2006, the Kyrgyz opposition were pitching tents and yurts in Bishkek's central square to protest against the failure to pass reforms to

strengthen parliament. The response came swiftly, and combined state power with social mobilisation:

> "The government… retained control of the media. It declined requests by opposition leaders for airtime on the state TV station, keeping large portions of the country in the dark … Electricity for the Bishkek station NTS, owned by one of the most active opposition deputies, was severed, and foreign access to Kyrgyz news services was blocked … *The government also mobilized its own base of popular support, setting up yurts a few blocks from the opposition protests, sending its own employees to the square to bulk up the crowds, and using its network of appointed university deans and governors to release students from universities and organize regional protests in support of the government.* As with the opposition protests, rumors swirled that people were paid to join the pro-government camp. In addition to these steps, the government sought help and legitimacy from like-minded neighbors. On Tuesday, November 7, Bakiev made phone calls to the heads of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia … on the same day, as small clashes broke out between opposition and pro-government protesters, tanks rolled into the square and security forces – which had been mobilized in the capital well in advance of the protests – fired tear gas to scatter opposition protesters. Just one day later, *a compromise constitution was signed and opposition tents were dismantled*" (emphases added)[37].

The Russian regime meanwhile has been developing its own sophisticated social campaigning infrastructure to forestall rivals, exert power and protect itself against a colour revolution. The youth movement Nashi was established in spring 2005 and is reported to have received over $250 million since[38]. It holds camps and pro-Putin raves, has a well-developed ideology including anti-Americanism and the encouragement of procreation and military service, and has been deployed against targets ranging from the British ambassador to oligarchs and the far-right National Bolsheviks. It is reported that Nashi's membership is over 50,000, including 5000 commissars being groomed for state jobs, and that it uses football "fan clubs" for "security". The resemblances to the Soviet Komsomol youth movement are inescapable, although Nashi appears more unruly.

Clearly, the use of social campaigning by governments, political parties and

[37] Spector, R.A. (13th December 2006) "The Anti-Revolutionary Toolkit" *Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst*. Available: http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=4634

companies is on the increase. Equally obviously, it is fraught with difficulty, in particular where the interests of the initiators do not mesh with the wider public benefit. But **the rejection of social campaigning as a legitimate attempt to undermine representative authority remains a much greater threat,** and a common response in less democratic societies.

3.4 COALITIONS AND NETWORKS - TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

As network technologies have evolved, so have network practices in civil society. The 1960s counter-culture generation in the US provided some of the first assessments of the impact of electronic networks, having experimented with social networking before the technology evolved to support it[39]. They tended to describe the network age in socially utopian, anti-statist and techno-determinist terms. Esther Dyson wrote that the internet "undermines central authorities, whether they are good or bad, and it helps dispersed forces act together, whether they are good or bad[40]". This analysis had truth to it, although network effects can snowball to make central authorities (such as Google Inc) hegemonic, and central authorities (states, corporations and militaries) can make effective use of network strategies[41].

Today most of us know that the state is here to stay, but that we can make it more translucent and responsive to social needs and priorities. The need for civil society campaigning thus persists – and campaigners of all stripes have discovered that the new technologies provide ample scope for innovation. Two remarkable but contrasting examples suffice to make this clear: the mobile-enabled protests in the Philippines regime change of 2001, and the evolution of a new civic infrastructure in the US by among others, MoveOn.org.

The Philippines: regime change by mobile phone

In January 2001, President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines, a populist ex-actor, was facing a Senate impeachment trial for corruption. Hundreds of websites and email discussion groups had been set up in previous years providing information about this, and the E-Lagda.com website collected a petition for impeachment with 91,000 signatures. On 16 January, the Senate voted by 11 votes to 10 not to open an envelope believed to contain vital evidence, its president resigned, and a tipping point was reached.

[38] Tim Whewell, (12th July 2006) "The Kremlin's new commissars", BBC Newsnight.

[39] Turner, F. (2006) *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

[40] Dyson, E. (1997) *Release 2.0*, Broadway Books: New York.

[41] Arquilla, J. and Ronfelt, D. (1996) *The Advent of Netwar* RAND Corporation.

Text messages began to circulate with a variety of messages, one of the most common being "GO TO EDSA[42], WEAR BLACK 2 MOURN D DEATH F DEMOCRACY[43]".

By midnight on the 16th, just 200 had gathered. On the 17th, former presidents and Cardinal Jaime Sin were addressing a large crowd. By the 18th, 200,000 workers in the Manila region were attending anti-Estrada rallies, and a 10-kilometre human chain was created from EDSA to another shrine of the People Power movement. On the 19th, 150,000 people gathered at EDSA, the head of the army announced his support for the protesters, and before the end of the day Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had assumed power. The Philippines had only 84 mobile phone subscriptions per thousand people, but these were heavily concentrated in the capital Manila. Globe Telecom was handling 45 million text messages a day, almost twice the normal average of 24.7 million, including "jokes, rumours, petitions, angry e-mails or factoids[44]".

A week later, *Time Asia* asked, "What actually happened behind the scenes to bring about **People Power II**? And could those very powers – and people – that have brought about the downfall of yet another Philippine President be the same forces that will make it difficult for anyone … to govern the Philippines effectively?" Three months later, Estrada's indictment saw a "Poor People Power" mobilisation: 100,000 of his poor rural and slum-dwelling supporters mounted an unruly gathering of their own at EDSA, bussed in by political operatives rather than "self" organised through mobile phones. They were finally dispersed by the military five days later.

It is clear that there was widespread social support at least in the Manila region for the toppling of Estrada. This was more than camouflage for an establishment coup. The initial protests were small, but they were taken up in personal conversational networks as well as through the media. People took their own decisions to mobilise and demand change. But at the time of writing, the long-term impact of this massive gathering on improving democracy and reducing deep inequalities in the Philippines appears to have been limited; power there remains insufficiently distributed or responsive, and basically unstable.

The precedent of People Power II suggests that flashmobs – where people come together in almost spontaneous demonstrations after receiving a text message stating when and where to gather – may offer potential as a means

[42] Edsa meant Epifnio de los Santos Avenue, where the People Power revolt of 1986 against the Marcos dictatorship had begun.

[43] This account is based on Castells & Co, 2006 and Tilly, 2004.

[44] Bagalawis, J. E. (2001). "How IT helped topple a president" *Computer World*, January 30, 2001. Available: http://wireless.itworld.com/4273/CW_1-31-01_it/pfindex.html.

of mobilising people for wider social campaigns. In recent times London commuters have been surprised to see hundreds of people dancing silently to their own MP3 players in Liverpool Street Station and mass pillow fights suddenly erupting in Covent Garden. But to date these events have mostly sought to disrupt or subvert everyday norms and social conventions without necessarily promulgating an explicitly political goal, and their organising value remains hard to generalise. There are larger lessons to learn from People Power II: first, the speed with which well-timed "viral" or network-centric campaigns can spread, especially when they are picked up in the media; second, the impact a narrative of popular mobilisation can have in taking a campaign to the tipping point; and third, the potential power and immediacy of mobile organising, even when text messages are limited to just a few characters. Mobile phones are becoming more advanced and ubiquitous all around the world, even among the poorest, and this has significant implications for the future of network campaigning.

MoveOn.org: online organising

The US network **MoveOn.org** was born when two internet entrepreneurs circulated a petition against the Republican effort to impeach the President in 1998, calling instead for Congress to censure Clinton and "Move On to pressing issues facing the country". Within a week 100,000 had signed. Co-founder Joan Blades said, "We thought it was going to be a flash campaign, that we would help everyone connect with leadership in all the ways we could figure out, and then get back to our regular lives. A half a million people ultimately signed and we somehow never got back". MoveOn began to work with its supporters to campaign on a wider range of civic and progressive issues. After the 9/11 attacks, student Eli Pariser created a petition for a restrained, multilateral response which drew over half a million signatures; shortly thereafter he joined forces with MoveOn.

The civic action wing has supported campaign finance reform, environmental protection and social security; recently helped block efforts to remove federal funding from National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS); organised the hosting of over 30,000 evacuees after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans; and was a linchpin of the Win Without War coalition before the invasion of Iraq. It developed a characteristic methodology of email campaigns hooked to developments in the twenty-four hour news cycle, driving advertisements in the print or broadcast media which brought them to the attention of a wider audience and accelerated the email campaigns.

The political action committee, now directed by Pariser, pioneered the raising of small donations online in 2000 and raised $32 million for progressive election candidates in 2004, more than the large Service Employees International Union. In the 2006 elections, MoveOn volunteers made 6 million phone calls through a distributed phonebank system, organised 7,500 house parties and ran 6,000 events in target districts.

MoveOn now has over 3.3 million members across the US. It reports over 268,000 volunteers and over 700,000 individual donors, and just 15 staff. It has facilitated tens of thousands of visits to elected representatives. Its internet-based network fosters local social connections, helping people to get together for neighbourhood organising and enabling them to organise thousands of simultaneous vigils or house parties involving hundreds of thousands of people across America to debate and campaign on key issues repeatedly in recent years. It has involved hundreds of thousands of members in shaping its campaign agenda. Its growth has come partly as a consequence of the polarisation of the US political landscape, but MoveOn Civic Action recently formed an alliance with the conservative Christian Coalition to protect the public realm against corporate lobbying through SavetheInternet.com, which brought together more than 850 organisations and over a million citizens.

People Power II was a revolutionary moment in the Philippines. MoveOn.org has become a key element of a wider social movement in the USA – and flashmobs highlight the power of new technologies and online forums to mobilise groups of people. Like MakePovertyHistory, however, these cases raise some dilemmas for campaigning in future – new challenges of legitimacy, sustainability and effectiveness, as well as old difficulties of coordination, control and commitment in new guises.

Harnessing technology and social innovation: key challenges

1. Who writes the script of the campaign, choosing and framing actions and deciding what counts as success?

Advocates of "network democracy" suggest that this can be done bottom-up, through people deciding where to channel their affiliation and support, and initiating their own campaigns where those already on offer are unsatisfactory. But this answer is not really convincing. Advantages accrue to early adopters, well-organised and well-connected operations which

can draw on substantial resources, and intensively-networked hubs. There are barriers to entry in the shape of technology, skills, social networks and limited stocks of public enthusiasm. There can also be serious disconnects between the outside track of a campaign and the way its inside track engages with power.

2. How can social campaigning be conducted in ways which are legitimate and accountable, but also contribute to overall public benefit in an effective and rational way?

At their worst, social campaigns can serve narrow interest groups or demand anti-progressive change. The old organisational model of "sovereignty of the congress" has also on occasion paralysed civil society organisations, making them unresponsive to wider social needs. But other approaches like MoveOn's Action Network or deliberative polling are not yet adequate to fill this gap. It must be remembered that there is no purely internal solution to this question, and that public realm debates must play their part.

3. How can network-enabled mobilisation help support more sustained campaigns for progressive social change over time, given that decision-makers seldom deliver on social demands overnight?

Network effects have accelerated the prevalence of temporary mobilisations, "media moments" and "smart mobs" (defined by Howard Rheingold as "people who are able to act in concert even if they don't know each other")[45]. But moments by definition are passing. The smartness of mobs is limited by conjunctions with demagogues, the police and other power players; the absence of feedback and mediation structures; and a tendency to abrupt dissolution, abandoning much of the social capital and value they have produced.

Network innovations: a new toolkit for social campaigners?

The wave of non-violent revolutions, which recently swept across eastern Europe and Central Asia, have usually been precipitated by state failures, and have not always led to social engagement through new and better governance systems. Individualisation has made the ebb-and-flow of public concern generally more salient than affiliation to individual institutions. This is why **more flexible and innovative social architectures are becoming increasingly important.** Paul Miller has argued:

"In essence, network campaigning allows a diverse grouping of organizations and individuals to participate through commitment to a shared purpose, while remaining autonomous individual agents. In this way it is possible to gain additional leverage over decision-making bodies through the 'multiplier effect' of a coherent message and more efficient deployment of resources and effort, while maintaining the flexibility and energy that more bureaucratic forms of coordination tend to squander[46]."

But even leaving aside other relevant innovations, we need to distinguish between coalitions, network-centric advocacy, constituent relationship management and campaigning networks if we are to properly understand this new social infrastructure toolkit. By network campaigning, Miller in fact mostly means the relatively old practice of building coalitions, albeit as seen through the lens of his own experience in the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

1. Coalitions bring together civil society organisations and other social intermediaries in a framework of loose consensus and common effort to work for one or more shared goals. When a wide range of organisations come together in a coalition to call for the same thing, their demands gain legitimacy. It is shown to be supported by broad and diverse sections of the public, and to represent an agreed consensus for change. This makes it easier to penetrate the media and decision-making circles, and to win celebrity support. There are also logistical advantages: the three pillars of Jubilee 2000 – non-governmental organisations, faith groups and trade unions – could each mobilise big networks of active citizens, some of which have taken decades or centuries to grow. Coalitions tend to operate with very light-touch central structures, to be time-limited and/or tightly focused efforts, and may empower their supporters through network technology.

In four years from a standing start, Jubilee 2000 built 69 national campaigns, mobilised hundreds of thousands of people in human chains and marches at international summits and other media moments, secured 24 million signatures to its petition and resulted in over $36 billion of Majority World debts being cancelled. But because they are primarily composed of civil society organisations which by definition have divergent agendas and private institutional interests, coalitions can be fragile, fail to achieve their goals, or leave participating organisations and the public dissatisfied. Jubilee 2000 was reportedly managed on occasion in a dirigiste style and became briefly bigger than its constituent member organisations, some of whom

[45] Rheingold, H. (2003) *Smart Mobs*, Basic Books: New York.

[46] Miller, P. (2004) The rise of network campaigning', in *Network Logic*, Demos: London.

felt threatened by this. We have seen some of the fallout from guillotining MakePovertyHistory after a year. Nonetheless, many of the Jubilee non-governmental organisations now collaborate through looser coalitions or network campaigns such as the Trade Justice Movement.

Meanwhile coalitions are becoming a widespread way of raising common issues and getting things done below the radar. For instance, the UK's Real World campaign brings together the Field Studies Council, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the National Trust, PGL, the Wildlife Trusts and the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, working together to bring out-of-school learning back into the curriculum after the marginalisation of field trips. More radically, as explained below, the UK's Citizen Organising Foundation is developing broad-based local coalitions for change in London and Birmingham using the organising principles of Saul Alinsky and his successors.

2. *Network-centric campaigning* is driven by distributed individual actions across interactive platforms. Social networks and communication technologies become vectors through which campaigns are disseminated and sifted. The judgments of individuals across the network are the main determinant of how fast and far the campaigns travel, and to what extent they are adopted. The platforms are typically colonised by network-centric campaigners, rather than owned by them. Examples of platforms used include SMS messaging, social networking websites like MySpace, Facebook or Orkut, YouTube, and the wider internet. Apart from cases such as People Power II, two of the biggest network-centric campaigns so far have been "Sorry Everybody", a website set up after the re-election of President George W Bush by Americans to apologise to the rest of the world, and "We Are Not Afraid", set up to demonstrate social solidarity and steadfastness after the London bombings. Both attracted thousands of user-generated images with variations on the same message, and millions of visitors.

The social hackers at MySociety.org in Britain have created a whole family of network-centric campaigning platforms designed to empower individuals. They include FaxYourMP.com and WriteToThem.com, which enable people to contact their elected representatives; Pledgebank.org, a collective action framework through which people commit to take a specified action if a critical mass of others will too; and the 10 Downing Street E-Petitions website, through which hundreds of thousands of people have made their views felt on over 1000 issues in the first month since its launch.

The merits of the petitions site are many: it is publicised and sanctioned by the government, anyone can start a campaign, and ministers can respond directly to petition signers. However, the design and ownership of network-centric campaign platforms can affect the campaigning activities they channel, as when a reactionary flash campaign against the government's road pricing plans swiftly became the largest Downing Street e-petition, gathering 1.8 million signatures. The Number 10 model seems particularly valuable for one-off niche issue campaigns, some of which have received positive responses; but it lends itself disproportionately to populism, political consumerism and crank causes, and risks turning into a democratic cul-de-sac and breeding-ground for anti-politics.

Another drawback (which has led many progressive and charity causes to shun the site) is the way its current design excludes the possibility of building sustained campaigns – the creator of a petition cannot contact its signers or work with them to take the effort to the next stage. Few civil society efforts win their first battle, and social movements develop by building their case and support step by step. Finally, because the addressee is the head of the executive and the model is petition-and-response, the most valuable aspect of any petitioning process – deliberation on the real dimensions of the issue raised – is lost or hidden behind closed doors. Scotland's e-petitions are directed first to the Parliament, where the issues raised can be considered in the round. Both the report of the Power Inquiry and the Young Foundation's recent work on local democracy have emphasised the importance of such a deliberative stage in any public petitioning or citizens' initiative process.

3. *Constituent relationship management* describes an established set of practices for any campaign to communicate with its supporter base, usually through one-to-many means such as emails. It differs from traditional direct mail in its speed and greater potential for two-way communication. Typically supporters are sent information and other alerts, asked to take actions or make donations, or invited to express what they are interested in. Close attention is paid to things like open rates (the proportion of emails that are read). This practice has been particularly common and well-developed in US political and civic e-campaigning, although many of the larger traditional non-governmental organisations also use it.

4. *Campaigning networks* like MoveOn.org bring a community of individuals together in a more interactive and sustained way to campaign for social change, often combining targeted single-issue

campaigns with a loose consensus about a broader social vision and set of values. MoveOn has learnt how to combine media-moment campaigning and constituent relationship management with lobbying, forming coalitions, self-organising action at the local level, and giving constituents a voice in future direction. In some respects, this approach updates the practices of trade unions and value-based communities like the Quakers. It almost certainly requires a sense of shared identity and values to be effective. The social networking website MySpace has recently experimented with campaigning for voter registration and turnout and on the Darfur genocide, albeit in a quiet, non-confrontational way which remains within the ambit of network-centric campaigning.

The boundaries of the campaigning network approach will be further tested in the coming years. A global initiative called Avaaz.org which counts MoveOn as a partner is launching in early 2007, after the success of experiments such as CeasefireCampaign.org, which within a week had raised 340,000 signatures for an end to the Second Lebanon War this summer. Avaaz is growing fast - operating in eleven languages, it already has over three-quarters of a million members. Avaaz have launched global campaigns to stop climate change, to advance peace talks in the Middle East and a resolution in Iraq, and to close Guantanamo Bay prison. Avaaz's YouTube videos range from a comic "mashup" based on "The Office" sitcom, calling for Paul Wolfowitz to be fired as director of the World Bank, to a prize-winning short on how to "stop the clash of civilisations". Avaaz campaigns are informed by consultation with members and policy insiders, and the organisation is now preparing SMS campaigns in places like Iraq. The challenges of international campaigning are clearly considerable. But so is the potential.

3.5 THE GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND LOCAL ACTION

On 19 February 2003, tens of millions of people marched in 800 cities around the world to protest against the impending invasion of Iraq, under slogans like **"Stop the War"** and **"Not in My Name".** It was the biggest international march ever, breaking national records in much of Europe and prompting many (including UN secretary-general Kofi Annan) to call global public opinion the "second superpower". The street demonstrations were backed up by Pew Center polling showing large majorities against the war in most – though not all – countries[47]. The second superpower failed, almost inevitably, to influence the US decision. Yet looking at the present state of

Iraq, many will now reflect that those who marched were right to do so.

This was not, however, a spontaneous mobilisation. It had been organised through European Social Forum anti-globalisation circles and meetings in Porto Alegre and Cairo, with the British Trotskyites of Globalise Resistance centrally involved. Some of the failings of the Stop the War movement can be traced to these anti-systemic origins. Others have since regretted their failure to step up and help shape the campaign. Almost nowhere did the demonstrations also oppose Saddam Hussein's crimes against his own civilian population, or present any positive alternative agenda. But as *The Observer* reported, this was a network-centric and locally-rooted mobilisation, its hamfisted organisation accidental to the outcome:

> "[As well as the] usual suspects - CND, Socialist Workers Party, the anarchists … There were nuns. Toddlers. Women barristers. The Eton George Orwell Society. Archaeologists Against War. Walthamstow Catholic Church, the Swaffham Women's Choir and Notts County Supporters Say Make Love Not War (And a Home Win against Bristol would be Nice). They won 2-0, by the way. One group of SWP stalwarts were joined, for the first march in any of their histories, by their mothers. There were country folk and lecturers, dentists and poulterers, a hairdresser from Cardiff and a poet from Cheltenham[48]."

After the million-strong London march, the Trotskyites consolidated their control in the UK campaign and similar numbers never turned out again. A comparison with the Italian mobilisation is instructive. Three million people marched in Rome – a global record. But after the war began, with the Italian government's participation, the mass campaigning continued. A million went on strike. There were over 500 demonstrations in the first 11 days of the war, including efforts to block "trains of death" carrying supplies to the major US base at Camp Darby, and dock strikes. On the first anniversary of the war, over a million people returned to the streets of Rome. They kept marching until Berlusconi fell, and they will march again. Why? The answer can be traced to the more organic nature of the Italian anti-war movement, supported as it is by a deep-rooted and well-coordinated infrastructure of trade unions, social forums and other civic networks.

Academic Lance Bennett has analysed **six effects of digital communication on international activism** (several of which also apply at national and local

[47] For more information see: http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf

[48] Ferguson, E. (February 16th 2003) 'One Million and Still They Came' *The Observer.*

level):

1. It weakens the identification of local activists with the movement as a whole, by allowing greater scope for introduction of local issues into movement discourse.

2. It makes loosely structured networks, rather than the relatively dense networks of earlier social movements, crucial to communication and coordination between activists.

3. It promotes the creation of permanent campaigns with rapidly shifting immediate targets.

4. It diminishes the relative importance of bonded, durable, resource-rich local and national organisations as bases for social movement action.

5. It reduces the influence of ideology on personal involvement in social movements.

6. It tends to combine older face-to-face performances with virtual performances.

All these factors can be seen from the anti-war protests to MakePovertyHistory, although as we have observed, "bonded, durable" organisations or networks remain very important to sustaining campaigning over time or helping popular energy move from one issue to another. Bennett suggested these effects make **campaigns in the network age more vulnerable to problems of coordination, control and commitment**[49]**. The stories in this paper support that argument, pointing up a deficit of systems for legitimacy, sustainability and effectiveness.** But they also feature suggestive examples of how these gaps may be better filled in future, from global to neighbourhood scale.

London Citizens

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty has continued working, particularly in the Global South, and on 17 October 2006 mobilised 23 million people to stand up around the world simultaneously against poverty and for the Millennium Development Goals. In November 2006, over 1,000 people gathered in York Hall in Bethnal Green for the tenth anniversary assembly

of London Citizens. For two decades the Citizen Organising Foundation has been working to develop Alinskyite broad-based organising for the UK, and it is starting to bear rich fruit. London Citizens and its constituent chapters now bring together a coalition of over 80 civic organisations – unions, mosques, churches and religious communities, schools and student unions – to build a local infrastructure for collective action, conduct labour and neighbourhood organising, and campaign on key issues. It has won victories in its campaigning for a London "living wage" above the minimum and for more affordable housing, and is currently battling to hold the 2012 London Olympics in East London to living wage pledges. It has also held a number of citizens' inquiries, including into the redevelopment of Queens' Market in Newham.

In 2005 South London Citizens published *A Humane Service for Global Citizens*, a detailed exposé of poor practices in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) at Lunar House, based on evidence gathered by citizen-researchers; the IND's chief executive promised to respond and cooperate. Like the lively Birmingham Citizens, London Citizens has held well-attended Accountability Assemblies with prominent electoral candidates. In spring 2006 London Citizens took up the links between global and local exposed by its Lunar House inquiry. It held a Mayday Mass for Migrant Workers at which the Roman Catholic Cardinal called for a partial amnesty for illegal immigrants. Immediately afterwards, a Living Wage rally announced the London Citizens' Workers Association to help migrant labour organise. The model combines democratic decision-making with professional citizen organisers in a highly structured approach. This does not appeal to everyone: it is hard work, and does not scale easily. The coalitions rely on base institutions which are shrinking overall, but organisers' scepticism about network innovations is intense. Nonetheless this kind of community organising is making positive social change happen for real[50].

Campaigning innovation and service delivery

Service innovation and forms of mutual aid often seed modern campaigning, just as they did at the origins of the union movement. In 2002 Carmel McConnell invented The Magic Breakfast, a social business providing breakfasts in UK primary schools, funded by the profits of Magic Outcomes – a consultancy and training business. For every person who does a leadership programme with Magic Outcomes, breakfasts can be provided for two schools. In 2006 the scheme will have delivered 90-100,000 breakfasts. But

[49] Bennett L.W. (2003). "Communicating Global Activism" *Information, Communication & Society*, 6 (2), pp. 143-168.

it is becoming a big logistical challenge. So The Magic Breakfast is now lobbying government for better food delivery in schools, disseminating its social innovation while working to end child hunger through the muscle of the state.

Other local campaigns

From the Brazilian landless movement to neighbourhood e-organising in the USA, and from community recycling campaigns or the moderate majority football chants and symbols adopted on the terraces of Northern Ireland against sectarian hooliganism to the success of Independent Health Concern (which has elected an MP and nine councillors in Kidderminster and Wyre Forest), rooted local campaigning is also on the rise. **Campaigning is simultaneously globalising and localising, following power centres and mobilising popular energies to influence their action.** One of the most broad-based campaigns Britain has seen recently is that for a Sustainable Communities Bill to strengthen grassroots democracy and community life. It flew under the media radar for years, but steadily built a coalition of 1000 local councils. It secured an outpost in Portcullis House, where Members of Parliament have their offices, and secured pledges of support from a remarkable majority of MPs, 359 at the time of writing. It has now been adopted as a private members' bill, although the British system makes it unlikely to receive sufficient time to pass. The analysis may not be perfect, but it is strong. Its proposals for more bottom-up power are a valuable complement to the recently published Local Government Bill, and the campaign effort deserves praise. A sensible government could consider adopting at least some of its provisions.

[50] Personal communications and observation; also see *The Art of Politics: broad-based organising in Britain*, Lina Jamoul (unpublished thesis, May 2006).

4 THE FUTURE OF CAMPAIGNING

4 THE FUTURE OF CAMPAIGNING

The purpose of this paper has been to investigate what is happening in the field of social campaigning, why this activity is increasingly important for democracy and social progress, and some of the risks and opportunities that are unfolding. It is for practitioners to develop these possibilities further.

As we have discovered, social campaigning is a diverse, contentious and unpredictable sphere of human life. It would therefore be strange if we were to lay out a comprehensive agenda for how it should be pursued in the future, and a programme of reforms to that end. Nonetheless, we will close by suggesting a few avenues which might bear further investigation by government, civil society organisations, donors and campaigners, particularly in light of how the social and political landscape of the early twenty-first century is evolving.

Campaigning is neither the only course of action available to citizens and organisations within civil society, nor uniformly the best. It has been substituted by, or combined with, association, mutual aid, service delivery, media strategies, electoral politics, unruliness, even political violence and revolution. Progressive social change has been achieved by all these means, as well as through a multitude of actions by states and market institutions. But social campaigning is a distinctive reminder of popular sovereignty, and of the power and unity collective social action can generate.

4.1 UNDERTOW, CONFLICT AND RENEWAL – WHAT NEXT?

Neil Jameson, the charismatic Director of the Citizen Organising Foundation in East London, recently suggested three possible scenarios for the future of campaigning:

- **The undertow of individualising social trends could slowly triumph** over civil society organisation, leaving campaigning at best fragmented into marginalised interest groups.
- **Existing institutions could be renewed through energy, innovation and collaboration**, as has happened with some churches and with the Service Employees International Union over the last two decades in the USA and Canada.
- **New civic mediating institutions could emerge and provide fresh roots for sustained campaigning.**

In fact, all three scenarios are unfolding in parallel today. Human action through social dynamics will determine their ebb and flow, establishing which scenario is most prominent and when, where and how. The undertow of social individualisation cannot be dismissed. On average across Europe, membership in trade unions and political parties has been dropping steeply while membership in voluntary organisations has also declined[51]. This is particularly the case for public issue organisations which are likely to engage in campaigning. Levels of religious affiliation are also declining overall in Europe, despite countertrends such as the rise of Islam. There is evidence that the rise in campaigning is due disproportionately to the activities of the middle classes, and the organisational capacity of a socially excluded and disenchanted underclass may actually have been declining. Sentiments of global solidarity and local community provide only a weak countervailing force.

Although we have seen a boom in campaigning, its most prevalent practices from the late twentieth century to the present day have been celebrity endorsed or media driven campaigning, professional efforts by organisations, and occasional massive and spectacular mobilisations of discontent. The overall effect may be extremely dangerous. **If social campaigning fades and fragments, it can risk degenerating into conflict and interest**

group politics, making it more easily dismissed or marginalised by centres of power in states and corporations, in turn breeding widespread dissatisfaction and hindering social progress. State and market institutions suffer too when their credibility and responsiveness is not renewed through social challenge and debate.

Civil society challenges the very power of the state by calling for the re-allocation and re-distribution of resources (such as debt relief), or challenging attitudes and "received wisdoms" (for example wider social movements such as feminism). The success of these campaigns will often find expression in legislative changes, even though a series of checks and balances exist in most democratic systems precisely to defend the state from such challenges and uphold parliamentary democracy. As a result, tensions between the state and such movements have always arisen. Furthermore, as the historical narrative above shows, these tensions will always occur – mainly because the campaigning work of civil society is never done, due in part to the fact that democratic institutions will never be fully responsive to people's needs. In short, the limitations of state democracy explain why we will always need the creative energies that are found at civil society's political edge.

The innovations described here in consensus-building, coalitions and network campaigning are of considerable interest, not only because they can accelerate the gathering and exercise of popular will on key issues of social concern, but also because they can help to consolidate it through lasting civic infrastructure. Civil society organisations pioneered the consumerist model of campaigning. They may also play a crucial role in developing and implementing **campaigns that centre more effectively on the needs and priorities of citizens and communities**. Like other organisations, they will need to consider how to evolve to take advantage of these opportunities. Unless they do, their social position is far from assured.

The next decade may see the campaigning patterns developed over the last half century mature and fragment, with the media moving into the driving seat. Alternatively, we may see new civic and participatory forms of campaigning leap up, with third sector organisations and new technologies helping to join the dots. Whether it is peace, the global social justice movement, the mission to stop global warming or another cause as yet unarticulated, the day could soon come when a hundred million people, from the richest to the very poorest, are able to rise up with a single demand on a single day all around the world, harnessing together SMS text messages

[51] For Trade Union membership see for example, results from the Labour Force Survey, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=4&Pos=3&ColRank=2&Rank=224 and, http://eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2004/03/update/tn0403105u.html#contentpage

together with street protests and a rainbow of other tactics – and winning.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following proposals focus particularly on the context of the UK, but many are applicable more widely. We have sought to identify directions worth exploring, while stopping short of fully developed prescriptions.

1. Develop stronger champions in Government and Parliament to protect campaigning from its many enemies.

- Having made social campaigning one of its priorities, the new **Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office should now develop a distinct custodianship role**, paralleling its sponsorship of the Charities Commission. Combined with better cross-cutting attention to constitutional affairs, this should protect better against dangers such as giving too great a weight to security fears repeatedly invoked, or to attempts by business and other interests to curtail the space for campaigning.

- **Parliament also needs to do more** to guarantee the freedom to campaign, argue and criticise, and could be a more effective champion of basic liberties. Far from viewing campaigners as a threat to parliamentary sovereignty, representatives should engage positively with them more as partners than annoyances, from constituency work to select committees and the larger work of Parliament.

2. Harness the potential of social campaigning to help re-energise our representative democracy.

- Institutional innovations to build better links between the informal, participatory campaigning arena and formal, representative decision making should also be considered. Such links could counter trends such as alienation and disillusionment with the political process. Simple but neglected measures can have a big impact, such as responding clearly and substantively to campaigners even when their demands are not taken up.

- The internet offers fresh opportunities for re-engaging a scattered public, by making collective campaigning and swift, clear feedback easier.

Countries like Switzerland and states like California have developed referendum and 'callback and initiative' processes to engage the public more directly in decision making. Their experience reveals some risks of encouraging an excessively febrile or "direct-democratic" campaigning atmosphere. But this could be balanced by incorporating deliberation into the process before any kind of referendum. In the report "Parties for the Public Good", the Young Foundation explored opportunities for citizens' initiatives – via online petitions – to trigger processes of representative and wider public deliberation. These initiatives could then be channelled into decision-making through Private Members' Bills, or indeed by a responsive government.

- As a preliminary step, the next Prime Minister could initiate a swift **review of the Number 10 e-Petitions site**, with a view to improving the role it can play in the democratic debate: for instance, exploring the potential for salient petitions to trigger public parliamentary scrutiny or citizen deliberation. The review should also assess how charity and other progressive causes might make better use of the system, for instance by creating opportunities for integration with their own e-petitioning processes.

- **Local and neighbourhood politics** can offer a particularly fertile space for civic campaigners and elected representatives to mix and collaborate with greater ease. Such cross-fertilisation can take many shapes, formal and informal. The Young Foundation's local innovation research has similarly proposed new civic initiative powers at the local level, beginning with the right to petition to place issues on council agendas and receive a response.

3. Strengthen civil society capacity for innovative and constructive campaigning, from individual entrepreneurs to civic institutions.

- Citizens and organisations within civil society need a stronger infrastructure of skills and supports to make it easier to campaign, and to balance the hugely powerful campaign machines at the disposal of big media, big government and big business. Much is now being done to develop campaigning skills in the voluntary sector, for instance through NCVO's Campaigning Effectiveness Programme. **Less support is currently available for small community organisations or individuals** and many remain mired at the stage of ineffective reaction

and protest. The Sheila McKechnie Foundation has been helping in skills development and networking, and a number of professional knowledge exchanges already exist, such as the regular E-Campaigners Forum of non-governmental organisation experts. The tendency is increasingly to support the development of skills, rather than individuals' time.

- Areas that are worth further attention include **more support for community organisers** in a wide range of contexts, building on the work of London Citizens and the Citizen Organising Foundation, as well as better ways to help people navigate and influence power structures at a local level (of the kind being developed by the Young Foundation through its Young Leaders programme).

- The considerable innovation in uses of vehicles such as YouTube and MySpace is happening despite the absence of much foundation. Opportunities for more sustained and concerted action may accordingly be being missed. In some fields there is a case for **supporting projects that push the envelope in terms of methods that can then be spread out more widely**, for example broad-based organising, email open-rate tracking, constituent relationship management, lowering barriers to entry to campaigning, and co-ordinating online and real world actions.

- The decline of institutions such as churches, political associations and unions threatens our capacity for sustained collective action. Serious efforts should be made to renew old institutions and activate their potential. But given social trends, the **development of innovative civic institutions** to foster social campaigning is just as important, from new unions working for migrants or the unemployed to campaigning networks like MoveOn.org and Avaaz.org.

4. Better funding mechanisms for social and civic infrastructures.

- Shared infrastructures can matter as much as institutions, as the citizen-centric open source tools pioneered by MySociety demonstrate. Further investment should be channelled in this direction, for instance toward local campaigning toolkits or platforms. As technologies and social softwares develop, the potential of campaigning will be supercharged – and it will become increasingly important that relatively weak and poor groups do not lose out in an arms race with the rich and powerful.

While tools such as PledgeBank.org lead the field, the BBC's Action Network was a good pilot of a new civic infrastructure which could easily be used by the public to shape and expand campaigns. A more local example was CampaignCreator.org, funded by the UK government and established and hosted by Bristol City Council. During its pilot, hundreds signed up and one high-profile campaign – to stop a local redevelopment being named "Merchants' Quarter" because of its links to the city's slave trading past – achieved its goal. **This is also an example of statutory and voluntary bodies working together**.

5. Help children get involved in campaigning in their local communities.

- By switching the emphasis towards "learning through doing" in citizenship education, schools could provide a new space for renewing society's campaigning skills, particularly if their approach encourages pupils to start campaigns and work for change in their communities. The soft skills and habits of mind acquired in such activities are of great personal and social value, and could help pre-empt both disbelief in and dislike of collective action.

6. Review the legal and regulatory context, identify measures which could disproportionately chill or limit campaigning activities, and loosen these constraints wherever possible[52].

- Registered charities represent an important part of our civic infrastructure and have a long history of campaigning - one need only look back on the establishment of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1889, which grew out of protests against the use of feathers in millinery. Yet despite revisions and glosses, the Charity Commission's CC9 guidance on campaigning for changes in law or policy remains unclear and inappropriately negative. A recent survey undertaken by NFP Synergy found that most charities feel recent changes to the guidance made little or no improvement, and a substantial minority still feel directly or indirectly constrained from campaigning[53]. The regime seems to have a chilling effect, making staff and trustees less likely to push the boundaries of the art or indeed to campaign at all. Specifically, the requirement that such campaigning be no more than "incidental or ancillary", though unclear, strongly suggests this activity be confined to the margins. **The guidance could be revised** to acknowledge that

campaigning to change specific policies is as respectable a means as any, while identifying some hard limits and norms like human rights. A **self-regulatory or collective peer review system** could then be trialled to catch potential campaigning abuses. There is a delicate balance to strike here; but the current stance appears to serve the regulator's caution more than the net public benefit.

- Recent "anti-terror" measures may also unjustifiably have curbed basic freedoms of assembly, speech and protest. The definition of terrorism in the Terrorism Act of 2000 is so broad that it could be made to encompass much legitimate protest, from the actions of Emily Pankhurst and her fellow-suffragettes a century ago to flashmobs and Critical Mass's urban cycling convoys today. The police have already used powers under the Terrorism Act to stifle legitimate protest, for instance when Walter Wolfgang, an 82 year old activist evicted from the 2005 Labour Party Conference for heckling, was detained under the Act's provisions.

- The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 has placed extraordinary constraints on demonstrations within a mile of Parliament, creating a new bar to the long tradition of bringing public protest to the heart of our representative democracy. Other provisions, while poorly framed, seem to introduce new legal risks for those organising consumer boycotts, demonstrations, and other actions. Some of these measures have little practical value; others could be revised more tightly. For now, their chilling effect matters more than the way they are implemented, but their wording also leaves scope for mission creep and malign interpretation in the future.

- The restrictions placed by the Communications Act 2003 on broadcast advertising by non-governmental organisations on issues of public controversy should also be re-examined. Notably, Ofcom made a retrospective judgment that MakePovertyHistory's "click" advertisements were illegal, although they were innocuous in their content and promoting a campaign with broad public support. There seems something curious about a media environment in which BP or Chevron can air television advertisements talking about climate change, but Greenpeace and Avaaz cannot use the same means to raise consciousness about the need for government action. But any liberalisation should be pursued with great caution: a money-dominated culture of political advertising like that in the US is not desirable. Such activities could be confined

[52] This could be a natural task for the Office of the Third Sector in its new role.

[53] NFP Synergy/People & Planet/Sheila McKechnie Foundation, *Survey of Campaigning Activities and Charity Commission Guidance CC9*, 2006. After the revisions to CC9, 17% of charities still said that charity law obstructs them in campaigning, and a further 17% said their trustees remain reluctant to campaign (informed by the guidance that they risk acting outside their trusts). 76% of charities said the revised CC9 guidance had made no improvement or almost none to the regulatory framework.

to charities, or perhaps also regulated through peer review and softer means.

7. More systematic research on how change occurs.

- There is a need for more research, and a few areas may be worthy of particular investigation. The first is social campaigning directed as much at changing public behaviour as at impacting decision-makers, where a more sophisticated understanding of the psychology and social dynamics of change is needed to balance the knowledge in the hands of powerful institutions in other sectors.

- Social attitudes and patterns of life are changing rapidly, and different governance forms also have a powerful effect on behaviour; but there has been little attempt to conduct any systematic or comparative analysis of how this impacts campaigning behaviour and possibilities.

- Lastly, the impact of coalition and network-centric campaigning on public attitudes and affiliations, participating civil society institutions and the achievement of goals is insufficiently understood, and greater clarity here might help foster change.

4.3 CONCLUSION

These are just a few examples of fields where campaigning could be supported and how the more progressive parts of civil society, including foundations and other large institutions, could take more responsibility for the climate in which public argument takes place. This is certainly to be encouraged. Social campaigning is a diverse, contentious and unpredictable sphere of human life: it has always been messy, rough, and argumentative. It is the grit that keeps the smoother world of electoral democracy fair and the currency through which societies can talk to themselves honestly about their virtues and their vices.

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The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation is a centre for social innovation. Our main goal is to speed up society's ability to respond to changing needs through innovating and replicating new methods and models. Our work programme has three strands - Launchpad, Local projects and Research - all of which complement each other in the shared goal of finding practical initiatives to meet unmet needs. The Foundation was launched in 2005, but builds on a long history. Our predecessor organisations under Michael Young were responsible for far-reaching innovations such as the creation of the Open University, as well as pioneering research on changing patterns of community and family life.

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