RESEARCH ARTICLE

Assembling movements: a case study on boundary work in (between) events

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ABSTRACT: There are moments in which the effervescence of protest practices can trigger the emergence of new subjectivities that significantly impact the relationships among protesters. Despite its relevance in activists' discourses, research on boundary work during protest events still tends to rely on approaches that privilege the stability of the group identifications while assuming an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. This article explores the group identification logic of collectives during protest events, using as a case study Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement. This research draws on data from a multi-year ethnography (January 2018–December 2020) that includes 28 in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis carried out during and between two events that triggered waves of contention in southwestern Spain. This article analyzes how the 'us' of Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement was built upon momentum and disagreement. It argues that the 'us' was not necessarily publicly negotiated or structured around shared meanings but constructed through some individuals' (self)exclusion from the practices emerging in that context. It also analyzes how these (self)exclusions reinforced some categories that acted as core values within this movement, preventing alternative positions. Finally, the article suggests a selfing/othering mechanism for this field.

KEYWORDS: protest, event, boundary work, identification, social movements

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1. Introduction

The formation of group boundaries is key to understanding the dynamics of social mobilization. In social movement research, boundary work emerges when movements define their 'collective us'[1] *vis-à-vis* other groups, such as political opponents (Bendford and Snow 2000; McAdam *et al*. 2001; Polleta and Jasper 2001) or allies (Gamson 1997; Hunt et al., 1994). Notably, these studies are grounded in the collective identity framework (for a review, see Flesher Fominaya 2010, 2019; Hunt *et al*. 1994; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Snow and Corrigall-Brown 2015; Wang *et al*. 2018). In short, the collective identity framework aims to understand how social movements construct their—*in-group* and *out-group*—boundaries through conventional practices, symbols, and discourses; and how these boundaries are context-dependent and change over time. Although the collective identity framework has an evident processual and contextual dimension (Flesher Fominaya 2019), one of the challenges faced by social movement researchers is how to operationalize the dynamic and agential condition of collective identity without reifying the practices that shape it (Brubaker 2004; Díaz de Rada 2008; Bourdieu 1990). While this problem is far from alien to researchers, it reveals a limitation intrinsically tied with social sciences' very analytical language—which tends to operationalize social reality through the delimitation of objects (for a critique, see Latour 1993, 2005). When researching boundary work within social movements, we observe this limitation in two intertwined trends: On the one hand, the tendency to operationalize activist networks around '(sub)groups'—which, to a certain degree, are considered as self-contained units; on the other, when defining the boundaries of these '(sub)groups' around characteristics that are assumed to be stable at all levels of social action (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Díaz de Rada 2008).

In contrast to this 'group-based,' 'substantialist' approach, this article seeks to explore how diverse activists' positions commonly overlap and coexist in pragmatic and instrumental ways (Flesher Fominaya 2019). In this sense, our aim is to simultaneously explore boundary work in different temporalities of a social movement, during moments of high-intensity activism and ordinary periods, in order to analyze the contextual and variable status of grouping and identification logics within movements (della Porta 2020; Cañedo 2012, 362).

Based on a multi-year ethnography of diverse social movements in Extremadura (southwestern Spain), which included 28 in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, this article analyzes the processes and categories that created boundary effects in the Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement (EARM) between 2018 and 2020. We argue that despite some activists' discourses—based on a shared interest on assembly-based organizational and decision-making processes—the 'us' was not necessarily negotiated in a public way or structured around the generation of shared meanings. Rather, it was constructed through the (self)exclusion of emergent practices. We also analyze how these processes of (self)exclusion highlight some categories that operate as core values within this activist movement, preventing the emergence of alternative positions. Finally, we propose a selfing/othering mechanism—the 'specular mode of relation'—in which the logic of identification, as applied in this field, depends on the projection of opposites defined according to a certain level of generality. By doing so, we seek to link boundary work research with studies on the contextual nature of agency (Kockelman 2007), while also contributing to the emerging literature on the analysis of eventful temporalities in social mobilization (della Porta 2020; Gillan 2018). Likewise, following the approach of authors such as Anna Tsing (2005), this article proposes to explore the dynamics that articulate the 'us' within social movements without presupposing that the construction of collective ground is the result of the convergence of similar points of view, nor assuming that the structuring of this 'us' leads to the homogenization of the differences between the participants.

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[1] In this paper, single quotation marks are used to (i) highlight those bibliographical quotations and informants' testimonies in the main body of the text; and (ii) mark categories and logics of action that are key from an emic point of view, emphasizing their situated condition (e.g., 'us', 'combative activism').

The article is organized as follows. The first section reviews boundary work in social movement literature and analyzes some key issues related to the dynamic and agential condition of collective identity. The second section describes the research methodology. The third section analyzes the different selfing/othering dynamics of the EARM at diverse levels of social action, considering how the 'us' is structured in the emergent stages of mobilization and during moments of disagreement. Finally, this text proposes the 'specular mode of relation' as a mechanism to operationalize the group identification logic in this field.

2. Beyond group-based and substantialist approaches to collective identity

The interest in the dynamics of boundaries separating social actors is at the very core of the epistemic tradition of social science (e.g., Barth 1969; Douglas 1966; Durkheim 1965 [1912]; Durkheim and Mauss 1963 [1903]; Elias 1982 [1939]; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940; Weber 1978 [1922]). Social actors define the boundaries that encompass and explain events, people, and groups while excluding others. By doing so, they categorize reality and articulate systems of shared meanings. When interpreting reality, social actors transform events and phenomena into representations, which they rank according to their value as reality, acceptable reality, or even possible reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Bourdieu 1990; Díaz de Rada 2003). This categorization is traversed by selfing/othering processes (Baumann and Gingrich 2004), which "separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership" (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). The segmentation between 'us' and 'them' helps individuals identify with the group they belong to, while also drawing attention to the categories that define differences between groups (Jenkins 1996; Tajfel and Turner 1985). Thus, boundary work allows us to understand how agents strive to produce and institutionalize their categories of perception and classification while confronting others (Bourdieu 1990, 2000).

In the social movement literature, boundary work is recognizable in different processes and fields (Flesher Fominaya 2010, 2019). The boundaries between and within groups appear when movements articulate their 'us' in opposition to other actors, whether these are political adversaries or allies (Bendford and Snow 2000; Gamson 1997). In this sense, the study of identification/alterization dynamics allows us to analyze the different ways in which agents express 'commitment' and 'solidarity' (Gamson 1991; Hunt and Benford 2004; Saunders 2008), articulate their diverse sensibilities (Flesher Fominaya 2010), or actualize their categories of identification (Gamson 1997).

As noted above, in the literature on social movements, research on the formation of boundaries between groups is chiefly based on the collective identity framework. This framework assumes that the emergence and persistence of social movements is built upon some perception of collective identity, understood—in a broad sense—as a "shared sense of purpose and reciprocal identification and mutual recognition among movement participants" (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 430). As Alberto Melucci (1995, 48) remarks, the shared meanings that shape the 'collective us' are not granted, but articulated in a conflictual manner—an approach that involves both the participants and the broader context in which the collective action takes places. From this dispositional sense (Bourdieu 1990), the relations that agents set up in the field are modulated through collective identity—the element that articulates the principles of legitimacy and representation (Bourdieu 2000, 61–64).

The collective identity framework raises different challenges in the social movement literature (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 19–21). Cristina Flesher Fominaya (2019, 436–440) justifies its robustness even in movements with highly ideological heterogeneity and identity multiplicity or in contexts of digital-mediated mobilization. Although these examples allow us to investigate collective identity without assuming that the 'us' results from the articulation of shared elements or publicly performed attributes, we believe that the use of categories such as 'collective identity' may lead to privileging those approaches that interpret the 'us' as a political convergence, thus neglecting other processes of structuring difference in which the 'us' is constructed without agreements, or even from disagreement (Tsing 2005).

This analytical approach towards the search for 'groups' in which an 'us' shares a number of characteristics as opposed to a 'them' reveals a difficulty embedded in the very analytical language of the social sciences, whose capacity to apprehend social reality depends on the delimitation of analytical objects. This approach can result in reifying the processual condition of every analytical object, including 'collective identity' (for a critique, see Brubaker 2004; Díaz de Rada 2008; Latour 1993, 2005).

Although the dynamic and contextual dimension of collective identity is not alien to those interested in research on social movements (Melucci 1995), in social mobilization research social movements tend to be defined according to forms of belonging that are marked by distinctive exclusiveness or based on essential attributes (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). This fact generates a series of limitations for empirical research, which we can summarize in two main areas. The first one is the tendency to operationalize the dynamic nature of our objects by considering 'group-like' units—that is, analytical units with clearly delimited boundaries at all levels of practice, as expressions that contain homogeneous and shared attributes among those who form the 'us.' The second trend tends to define the 'inside' of the groups based on characteristics—or sets of distinctive attributes—that remain stable at all levels of social action (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Díaz de Rada 2008; Latour 2005). As an example, we can point out those approaches that assume that sharing a certain attribute at the practice level—e.g., a shared interest for 'combative' actions—leads to sharing other attributes, such as an ideology; or, conversely, the assumption that a shared ideology implies sharing concrete logics of action. If group-based and substantialist approaches are assumed, 'groups'—or 'subgroups'—within a social movement would be defined and stabilized by contrast, based on categorical oppositions that precede practice. However, if the analyst defines collective expressions as 'groups' with stable characteristics at all levels of social action, it becomes unclear why similar 'groups' are sometimes antagonistic and sometimes cooperative; or why distinct 'groups' can form lasting alliances beyond a temporal coalition (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 441; Turner 1996 [1957]).

To overcome this limitation, in this work we rely on the 'identification' category proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 14–21). Contrary to other ontological approaches, 'identification' points to the processual dimension of 'identity' since it concerns the agents who identify. This processual and active approach implies that the way in which one identifies oneself (and is identified by others) is situational and depends on the very context in which the identification occurs. In this sense, the 'in-group' and 'out-group' characteristics that we ascribe are contextual and based on the capacity of agents to produce, stabilize, or transform the border effects that hierarchize and objectify the differences that they enunciate (Butler *et al*. 2000, 53). It must be noted that this boundary work does not necessarily involve the convergence of the different positions within the collectives or the homogenization of the characteristics that define them. On the contrary, the 'us' is also articulated from divergence and heterogeneity, given that, as we address in this paper, the differences between those who make up the groups can be expressed (or not) in multiple ways—whether as explicit oppositions, 'step backs,' or 'strategic silences' with which to overcome the differences that may exist at a given moment. According to Anna Tsing (2005), and in contrast to the approaches in which 'collective identity' presupposes reaching shared agreements, we understand that it is possible to build political commons without agreements and on the basis of disagreement. Thus, we consider that not expressing divergences at a given moment does not necessarily mean that they do not exist (nor that an agreement implies the absence of discrepancies).

Thus, our intention in this work is to explore the dynamic nature of the 'us' of a social movement, outlining its processes of identification and boundary work in different temporalities: in moments of peak activism, when an event triggers activist networks; and in moments of latency, when the mobilization rests on ordinary activities, such as regular assemblies. As we will point out, in the social movement addressed here, the consolidation of the 'us' relies on dynamics of (self)exclusion that vary according to an eventual temporality.

3. Methodological notes

This article draws on data collected during a multi-year ethnography of the Anti-Repressive Movement in Extremadura (southwest Spain, along the border with Portugal) between January 2018 and December 2020. This ethnography included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of documents produced by the collectives that integrated the Anti-Repressive Movement in the region during the research period.

The selection of particular movement was based on two main factors: field accessibility and duration of the mobilization. First, this movement included activists with whom the author had previously conducted fieldwork between 2011 and 2014 (Allen-Perkins and Frías 2018), which facilitated field accessibility. Second, this was one of the few social mobilizations in Extremadura whose longer duration allowed assessing our epistemological approach of addressing boundary work in different temporalities of a social movement. In this sense, the EARM allowed us to explore how their 'us' transformed diachronically—something impossible to assess in other shorter mobilization processes in which we also conducted fieldwork.

During the ethnography, we conducted 28 in-depth interviews with activists from different social movements in Extremadura, including former activists. Interviewees were mainly male (18 self-identified as male, 8 as female, and 2 as transgender), aged between 18 and 36 years (Table 1). This sample reflects the general profile of most participants in EARM: males in their twenties, who self-identify as communists or anarchists; students (mostly university students), unemployed, or those with precarious jobs in the service sector; and with relatively long militant trajectories (five years or more) both in formal organizations—mainly labor unions or youth arms of political parties—and in assembly-type social movements. The interview questions concerned their activist trajectories before joining EARM, their reasons for supporting the mobilization, their social networks, and the main 'logic of action' with which they tended to identify themselves. Informal testimonies collected in assemblies, demonstrations, outings, and during walks with activists were also analyzed. These self-understandings (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 17–19) were taken as the basis from which to examine the dispositional processes enunciated by the agents (Bourdieu 1990, 80).

Along with the analysis of the participants' verbal accounts, participant observation of different social movements and political organizations was conducted in various cities of southwestern Spain, such as Cáceres, Mérida, Almendralejo, and Badajoz. The main fieldwork covered assemblies, demonstrations, and the tracking of WhatsApp and Telegram groups—in which the author did not actively engage in organizational discussions nor the planning of activities. Notably, the research also included participation in the leading activists' daily life spaces—outside the collective's assemblies and communication channels, such as attending festivals organized by allied political groups, punk music gigs and political book fairs. This approach allowed for the observation of tensions that were not typically evident in places of activist interaction. This strategy included different techniques, such as walking ethnography (Ingold and Vergunst 2008), which proved to be very productive during the discursive analysis. Finally, we analyzed the material produced by the movement—including flyers, manifests, photographs, and social media—to explore the objectified forms of representation of the collective.

The empirical data were analyzed following an iterative process: data collection, coding, interpretation, epistemological reflection, refinement of the analytical categories, and return to the field (O'Reilly 2011; Velasco and Díaz de Rada 1997). Methodological triangulation and theory triangulation ensured data saturation (Denzin 2009). Anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent were considered while carrying out this research. Informants were told in advance what data would be collected and how these would be used.

Table 1 - Socio-demographic profile of the interviewees

#	Gender	Age	Previous experience as an activist (years)	Participates in...[2]			Occupation	Date (dd/mm/yyyy)
				... EARM	... other social movements, apart from EARM	... political parties and / or trade unions		
1	Male	28	10	✓	*SRI*	-	Student	15/05/2018
2	Female	32	7	-	*AFC*	-	Unemployed	13/06/2018
3	Transgender	29	12	✓	*SRI*	-	Service sector	10/10/2018
4	Female	18	< 1	✓	*AFC*	-	Student	11/11/2018
5	Male	26	3	✓	-	*CNT*	Student	17/01/2019
6	Male	31	6	-	-	-	Service sector	10/02/2019
7	Male	27	5	✓	-	*UJCE*	Unemployed	03/03/2019
8	Male	26	6	✓	AEC	UJCE, CCOO	Service sector	23/03/2019
9	Male	25	2	✓	AEC	UJCE	Student	23/03/2019
10	Male	21	4	✓	SRI	-	Student	05/04/2019
11	Male	36	18	✓	RSP	PCE, CCOO	Lawyer	17/04/2019
12	Female	30	5	-	-	-	Unemployed	18/04/2019
13	Female	36	9	✓	RSP	-	Service sector	19/04/2019
14	Female	29	10	-	-	PCE, CCOO	Service sector	07/05/2019
15	Male	30	11	-	GD, SRI	-	Primary sector	07/05/2019
16	Male	21	5	✓	SRI	-	Student	18/07/2019
17	Male	32	11	✓	-	PCE, CCOO	Administrative staff	18/07/2019
18	Male	28	8	✓	SRI	-	Primary sector	19/07/2019

[2] A25M = Asociación 25 de Marzo (25th March Association) is a political, cultural, and historical association for debate and analysis of the reality of Extremadura.

AEC = Asamblea de Estudiantes de Cáceres (Student Assembly of Cáceres) is one of the two platforms that shape the student movement in Cáceres, especially at the university level. The platform maintains alliances with other student representation groups in Extremadura.

AFC = Asamblea Feminista de Cáceres (Feminist Assembly of Cáceres) is the leading feminist collective in Cáceres. It has relations with other feminist groups in Extremadura and Spain.

ALM = Ateneo Libertario de Mérida (Libertarian Athenaeum of Merida) is an anarchist-leaning, self-managed, and assembly-based athenaeum in Mérida.

CCOO = Comisiones Obreras (Workers' Commissions) is the largest trade union in Spain, linked to the Communist Party of Spain (PCE).

CNT = Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labor) is a Spanish confederation of anarcho-syndicalist labor unions.

EARM = Asamblea Antirrepresiva De Extremadura (Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement).

GD! = ¡Guadiana Despierta! (Guadiana Awakens!) was a citizens' platform born in the town formerly known as Guadiana del Caudillo, whose demands included the removal of the term "del Caudillo"—in allusion to the figure of the dictator Francisco Franco— from the name of the town.

PCE = Partido Comunista de España (Communist Party of Spain)

P8M = Plataforma 8M Mérida (Mérida 8th March Platform) is the leading feminist collective in Mérida. It has relations with other feminist groups in Extremadura and Spain.

RSP = Red de Solidaridad Popular (Popular Solidarity Network) is a network of mutual aid that seeks to generate programs of solidarity and self-organization to respond to austerity policies.

SRI = Socorro Rojo Internacional (International Red Aid) is a communist-leading platform that supports persons deprived of their liberty.

UJCE = Unión de Juventudes Comunistas de España (Communist Youth Union of Spain) is the youth organisation of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE).

19	Male	26	3	✓	ALM	CNT	Unemployed	18/10/2018
20	Female	23	1	✓	P8M	-	Student	18/10/2018
21	Male	32	16	✓	RSP	PCE, A25M	Unemployed	19/10/2018
22	Male	34	9	✓	-	-	Unemployed	12/12/2019
23	Male	31	9	-	-	-	Service sector	08/01/2020
24	Female	19	<1	✓	AFC	-	Student	09/01/2020
25	Transgender	22	<1	-	-	CNT	Student	07/03/2020
26	Female	27	2	✓	GD	-	Unemployed	17/03/2020
27	Male	21	1	✓	AEC	-	Student	12/04/2020
28	Male	23	1	-	AEC	-	Student	12/04/2020

4. Movement boundaries as a (self) exclusion: some field notes

4.1 Activism in Extremadura

Extremadura is located in Western Spain, along the border with Portugal. It is a territory of small and medium-sized towns, where the average number of inhabitants per town is less than 3,000 people and only ten places have more than 10,000 inhabitants. As the activists themselves point out during the interviews, in the larger towns, such as Cáceres, Mérida, Almendralejo, and Badajoz, 'all of us know each other.' Thus, a first feature of activism in Extremadura is that recruitment is strongly mediated by affinities and interpersonal connections (Passy 2002, 10-11).

Also, activism in Extremadura has a marked event-mediated character. Unlike in other parts of Spain—such as Madrid, Barcelona, or the Basque Country— in Extremadura, broad protest events are not usual, and there are hardly any social movements that maintain their activity (e.g., regular assemblies or recruiting activities) in moments of latency. Thus, in Extremadura, protests generally rely on the emergence of specific events that trigger confluences in the courses of action of different individuals and collectives—where the mobilization depends, to a large extent, on the protest events that occur in large cities.[3] Beyond media coverage of the protests, these events are spread through different channels, such as social media and digital messaging platforms, by word of mouth, or by flyers at activities organized by affinity groups. Again, these strategies relate mobilization to the initiative of those activists who are in touch with other political organizations, whether in organizing the protest or seeking alliances to 'scale up the struggle.'

Within the framework of the specific mobilizing events and personal affinities that shape activism in Extremadura, there is a field of shared meanings among activists. First, these discourses move around two poles: an axis shaped by 'working-class' categories, the rejection of institutional practices, and 'combative mobilization in the streets,' which is usually identified as a 'militant' or 'orthodox' activism or as a 'committed activism' among the more 'militant' activist themselves; and a second pole, which activists name as 'autonomous,' interested in the construction of more 'transversal' and 'inclusive' categories of representation. Secondly, both 'militant' and 'autonomous' discourses are characterized by a preference for assembly-based methods, with a clear rejection of formalized leadership within the groups.

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[3] During the fieldwork, it was common for interviewees to thematize activism in Extremadura as a 'secondary' or 'peripheral' activism concerning the demands driven by social mobilizations in larger cities of Spain. Informants pointed out that there were centers of interest in activism, which could be either places (Madrid, Barcelona, or the Basque Country, mainly) or other struggles hierarchized according to their 'significance.' In this sense, Extremadura and the anti-repression movement would be the *periphery* of these centers.

These 'militant' and 'autonomous' sensibilities converged and interweaved following the cycle of mobilization that started after the emergence of the so-called 15-M movement (Allen-Perkins and Frías 2018). The 15-M movement emerged in Spain on May 15, 2011, as a criticism of the policies taken by political representatives to address the economic crisis that was hitting the country. While 15-M's practices of occupation of public space denounced 'the lack of representativeness of politicians,' they also sought to prefigure new modes of decision-making and political representation by emphasizing their 'horizontal' nature and rejecting formalized forms of 'traditional' representation—that linked to militancy in political parties, unions, and institutional organizations (for a synthesis of 15-M's logics of action: Castañeda 2012; Flesher Fominaya 2014). Once the mobilization began, the 'decentralized' dynamics supported by 15-M moved to the new social movements that started to emerge in Extremadura at the whim of the mobilization, such as the Campamento Dignidad (Dignity Camp)[4] or the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages).[5] In the transit between the initial demonstrations of 15-M and the development of these new platforms, the senses of 'horizontality' and rejection of political delegation begin to overlap (in a conflictive way, at times) with 'traditional' activism. This convergence made possible the approval of various laws because of popular mobilization,[6] and favored collaboration (punctual, around concrete actions) between political organizations (Allen-Perkins and Frías 2018). This convergence did not imply a distancing or a rejection of the more ideological 'working-class' narratives among 'traditional' activists, nor the end of their activity in the formal organizations in which they have been participating, but it does inform the 'assembly', 'horizontal' nature that begins to be regular in the decision-making processes of the collectives in Extremadura.

In any case, the coexistence of 'militant' and 'autonomous' sensibilities is not free of conflicts. We can note a recurrence of tensions and discrepancies that emerge in the different mobilizing events. As we will discuss in the following points for the case of the Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement, the management of discrepancies varies according to the temporality and context of the mobilization. In periods of high-intensity activism, such as in the initial stages of the protest, differences among participants tend not to be public, so as not to 'hinder the impulse.' On the other hand, when the intensity of the protest decreases and some activists demand greater involvement, these differences tend to be structured around how 'militants' and 'autonomous' understand categories such as 'commitment' or what the legitimate repertoires of action are. However, far from assuming that these positions are pre-given 'identities,' it is necessary to see how activists negotiate their significance contextually.

4.2 The 'us' as the (dis)engagement of emergent practices

In May 2018, a talk in the city of Cáceres about Jesús Santrich, former commander of the FARC-EP militia in Colombia, marked a new stage in Anti-Repressive Movement in Extremadura. The conversation brought together fifteen activists who commented on some recent 'cases of repression' in Spain. They mainly discussed Valtonyc and Pablo Hasél, two rappers who a few months earlier had been tried and subsequently given prison sentences for exalting terrorism, humiliating victims of terrorism, slander, and insulting the Spanish crown (Dopico 2021).

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[4] The Dignity Camp is a decentralized 'network of mutual support' whose main repertoire of action is occupations. Its main demands are universal basic income, the creation of public employment in Extremadura, and a halt to evictions.

[5] The Platform for People Affected by Mortgages is an association and social movement that, among other objectives, seeks to stop evictions, regulate the dation in payment, convert the stock of mortgaged primary residence housing into public social rental housing, and audit the functioning of the mortgage market.

[6] A notable example of the coordination of associative movements with formal politics is the processing of the Popular Legislative Initiative for Basic Income—led by Campamento Dignidad— and the subsequent approval of the Basic Income Law in the Assembly of Extremadura (Law 9/2014 of 1st October).

The idea of organizing an anti-repressive collective emerged in the context of this talk, due to the 'strength' identified by the participants. When considering the dispositions of those who drive the EARM, we observed the existence of long-term patterns among those who intensified their political militancy under the anti-austerity 15-M Movement, in student strikes, and the housing crisis protests (Allen-Perkins and Frías 2018; Allen-Perkins 2022). As we have noted, in Extremaduran activism the personal dimension is central. The positions of those who drive the collective are articulated around categories that other activists identified as 'orthodox'—i.e., 'working-class' narratives, rejection of institutional politics, and 'combative opposition in the streets.' This orthodoxy fosters agency among related activists, while also being perceived as a potential issue that could hinder the participation of those who advocate for the inclusion of categories of representation beyond 'working-class' discourses. However, despite the recurrent modes of managing dissent noted above, there is a normative disposition among experienced activists to 'come together,' 'support,' and 'join' the dynamics of 'push.' We are then interested in analyzing how the EARM structures its diverse sensibilities during periods of high-intensity activism.

In the context of activism in Extremadura, personal relationships and prior experiences informs the practices that are (or can become) legitimate for a given collective (Bourdieu, 2000). In the activist movement addressed here, involvement in the assemblies, demonstrations, or related groups' activities is the principal source of legitimacy and recognition of activists within each collective, and of each collective regarding other activist groups. In EARM, the viability of the emerging practices depends on the individual efforts of some activists. As in other horizontal, assembly-based movements, there are no mechanisms to enforce compliance with agreements, no formal delegation procedures, and hardly any formalized memory records (Graeber 2009). Because there are no obligations with what has been agreed upon, activists frequently appeal to 'commitment'. During the early assemblies of the EARM, the concept of 'commitment' took shape around the familiar ways of participation of those who drove the group, based on the need to undertake new actions and engage in those organized by related groups. At these early stages, the 'commitment,' often expressed among the more 'militant' activists as a sense of 'adequacy' or 'coherence' between activism and their own daily lives, was not challenged by the rest of the EARM participants. More experienced 'autonomous' activists shared the belief that the success of the collective relied on their presence in the public space, whether through holding assemblies or disseminating the group's activities. However, the less experienced ones, some of whom were participating in a political group for the first time, did not question this commitment, either because they believed it was the 'usual way of participating' or because of 'fear of screwing-up' (Interview #24).

At these early stages, the 'militant commitment' resulted in a prescriptive way of being within the EARM. Firstly, it was defined by identifying the EARM as 'working-class' group and adopting 'combative' repertoires of action. Secondly, it established two forms of legitimate participation in the group. On the one hand, this commitment legitimized those who assumed leadership of the tasks that were agreed upon or proposed new actions. On the other hand, it favored those who had the means to establish new relationships—mainly with other collectives with whom they had an ideological and, especially, personal affinity (Snow *et al*. 1980). As we note, within the EARM, legitimacy implies action, so those who were most committed to the movement— by attending more assemblies, proposing new actions, taking on the tasks that are agreed upon, or contacting other collectives—will be seen as most capable of ascribing normative positions within the group.

This readiness for action became even more apparent during a second stage of momentum, seven months after the first assembly. In December 2018, after the regional elections in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Vox became the first far-right party voted into a Spanish regional parliament since the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975. The electoral success of a party self-identified as 'right-wing without complexes' and whose main programmatic axes included anti-feminism, Spanish nationalism, and the reinforcement of border controls (Ferreira 2019) triggered a mobilization in which the EARM scaled up its actions beyond the city of Cáceres.

The rise of Vox fostered alliances with collectives in other localities in southwestern Spain, including state-wide platforms (Red de Solidaridad Popular[7]), regional movements (Asociación 25 de Marzo[8]), and local groups (Ateneo Libertario de Mérida[9]). Again, the personal background of the more experienced activists was a key factor in the articulation of these coalitions, as many of them had already engaged together at previous events. The EARM began organizing on a regional level by holding local assemblies in Cáceres, Mérida, and Badajoz, as well as regional meetings in Mérida and Guadiana. During these meetings, new protest actions were discussed and agreed upon, and the groups sought to strengthen their relationships by participating in events organized by each other.

In this emerging moment, the Cáceres group showed leadership by taking charge of the initial protests against Vox. However, when organizing the protest, some participants differed from the 'working-class' categories of representation. For example, militants from the Communist Youth Union of Spain and activists in anarchist collectives in Mérida opted for a more 'transversal' language, where 'the workers' joined 'the women,' 'the poor,' 'the migrants,' 'the youth,' and 'the LGBTQ+ movement' in their struggle against 'the Vox fascists.' Likewise, their normative dispositions differed from the 'combative' modes of action, considering strategies that sometimes included the dialogue with actors close to the institutional left-wing parties.

When analyzing how the diversity of identifications converged in the actions agreed upon by the different collectives that began to integrate the EARM, we realize that there was hardly any sort of negotiation about which categories should represent the 'collective us.' Although dissemination and protest actions were supposedly based on collaborative work—as agreed in the regional meetings—the analysis of the organization of campaigns, meetings, or demonstrations revealed a clear absence of internal negotiation. For example, the analysis of debates in Telegram groups showed that manifestos and leaflets were approved without substantial changes to the originally submitted texts. Likewise, when reviewing the meeting minutes, it was observed that the 'alternative strategies of struggle' put forward by some participants—e.g., talking to neighborhood associations and other groups outside the scope of social movements—never materialized. In both cases, these initiatives did not come from the Cáceres activists but from the collectives that join the EARM after the protests against Vox. The activists of Cáceres, especially the most 'militant' ones, sought to 'decentralize the leadership [of the collective] to these new groups, supporting their proposals although they confront[ed] some of [their] usual forms of representation' (Interview #21). This absence of internal opposition became even more clear when the police arrested a number of activists a few weeks later. Those who promoted a 'total amnesty' and the refusal to pay fines—including two activists from the anti-repressive group in Cáceres who also faced prison sentences—stood side by side with those actively working to bail another activist from Mérida.

This lack of opposition is common to both forward momentums—at the initial stages of the movement and after the electoral success of the Vox party—when activists made an appeal to 'broaden the struggle.' Among the more experienced activists, this meant demonstrating a willingness to take action, supporting protest calls and participating in activities organized by related groups, even if they challenged some of the theses they defended. For these more veteran activists, the most important issue was to 'sustain the struggle' rather than attempting to reach common ground on issues where there may be disagreements. They tend to express this 'know-how' as 'taking a step back' when, as they assume, 'sometimes it is impossible to agree with some

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[7] Red de Solidaridad Popular (Popular Solidarity Network) is a mutual aid network that seeks to generate programs of solidarity and self-organization to respond to austerity policies.

[8] Asociación 25 de Marzo (25th March Association) is a political, cultural, and historical association for debate and analysis of the reality of Extremadura.

[9] Ateneo Libertario de Mérida (Libertarian Athenaeum of Merida) is an anarchist-leaning, self-managed, and assembly-based athenaeum in Mérida.

people at some points' (Interview #17). In contrast, inexperienced activists expressed their 'fear of contradicting those who have worked hard in the group' (Interview #24). This attitude resulted in passive behavior during the assemblies, not publicly opposing the agreed proposals, and, in most cases, not getting involved in the activities suggested by more experienced activists. As we note, in moments of activist effervescence, when the EARM can undertake new actions and cooperate with related groups, the 'us' of the EARM is structured without discussing differences either by not publicly addressing certain topics, by redirecting debates toward direct actions, or by 'stepping back' temporarily or definitively. These dynamics of (self)exclusion do not remove divergencies among the group, but they do seem to *blur* them, at least while the mobilization is at its peak.

4.3 The 'us' as a closure

When I made the memo [to meet the] neighborhood associations, I understood that it was the right time [because] people were receptive to the Vox issue, and if we did not manage to broaden our social scope, we were going to be stuck with the four same old punks, with all my love and respect (Interview #11).

In one assembly, a girl began to talk about feminism, and some laughed at her in the following intervention. One of the few talks I had [...] was to say that we had to make anti-fascism [...] something transversal and that it should not remain a kind of fashion or a group of young people, let's say, with very bad-looking appearance [laughs]. The first meeting [I attended, after the rise of Vox] they talked about hunting Nazis. In other words, look what kind of people they are (Interview #9).

If in the previous section we focused on the structuring of the 'us' during the stages of high-intensity activism, this section analyzes how this issue was tackled once the event's potential decreased and problems of participation started to arise. To this end, this point addresses the 'collective us' after the rise of the Vox party—whose electoral success led to a surge in activist participation, widening the range of identifications among those involved in the Anti-Repressive Movement. In order to analyze the dynamics of structuring the 'us' of the EARM in more detail, we will focus on the anti-repression group of Cáceres, which is the largest of those who participate in the movement.

After the initial protests against Vox, the arrival of new participants resulted in a shift from anti-repressive narratives to anti-fascist discourses. As several informants point out, 'let's not fool ourselves, the anti-repressive struggle has always been a matter of a few' (Interview #16). In this sense, Vox is an antagonist whose political positions have a greater capacity for mobilizing the broader population than the original EARM's calls for freedom of speech and the release of political prisoners. As noted, the arrival of new participants broadens the range of identifications that shape the 'us' of the EARM. Among these new participants are experienced activists who are familiar with the 'patterns' of those leading the Cáceres' group. Likewise, there are participants with no previous experience in activism, who distance themselves from the usual 'working-class' identifications and 'committed activism,' and who even support voting for left-wing parties in response to Vox.

The mobilization against Vox opens a new instituting moment in the collective. Attending to how participants discussed and updated their 'us' in the assembly, significant differences in assembly competence could soon be appreciated, especially among those with no previous experience in activism. When faced with situations of friction—i.e., interruptions while speaking during the assemblies—the more veteran activists took on the tasks of moderating the meetings. Perhaps this could be understood as a process of *learning* aimed at some activists becoming trained in basic assembly skills, such as active listening or the consensual

reformulation of proposals (Graeber 2013). However, the management of divergence through 'more assembly' (Vercauteren *et al*. 2010, 50–51) does not always resolve the (few) moments of conflict that might arise. Instead, it serves to reinforce the position of those who have already demonstrated their assembly competencies (Bourdieu 1990, 129).

Besides the logic of 'more assembly,' another strategy that modulates the participation of activists is that of taking turns to speak. For instance, during one assembly, an activist suggested that the other participants 'have their say.' However, some more 'combative' activists interrupted, exclaiming, 'enough of all this talking, let's go out and get the fucking Nazis' (Meeting minute. 17 December 2018). Although the first activist had suggested incorporating other repertoires of action and reach out to some neighborhood associations to create a 'more transversal coalition,' these more 'inclusive' positions faded as the discussion continued. The more 'militant' activists attribute the inability to achieve this specific goal to the 'lack of commitment' of those who propose it: 'We support their ideas, but whoever suggests something must be the one who carries it out' (Interview #15). However, as another experienced activist noted a few weeks later, 'in certain moments, tactically the best thing to do is to take a step back, and not to take a frontal position against those who [lead] the collective so as not to compromise your participation in that collective in the future' (Interview #8).

As noted above, this 'step back' expresses the *indifference* of those who have known each other for years and assume that that—sometimes—it is best not to hinder these high-intensity activism moments. In contrast, among less experienced activists, this *indifference* expresses their inability (or lack of desire) to adapt to the sense of commitment of the most 'militant' ones and their difficulties in managing in assembly contexts. In both cases, most activists assume that representativeness is 'guaranteed' due to the 'horizontality' and 'equality' of the assembly practice: 'If no one opposes [in the assembly], it is because we all agree' (Meeting minute. 19 April 2019). However, these assumptions on equal participation favor the dynamics of (self)exclusion already pointed out during the stages of momentum. The most 'militant' activists indicate that the assembly model and the provision of equal opportunities to speak guarantee that all activists can participate on equal terms, while those who do not feel represented in the 'militant' discourses express that 'the usual ones phagocytize the movements' (Interview #23), or simply leave the movement when their proposals 'are ignored over and over' (Interview #14).

A few weeks later, the call to 'disrupt' the acts of the 'fascist parties' eventually led to a counter-demonstration during a meeting of the Vox party in which the police arrested two activists in Cáceres. This 'direct action' and the clash with the police reaffirmed the position of those who saw it as an example of 'being in the streets.' However, this action also caused rejection from those who attended the protest and did not recognize themselves in the narrative of 'combativeness.' Some participants were afraid and uncertain because of the physical violence and the threat of fines. Also, some activists were irritated by the 'macho' and 'condescending' attitudes of those who saw them as 'weak comrades' when the police charges became more intense (Interview #14). As with so many other debates in the collective, the anxieties that emerged after the counter-demonstration were resolved through constant appeals to 'organize a response,' avoiding the discussion of other emotional dimensions of the event (Goodwin 2009).

In the assembly in which the group evaluated how to 'support the detainees,' no one pointed out that during the counter-demonstration 'some of the most combative ones left running' (Interview #14), or that 'the attitude of some could trigger police action' (Interview #7). After those arrested in the protest spoke, one of the key activists within the movement pointed out that he too was facing a trial in the coming days, accused of burning an ATM. Contrary to the other detainees—who hoped to reach an agreement with the Prosecutor's Office— this activist refused to do so. The debate focused on what the movement's 'official line' should be in the face of future arrests—whether it should opt for a 'total amnesty' or whether it should support the strategies decided by the detainees. The assembly went on without reaching an agreement: the more 'militant' attendants

supported the position of the activist accused of burning the ATM—'so as not to whitewash the repression of the state'(Interview #16)—while a few activists answered that 'of course, we have to support [them], how can we stop supporting [them], but not everyone can afford a fine or a prison sentence' (Meeting minute. 10 February 2019).

As these two assemblies show, there are different stages within the grouping processes of the EARM—of friction and lack of participation in the group, of confrontation with institutional forces—that highlight the existence of different positions and legitimacies. As opposed to the 'us' grounded in the moments of peak activity, in these scenarios of conflict disagreements may arise (although this is an uncommon situation). Just then, we observe that certain foundational elements are assumed to be uncontestable—or, at least, activists do not manage to articulate alternative discourses and practices against them. In EARM, in these moments, discourses on 'direct action' and 'fighting fascism in the streets' prevailed over more 'inclusive' ones. On the one hand, the prevalence of 'militant' discourses can also be attributed to the fact that moments of conflict and friction tend to reinforce the dynamics of (self)exclusion of those who do not identify with them. For example, most participants without political experience who joined the EARM after the rise of Vox are unable (or reluctant) to get involved at the pace of the more 'committed' activists. As one activist points out: 'I have a life beyond activism. I have a family. I have other responsibilities [...] I can't spend all day going to talks or handing out pamphlets. You have to prioritize your time' (Interview #22). As discussed in the previous section, during the moments of highest activist intensity, the 'militant' activists are receptive to the proposals of other participants. However, the 'militant' activists intend to 'instill' in the newcomers the mode of engagement they have been developing since the start of the EARM by 'supporting [their] proposals' but also by 'trying to ensure that those who propose actions are the ones who carry them out' (Interview #21). Newcomers who do not conform to the meaning of 'militant' commitment tend to eventually leave the EARM, resulting in a collective made up solely of experienced activists who have known each other for years. During these moments, when the protest lacks participation and 'strategic silences' fail to revitalize it, differences among activists come to light. During interviews, when discussing how moments of friction highlight the different identifications within the EARM, the more experienced activists continually point to the 'self-referential' and 'sectarian' attitudes of several participants. In this sense, when the collectives break up, it is common for accusations of 'phagocytizing the movements' (Interview #23) and 'appropriating the struggle' (Interview #28) to arise. These expressions are used by both 'militant' and 'autonomous' activists, usually not publicly. Activists use these terms to justify their (self)exclusion and distancing; these are dynamics of those activists who 'disappointed' and 'burned out' leave the collectives because 'the same old activists do what they always do' (Interview #12). As noted, these differences are typical in the final stages of mobilization in Extremadura, just before social movements enter a phase of latency. However, it is worth considering why the 'militant' categories serve as a means of closure, rather than other forms of identifications.

In the field of activism in Extremadura, which lacks consolidated activism networks and is subject to highly eventful temporalities, during periods of high-intensity activism, the momentum of the protest prevents activists from debating what constitutes legitimate strategies of struggle or representation categories. More experienced activists favor this approach, showing a normative disposition towards action. In contrast, during moments of lower participation, groups lack procedures to force activists to take action and can only appeal to their commitment. When these calls fail, social movements struggle to sustain the public protest. The usual way of behaving among the most 'militant' activists is to reinforce the relationship of hostility and antagonism towards the 'other.' In this sense, the repertoires and representation categories of 'militant' activists rest on their ability to generate a sense of urgency, that is, to respond urgently to the 'other' they seek to confront. This urgency leads to the production of practices in public space to make the presence of the social movement visible. In Extremaduran activism, the occasional temporality and absence of consolidated activist structures favor discourses that seek to confront the 'they' in the 'here and now.' However, the totalization of the 'them'

leads to an increasingly exclusive 'us,' which displaces 'non-militant' narratives. In this sense, the 'self-referentiality' described by activists is an inability to articulate 'non-militant' alternatives that can oppose the 'them' in public spaces. This incapacity reinforces exclusion by partially accepting the legitimacy posed by 'militant' positions but also shows how 'militant' categories act as non-disputable closures in this activism—since the very capacity to generate opposites rests on them.

5. An 'us-in-process:' The specular mode of relation

In fields defined by their event-mediated condition, some events intensify activists' networks and give them momentum. In the EARM, during such high-intensity moments, as long as the collective faces no participation issues and organizes and engages in related groups' activities, no one questions or defines the 'collective us.' However, in moments of friction or when participation issues arise, differences tend to be articulated through categories and discourses that are not questioned. Regardless of the reasons given by activists, what we observe in EARM is a reluctance to show public disagreement, which leads to an assumption of the centrality of the more 'militant' discourses. Along with the already noted mood of *indifference*, the 'us' of the EARM seems to break down into private discrepancies and alternative possibilities that never materialize.

These modes of action are consistent with a 'specular mode of relation', where the identification logic, in this specific field, is based on the projection of opposites. In the specular mode of relation:

(1) The structuring of the 'us' depends on the abstraction of the 'them'—the identification of an 'other' at a certain level of generality produces a certain 'us.' This structuring movement emerges when the 'them' is concretized in specific agents to whom activists must respond, usually in an 'urgent' manner. In our ethnography, the most significant examples of this logic are related to the arrests of activists. In the face of arrests, the 'them' confronted by the collective is no longer based on a vague rejection of the judicial and police system (as in the initial stages, when the EARM advocates for freedom of expression and liberation of political prisoners). On the contrary, in these moments, the *concreteness* of the 'them' makes the activists decide how they will face the payment of fines or mobilize the 'solidarity' of the rest of the activists. These debates move to the definition of actions that, in turn, shape the 'collective us.'

(2) The greater the generalities of the 'them,' the greater the scope of the 'us'—their potential for scaling up and the intensity of the identification around the premises that form the 'us.' This selfing/othering mechanism can be observed when considering the two moments of greater intensity in the EARM activity: in its initial stages and the protests against Vox. As we have pointed out, in the former, the 'them' is concretized in the rejection of the judicial and police system through categories that appeal to the 'combativeness' of the activists. In turn, in the face of the rise of Vox, identifications involved in the organization of the actions intersect with those that support feminism, migrants, and the LGBTQ+ movement, among others. This broadening of the diverse identifications widened the scope of the 'us' and enabled the movement to scale up.

(3) The structuring of the 'us' does not necessarily involve negotiating or homogenizing the disagreements. The various sensitivities or differences that might present at a given moment, if they emerge, are managed through dynamics of (self)exclusion that lead to non-disputable closures—since the very capacity to generate opposites rests on them. These dynamics of (self)exclusion are habitual, both in moments of more intense activism and in those of less participation or when friction arises (although they are more evident in the latter, leading to a lower number of participants). As noted, these dynamics are articulated by not addressing some topics publicly, redirecting debates toward direct actions, or 'stepping back' temporarily or definitively. This is how the EARM seeks not to 'hinder the struggle:' without addressing the differences among the participants, at least while the mobilization is at its peak. This mode of articulating the 'us' does not eliminate divergences but *postpones* them (if at all) to moments in which the collective cannot sustain mobilization.

The 'specular mode of relation' is grounded in the logic of structuring differences proposed by segmentary models (Evans-Pritchard 1940), although it presents some distinctive features. In different sections of the ethnography, the activism of Extremadura (and the dynamics of mobilization of the EARM in particular) resemble the image of political agents linked by some sort of disagreements that, nevertheless, these very same collectives are capable of weaving alliances with which to respond to the threat of a greater enemy (such as the arrest of an activist, or the arrival of the extreme right in government). In this sense, the harmony of segmentary models lies not in their predictive capacity but in the attention to the contextual dimension. An activist can be an 'enemy' in a context of low-level segmentation (e.g., in periods of latency and demobilization), while that very same activist can be an 'ally' at a higher level of segmentation (when seeking to 'respond' to that greater enemy). In other words, the positions that define the 'us' of the EARM depend on the context. And determining that context involves recognizing the appropriate classificatory level, that is, the structural level of conflict or cooperation involved at any given time. This recognition is the 'strategic' position pointed out by several informants: the ability to recognize if the mobilization is at a point where it is better not to hinder the momentum. As Gerd Baumann (2004, 29) notes, "segmentary systems [...] can only work […] when there is consensus about the classificatory levels. This consensus would have to define not only the apex of the segmentary structure, but also any and all of the criteria that define the intervening levels of segmentation." When this consensus breaks, generally because the collectives are involved in processes of alterization in which agents with a greater capacity for agency intervene (the state and the systems of administrative representation in our ethnography), the very harmony of 'segmentation' is blurred, producing other logics of structuring differences.

The 'specular mode of relation' reveals that segmentation in the Extremaduran activism field does not necessarily depend on shared beliefs or a common understanding, but rather on how activists interpret certain positions, which may appear incompatible in a particular context. We propose this 'specular mode of relation' as a particular way of structuring differences arising specifically in this field—although, of course, it might also do so in others. However, by proposing a logic in which the 'us' is a projection of an 'other,' this article does not mean to suggest that this is a general mechanism that explains the dynamics of creation and recreation of 'identity'—nor does it assume that the 'us' is a mere opposition to a 'them.' On the contrary, following Baumann (2004), the 'specular mode of relation' implies a process of identification and/or alterization that does not go through dualisms such as 'each "us" excludes a "them".'

6. Conclusions

This article examined the processes of grouping and structuring identifications in an emerging field of practices through a case study analyzing Extremadura's Anti-Repressive Movement. It has shown that, in contrast to the activist discourses on conflict and consensual decision-making processes, 1) within this movement public divergence hardly takes place; and 2) when it arises, it does not lead to alternative positions, instead being blurred into a certain presumed indifference that is even clearer in stages of high-intensity activism. In this sense, this discussion has shown that as long as the collective has no participation problems, organizes activities, and engages in those of related groups, the differences between the activists remain private. Conversely, any disagreements that might arise are overcome by the (self)exclusion of some participants from the decision-making processes, by rejecting or ignoring certain issues, or by redirecting the debates toward the concretion of new, direct actions.

This article contributes to understanding the identification and grouping logics of contemporary social movements in three ways. First, by proposing an identification logic grounded in practical contexts, making it possible to detach analytical closures from other common categories in the literature on social movements—i.e., closures around group-based and substantialist characteristics (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Second, by

examining the articulation of identifications without assuming that the result is some homogenization of the parts (Tsing 2005). Third, by presenting an ethnographic case study that contributes to the emerging literature on the event-responsive logics of action of social movements (della Porta 2020). As the empirical data have shown, the image of 'unity' projected by the EARM does not involve a homogenization of positions, a major negotiation among the agents, eliciting 'concessions' from any of them, or an 'appropriation of the struggle.' On the contrary, the 'us' of the EARM is *assembled* via the contextual joining of particular positions—with dissent being expressed only through their *(dis)engagement* from the dynamics emerging in periods of intense activism. Also, it has been noted that this 'in-group definition' is shaped according to the specification of the 'them' it opposes.

Although this research has focused on contexts of public mobilization, further research is needed to analyze how latency moments affect (dis)continuities within this field (Melucci 1995). Additionally, future research could explore how this event-responsive field is articulated in the life cycle of activist practice, considering the legitimacy of the narratives of 'commitment' among the most 'militant' activists—where discourses often express the idea that 'authenticity' rests on 'continuity' and presence. Finally, it is worth recognizing that these group identification logics are present in other spaces, in particular when the 'us' is expressed as an 'alternative' to something (Cañedo 2016). In this sense, this work contributes to showing the difficulties that underpin episodes of contention—when the expressions that emerge during specific events, in their concreteness, are barely capable of generating alternative representations. Although this is an empirical difficulty that we must address considering the particularities of each individual context, we believe that this work can contribute to exploring these 'alternative modes' without fetishizing certain practices and without reifying identification processes.

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