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**Anti – Nuclear Movements: Failed Projects or Heralds of a
Direct Action Milieu ?**

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Ian Welsh

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Abstract

This paper reviews existing work on the 'failed' UK 'anti-nuclear' movement in the context of subsequent theoretical work on reflexive modernisation that accords social movements a central place in social change. Through a presentation of qualitative work the paper traces the network outcomes of the direct action wing of the UK anti-nuclear movement arguing that the anti-nuclear mobilisation represented the start of a direct action milieu. The cumulative network consequences of this, and subsequent direct action campaign, is seen as a process of movement capacity building. Capacity building is approached as a process applying to both movement communities and local communities confronted by a range of modernisation issues. It is argued that the term civil societies be applied to this transformative domain of social and cultural significance leaving new social movement to apply to analyses tracing the policy impact of specific movements declaratory posture.

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Contact

Welshi@Cardiff.ac.uk

Introduction

The anti-nuclear movements of the 1970s contributed to both the identification (Touraine 1981,1983) and empirical investigation (Nelkin & Pollack 1982, Rudig 1994, Flam1994, Joppke 1991, 1993, Welsh 2000) of the ‘new’ social movements sector. Together with the peace and environmental movements this work has framed an increasingly diverse field of academic inquiry that has spread to include sexuality, gender and a wide range of cultural and political ‘lifestyles’. This engagement with an increasingly diverse range of collective phenomenon has produced further conceptual innovation with McKay’s notion of DiY Culture being one of the more prominent (McKay 1996,1998). It is however, the inclusive category of new social movements (NSMs) that has been incorporated into broader social theory where NSMs have been flagged as social agents capable of constraining the runaway ‘juggernaut of modernity’ (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992, Lash & Urry 1994). This is an onerous role given the asymmetry in resources between the parties engaged in this conflict. It is a curious claim in another, more immediate sense, given the number of studies that have concluded that the anti-nuclear movements of the 1970s ‘failed’ (Bonanno 1985, Joppke 1991, Rudig 1990, 1994).

It is suggested here that established notions of failure conflate the fate of a particular issue focus, representing the instrumental declaratory posture of a movement, with the fate of the underlying movement or movements. In other words there has been a systematic failure to heed Touraine’s warning not to conflate the identity of an engaged social movement with the domain of contestation – in this case the public conflict over the future of nuclear power. I argue here that one of the major social movements submerged within the anti-nuclear struggles of the 1970s was a heterogeneous direct action movement that has been analysed as if it were the anti-nuclear movement. I suggest, and demonstrate empirically, that this movement was one key element of anti-nuclear mobilizations throughout the 1970s and 1980s that transformed the nature of the conflict over nuclear energy by ‘breaking the limits of the system’. I go on to argue that material and discursive network links from this period have been

central in transforming the action repertoires of movement conflicts present within Britain and liberal democracies generally. In particular I argue that the increasing use of direct action techniques by an increasingly diverse range of social actors suggests that the heterogeneous direct action movement that gained public visibility in the 1970s has been comparatively successful¹. The paper concludes by questioning the viability of recent attempts to meld European and American approaches to social movement theory (e.g. Diani 1992). It is argued that separate sets of analytical categories and methodological means of engagement are required to deal with the culturally diffuse but primary domain of social movement which precede engagements pursuing specific demands within prevailing political opportunity structures. Following earlier work (Welsh, 2000, McKechnie & Welsh 2001) the term ‘civil sociations’ is proposed to refer to movement communities engaged in conflicts over cultural identity and symbolic stakes. It is argued that situated i.e. local communities are in effect ‘radicalised’ producing a dispersed capacity to act in and for the local that ultimately transfigures and vitalises civil society, producing pressures for new political opportunity structures. In this sense then the cultural precedes the political as Melucci has long argued (Melucci 1996 see also Lash & Urry 1994:51 et. seq.; Jowers et.al. 1999). Given the primacy of civil sociations within this sphere the term new social movement should be left to those interested in plotting the course of issue foci through existing political opportunity structures and the subsequent alignment with the policy process

The paper unfolds by outlining the notions of ‘failure’ associated with anti-nuclear movements in the new social movement literature, reappraising the significance of a heterogeneous UK direct action movement that engaged within the nuclear conflict, outlining the network and discursive lineage of this movement and finally arguing that accounts of the failed UK anti-nuclear movement have simply not addressed the process of cumulative capacity building in terms of both direct action repertoires and the range of social actors prepared to use them. By focusing upon this element of the mobilisation phase of the 1970s it

is possible to identify one of the major means through which social movements have fulfilled roles attributed to them by European movement theorists, significantly challenging prevailing cultural codes (Touraine, Melucci), declared important symbolic stakes to society (Melucci) by breaching the limits of the system (Offe, Melucci).

The Failed Anti-nuclear Movements?

The anti-nuclear mobilisations of the 1970s in Western Europe and America have been the subject of a considerable literature written from a wide variety of analytical perspectives. A thorough review of such a literature is beyond the scope of a single paper (see Rudig 1990). A recurrent theme throughout this literature however, is the attempt to meld American approaches derived from resource mobilization theory (RMT) and European approaches, particularly those of Touraine and Melucci. The American tradition is widely seen as necessary to answer key questions about 'how' movements mobilize whilst European approaches are necessary to address 'why' movements emerge. The notion of political opportunity structures has frequently been used as a kind of conceptual bridge (Joppke 1993) and alternative means of addressing the 'why' question (Tarrow 1994/5).

Whilst RMT works through categories of conscious human agency dedicated to the rational, purposive pursuit of strategic and tactical objectives it has been substantially criticized for its inability to address cultural factors that shape what becomes an issue. Attempts to respond to such criticism has evoked a notion of individual agency fundamentally different from European traditions where exposure to cultural diversity reinforces notions of difference (including aesthetic and affective domains) that make a universal 'rational' language problematic. In comparison to the straightforward voluntaristic individual consciousness of RMT European writers have emphasized both structural constraints on individual agency (Offe 1985, Touraine 1995) and a capacity for 'reflexive subjects' to become 'actors' engaged in systemic conflicts (Beck et.al. 1994). In turn these positions have been criticized on a number of grounds.

Touraine's initial work (1981,1983) has been widely criticized for attempting to replace one universal agent of social change, the working class, with another – the anti-nuclear movement (e.g. Rudig 1990). Despite substantial revisions (1995,2000), Touraine's work continues to be widely regarded as too tainted by structural considerations such as this to be sufficiently sensitive to the affective dimensions of social movement. Melucci on the other hand has been criticized for granting the cultural domain too much autonomy by neglecting specific historical circumstance (Mayer 1992), and for an eclecticism that renders his stance methodologically unoperationalisable. The notion of reflexive subjects central to theories of reflexive modernisation have been criticised for prioritising various forms of knowledge in a manner that leaves no role for other rationalities in constituting legitimate critiques of the prevailing social formation. Put another way, the affective dimension of social movements are silenced (McKechnie & Welsh 2001).

Irrespective of these theoretical divides there is virtual unanimity within the new social movement literature about the failure of the 1970s anti-nuclear movements in America, France, Germany and the UK. To the extent that there was such a failure then it occurred in RMT terms, as quite clearly the nuclear industry in all these countries still exists and in this sense the declared objective of stopping nuclear power failed. Even this narrowly defined failure could be subject to revision given the German decision to phase out nuclear generation taken in 2000. However, it is the UK case that forms the empirical base upon which this paper rests and it is to this that I now turn.

Rudig (1983,1990,1994) has been one of the most prominent analysts of British anti-nuclear movements, making a significant contribution to the comparative literature examining movement success in varying political opportunity structures (Flam 1994). The impact of the British anti-nuclear movement is described as 'negligible' compared to those of 'other countries' or 'the British peace movement' (Rudig 1994:70). Rudig's formulation is a clear illustration of the consequences of approaching an academic category, in this case 'the British

anti-nuclear movement' as if it corresponds with an actual, undifferentiated collective actor (see Melucci 1989, 1996, Schmitt-Beck 1992). In explaining the weak showing of the British anti-nuclear movement several key arguments derived from a variety of comparative social movement approaches are made. Compared to mainland Europe and the USA the British movement operated with:

1. A lack of targets for opposition i.e. an absence of reactor construction starts.
2. A sophisticated political state apparatus effective at issue management and legitimation rituals.
3. A specific tradition of direct action lacking the confrontational dynamics and challenge to state power present on mainland Europe.
4. A socio-economic structure lacking equivalents of key movement participants found on mainland Europe e.g. a residual peasantry.
5. A centralised political opportunity structure offering limited 'portals of access'.

Rudig's analysis is based on the limited UK experience of direct action against nuclear power that took place in Scotland between 1978 and 1980. This element of the anti-nuclear mobilization in particular is subject to severe criticism displaying a 'lack of confrontational tactics which even the most radical parts of the anti-nuclear movement contemplated' (Rudig 1994:81). In particular Rudig is critical of the main social movement organization (SMO) involved for briefing the police on the intended direct action strategy and tactics asserting that this confined the impact to the symbolic level. The symbolic is thus effectively dismissed as being of little material consequence in terms of the analysis of the conflict.

Read in this way the experiment with non-violent direct action within the anti-nuclear movement represents little more than a temporary foray into a mode of conflict that rapidly reaches the limits imposed by symbolic challenge. From this perspective direct action is undertaken as a measure of last resort having exhausted all the available 'portals of access' available and serves to further undermine the anti-nuclear movement that is swept from the

stage of history by the second cold-war and the 'defensive' (Habermas 1981) movement response of a resurgent CND.

These are tendencies reproduced in a range of comparative studies addressing the ability of new social movement actors to progress a particular interest focus through existing political opportunity structures. Flam, for example, argues that new social movements ability to achieve success depends upon their ability to 'operate in state space' (Flam 1994). The idea of conflictual entities that breach the limits of the system and challenge primary codes of cultural and symbolic meaning operating within the state represents a major departure from European definitions of the classic new social movements of the 1970s. Other comparative studies take the public declaratory posture of movements as reported in the mainstream press as an accurate representation of both a movement identity and it's purpose (Kreisi et.al. 1995). The argument presented here through a consideration of the British case reveals the limitations of such appraisals and thus has generic relevance to the field of social movements.

The UK Road to Direct Action

The post World War II, UK trajectory towards direct action was indelibly shaped by the emergence of CND. The most important elements here were the decisions to campaign purely against nuclear weapons, ignoring the systematic and substantive linkages between civilian and military nuclear cycles (Edwards and Durie 1980 , Welsh 2000), and to confine the use of confrontational direct action to an elite constituted as the committee of one hundred (Parkin 1968, Skelhorn 1989). Amongst other things, this limited the use of direct action to a small middle class group rendering it a special technique not widely disseminated even within the originating movement. Following it's use by first wave CND direct action within the UK effectively disappeared from the public sphere until the mid to late 1970s when it re-emerged in the midst of the deepening public conflict over the putatively civilian uses of nuclear energy. This coincided with the rise of environmentalism and the prominent social movement

organizations (SMOs) Friends of the Earth (FOE) (Lamb 1996) and Greenpeace, which had roots in direct action against nuclear testing (Brown & May 1991).

The conflict over nuclear power engaged this environmental SMO sector and was augmented by a number of specifically anti-nuclear groups. These included Lancaster Half Life, the Edinburgh based SCRAM as well as umbrella organizations such as Network for Nuclear Concern (NNC) and the World Information Service on Energy (WISE) based in the Netherlands. The UK movement milieu also included groups like the Political Ecology Research Group (PERG) specializing in the use of counter-expertise, underlining Yearley's point that environmentalism *sui generis* is not anti-science (Yearley 1994). These better known SMOs existed alongside a more diffuse range of groups advocating a range of direct action stances. These groups were both nuclear specific, like The Nuclear Reactor Vigilantes based in Somerset, and environmental, like London Greenpeace.

Against a background of mass confrontations characterised by violent clashes between protestors and riot police on mainland Europe anti-nuclear activity within the UK during the 1970s remained focussed upon the main 'portal of access' offered within the prevailing POS. The public inquiry into the expansion of British Nuclear Fuel's Windscale operation through the commissioning of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) plant effectively absorbed activist's energies (Wynne 1982).

The release of the Parker Report, recommending that the go-ahead be given to the THORP project, effectively split this coalition of environmental and anti-nuclear groups over the question of tactics and strategy. To sections of the movement every legitimate 'portal of access' had been used to present reasoned arguments against nuclear power to no avail. Whilst FOE continued to support constitutional means of opposing nuclear energy, pointing out the 'information gains' made at Windscale others, notably the editorial collective of *The Ecologist* and *Peace News*, began to call for direct action as the only remaining means to stop nuclear power. To FOE the adoption of direct action would completely undermine movement

legitimacy and alienate public support and sympathy. These divisions came against the backdrop of a mainland Europe conflict between state and nuclear utilities and sections of civil society opposed to the atom. This conflict was confrontational, direct and typified by violent clashes (Nelkin & Pollack 1982). These mass actions had parallels in the USA where the form of direct action adopted resulted in less violent confrontations (Joppke 1993). The adoption of direct action against nuclear power in the UK emerged from a combination of specific historical conditions and interactions with, and perceptions of, European and American direct action repertoires. The crucial element here was the British portrayal of American direct action at Seabrook as successful (see Welsh 2000:158-164). This 'mediated' (Thompson 1995) view ended movement reservations that mass direct action inevitably led to violence and was congruent with the movement's decentralist ethos.

The site for this engagement came with the announcement of a new reactor at Torness on the east coast of Scotland south of Edinburgh. It is this direct action phase that Rudig in particular dismisses on the grounds of its limited symbolic engagement with the conflict over nuclear power, the resultant failure to halt the technology, and its failure to exert a 'precipitating effect' for local anti-nuclear opposition elsewhere' (Rudig 1990: 183). In what follows I suggest that whilst the immediate instrumental aims and objectives of the wider anti-nuclear movement i.e. stopping nuclear power were not met the experiment with direct action neither ended at Torness nor failed in the longer term. Rather, Torness represented a particularly dense movement network node from which emerged a number of ongoing strands of engagement that had many intended and unintended consequences. In Melucci's terms the anti-nuclear movement was composed of 'networks of networks' (1996). This differentiated sense of movement cannot be accessed by analysis of press reports that merely reproduce a combination of movement declaratory posture recast through a journalistic gaze applying familiar categories of reportage. Far from failing the direct action movement produced a significant growth in the legitimacy and sophistication of repertoires of direct action. Far from

alienating public support direct action contributed directly to a process of cumulative capacity building across subsequent decades.

The vital element in this argument is a sociologically differentiated view of the social movement engaged during the direct action phase that reveals the limitations imposed by the unitary title anti-nuclear movement. My presence as a participant observer throughout this phase granted me access to both direct observation and a range of grey literature generated within the movement that permits this task. Methodologically this underlines the importance of qualitative work within movement networks and the limitations associated with mediated reports, particularly those generated by national newspaper accounts.

Anti-nuclear and / or Direct Action Movement?

Whilst FOE rejected direct action on the grounds that it alienated public support the Edinburgh based Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM), weary from participation in public inquiries, began to plan an occupation of the reactor site at Torness. This anti-nuclear initiative coincided with a much more diffuse emergent direct action movement loosely organised around *Peace News* but with significant support across a range of sites within what was then termed the 'alternative' or counter-cultural milieu. To this emergent movement nuclear power provided something to be non-violent about rather than a sole reason d'être. The crucial analytical point here is that once the anti-nuclear conflict was opened up to a more diverse constituency through the move into direct action the primacy of stopping nuclear power was melded with other significant issues, aims and objectives. The anti-nuclear and environmental SMOs that had played a major role in shaping the anti-nuclear conflict in effect could no longer exert the same degree of direction over a movement within which autonomy, non-hierarchical organizational forms and decentralization were central tenets. Numerous consequences flowed from the increasing hybridity of the anti-nuclear milieu. These range from the definition of knowledge domains through which nuclear ambitions were challenged to the means by which such challenges were to be mounted.

Before I move on to demonstrate these points I would like to be absolutely clear that I am not arguing that there was a homogeneous, conflict free direct action movement within the anti-nuclear movement. Far from this, activist approaches towards direct action were as diverse in 1978 as they remained in the 1980s and 1990s and into this century. A principle divide here revolves around the definition of non-violence used. Pacifists and some feminists generally define non-violence as precluding harm to people and property whereas others define non-violence in terms of avoiding harm to people (see Sharpe 1973). Those defining non-violence in the latter sense included the Socialist Workers Party (who at the time supported nuclear power under workers control) and anarchist groups like London Greenpeace. In the eyes of such groups unless material damage was imposed upon the opponent to the conflict then no actual costs had been inflicted. This divide effectively structured deeper disagreements about whether the means used to promote change within society had to be consistent with the desired end state or whether the ends justified the means.

Direct Action and the Transformation of Discursive Challenge

The direct action phase discussed here had four quite distinct phases. An initial occupation of the designated reactor site with the permission of the landowner, a permanent occupation of a corner of the designated reactor site, the subsequent occupation of the enclosed reactor site and finally failed attempts to re-occupy a heavily policed site.

The initial 1978 occupation took place on a festival site established by SCRAM. Groups attending were marshalled together according to geographical region of origin in a deliberate move to maximize local network building and solidarity. Whereas the UK nuclear debate had remained a predominantly technical one in the hands of the main environmental SMOs the festival site contained a wide range of discursive challenges reaching beyond the technical realm. Two in particular are worthy of note. First there was the recognition that nuclear power had particular relevance for feminists (Nelkin 1981) due in part to its origins within patriarchal male science (Easlea 1983). Second the link between the political rights of native peoples

whose lands had been appropriated to supply uranium or test nuclear weapons were made particularly starkly. The field of discursive contestation was thus broadened to include a range of non-technical issues of a moral, political, social and cultural nature.

This first phase resulted in 400 groups and individuals signing the ‘Torness Declaration’. The Declaration committed signatories to taking ‘all non-violent steps necessary to prevent the construction of a nuclear power station at Torness’(Torness Alliance 1979:4). Signatories to the Declaration automatically received copies of the Torness Alliance Newsletter (hereafter TANL), providing a forum for debate on strategy, tactics and campaigning ideas. Compared to FOE’s national response to the Parker Report, a march and rally in London that attracted around 10,000 people, the 4 – 5,000 attending Torness and the 400 signatures on the Declaration might be regarded as insignificant. This would however be to overlook the comparative network effect of each event.

The FOE rally effectively ended as people left Trafalgar Square where they had briefly gathered to hear speeches. The first Torness occupation created a relatively autonomous space prefiguring Bey’s notion of a temporary autonomous zone (Bey 1989). This TAZ however produced a comparatively permanent network with a means of communication capable of negotiating meaning and constructing identity –key features in the latency period of a movement for analysts like Melucci. This process remained largely invisible in the eyes of both the media and academic commentary based on secondary sources. My simple point is that a network multiplier affect flowed from Torness that was simply absent from the FOE rally. This suggests that the preoccupation with the size of protest events as a barometer of meaning and significance within certain areas of the NSM literature require some caution if not revision (Kreisi et. al. 1995).

The Permanent Occupation – Network Density Building

The second phase of direct action began when a small number of activists, including several individuals originating from within the cohering direct action movement, decided to explore the

possibility of establishing a permanent presence at Torness. Continued support from the farmer and SCRAM facilitated this and a mixed gender group with a number of small children began rebuilding a derelict cottage in the North East corner of the site. This became a race against time as winter drew near with the roof being finished and windmill installed just in time. The occupation became a focus for the wider Torness Alliance and groups from throughout the country visited the site donating materials and labour to the project. In this process the occupation and the occupiers became a particularly dense micro-node within the alliance / movement network. Visiting groups were diverse, ranging from Students Against Nuclear Energy (SANE), hybrid groups containing mixtures of FOE and anti-nuclear activists, anarchist groups to friends and acquaintances. The intensity of interaction within such movement / network nodes is particularly dense producing particularly strong affinity, social bonding, definition of meaning and also conflict. This particular network node was characterized by a social and inter-personal intensity resulting in particularly intense meanings and a variety of forms of interaction. These included proximate facework and distanced textual means but the result was a particularly dense solidaristic network with strong local and national links constitutive of an activist 'community'.

In what follows I am arguing that without a means of assessing the density of movement networks the act of mapping them is of limited value. Dense networks have a potential and capacity to perform certain kinds of movement 'work' identified by Melucci. First, situated movement actors are media in their own right (Melucci 1996, Aton 1998,1999) and second they act as 'symbolic multipliers' in ways that enable them to 'declare the stakes' to wider elements of the surrounding society whilst declaring 'power visible' in the process. I am arguing three things in parallel here and it is important to keep them analytically separate. The first strand of argument is that the direct action phase did elevate the social awareness of a set of technical and expert arguments about nuclear power - the instrumental agenda. These ranged from issues such as reactor safety, economic viability, low level radiation to waste

disposal. The second strand of argument is that the direct action phase elevated the social awareness of issues relating to the practice of democracy by and within a technocratic society. The third strand of argument is that this awareness became sedimented within a variety of ‘communities’ throughout the UK in ways that continue to have major implications for the state’s ability to take and implement scientific and technical decisions in the name of society. In other words in order to discern the diffuse power in movement (Tarrow 1994) it is necessary to be embedded within the network of networks across a timeframe exceeding that associated with most studies (but see Lichterman 1996).

Local Actions as Symbolic Multipliers

The permanent occupation at Torness acted as an important symbol for the Torness Alliance and SCRAM as a SMO. The occupiers also played a role in reconstituting local community in the face of the apparently unstoppable ‘juggernaut of modernity’. A full account of these processes is beyond the scope of a single article (see Welsh 2000) but the main analytical points can be summarised.

The most prominent aspect of Torness as a symbolic multiplier was the broadcast of a BBC Scotland ‘Open Door’ programme on the occupation. This produced 500 letters of support for the occupation and stimulated a round of self-referential media reproduction of the ‘new’ story. BBC Radio Scotland interviewed the Chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board who described the occupiers as ‘anti-social’, ‘irresponsible’ and a ‘core of professional agitators’ (SCRAM Energy Bulletin, 9,2). The story was also opened up to local print media coverage where ‘human interest’ categories tend to dominate, here *The East Lothian Courier* played a particularly important role. The SSEB chose not to tolerate the rising public profile and symbolic resonance evoked by the occupation, bringing it to an end by bulldozing the restored cottage into the North Sea. The material presence of the occupation had produced a symbolic multiplier that this apparently invulnerable statutory undertaker with state support could no longer tolerate or co-exist with. SCRAM and the Lothian and Borders Anti-

Nuclear Group responded immediately by calling a day of direct action intended to halt construction work on the site. The network density of the Torness Alliance resulted in several hundred members confronting workers, security personnel and police in an action that achieved its immediate objective. The day also revealed a range of movement issues particularly the viability of decentralized, small, direct action groups confronting a large police and security presence. These were issues compounded the following year when the site was again occupied in May 1979. These internal movement issues are not what concern me here, however (see Welsh 2000) the important points relate to the local impacts of this direct action phase.

What is important is that the durable period of activist presence established a diverse range of social contacts with the local population within which there was a considerable transfer of 'techniques of self', repertoires of action and so on. In other words elements of the social movement habitus were transmitted as transferable skills that were taken up within the community. Follow on interviews with some of the permanent occupiers showed that even within the comparatively staid realm of local democracy the activist's actions had not gone without effect. Faced with a fiscal threat to close local leisure facilities elected councillors had openly declared that any such action would be met by concerted direct action that would make recent events at Thornton Lock (the site of Torness) look like children's play. Whilst utterances such as this could be readily dismissed as mere rhetoric inspired by the heat of debate I would suggest that they also indicate an open recognition of the limits of representative democracy to preserve local interests. The sentiment is also strongly suggestive of a willingness not to be bound by the identity of councillor and to adopt other identities when this was tactically necessaryⁱⁱ. The point of significance here is that such utterances are little public expressions of the willingness of elected members of a democratic polity to withdraw their allegiance to office in the face of a power that is perceived as monolithic. In this instance the act of withdrawal is accompanied by a threat of conflictual action derived from a social movement.

Such identity cross-overs were not confined to relatively high profile local figures such as councillors' but extended throughout the local community where they were expressed through groups such as Mothers Against Torness. There was in other words a significant change in the capacity of the local community to both articulate and act in and for itself – to use a more recent idiom a process of empowerment had occurred. This is capacity building in two senses. First there is an enhanced local capacity as indicated but secondly there is an increased public recognition of the importance and value of direct action within democratic society (Habermas 1985). By implication there is also an increased public sense that the ability to undertake such action is something worth protecting. Some measure of the proximate impact of this wide range of affective social multipliers can be seen in The East Lothian Courier's 'plebiscite' on whether to proceed with Torness. Held in the summer of 1979 the poll found 90% opposed to any nuclear development in the area, 8% demanding further safety analysis and just 2% in favour of proceeding. The resultant call to abandon the station achieved some limited national media attention but is perhaps most significant in terms of the transformation of local public opinion compared to the prevailing ethos of resigned inevitability at the public inquiry held in 1976. This transformation in local public opinion about the desirability of nuclear power reflects the sustained presence of a group of activists engaged in a variety of community outreach activities. As public scepticism grew in relation to the knowledge claims of the SSEB so did the sense that something had been imposed from the outside on far less clear cut grounds than those advanced at the public inquiry (Patterson 1985). This public scepticism was further reinforced by the SSEB's destruction of Half Moon Cottage. Far from direct action destroying local support for the declaratory posture of the anti-nuclear movement it was reinforced and amplified through a range of affective social relationships. In this process the 'anti-nuclear' argument gathered social force that increasingly undermined local support for any form of nuclear development in the UK throughout the 1980s. Sociologically, durable, situated activist

presence was one of the key factors in building this social force though the viability of direct action at Torness was at an end.

Terminating Torness: From Defence to Movement Diaspora?

Elements of the Torness Alliance continued to attempt annual occupations of the site but were swamped by massive police presences that rendered such action futile. In an instrumental sense then, the campaign to 'Stop Torness' and the wider aim of bringing an end to nuclear power did fail. But in terms of the NVDA social movement the story is not so clear cut. Following Torness the movement placed decentralization at the heart of its strategy – a case of small being regarded as beautiful following Schumacher's influential book (Schumacher 1974). The hundreds of local groups with regional networks formed as part of the Torness Alliance began to engage with the nuclear issue in a range of ways reflecting local conditions, national and international agendas. There were at least four elements of this diasporic spread.

The deepening cold war pushed nuclear weapons up the political agenda leading to resurgence in CND and the establishment of women's Peace Camps at Greenham Common. At precisely the same time a new national SMO the Anti-Nuclear Campaign (ANC) opposing both nuclear weapons and nuclear power was launched. Consciously modelled on the 1970s Rock Against Racism the ANC created a federalist regional structure with a national coordinating tier. Third, the ANC and Greenpeace both identified the practice of transporting nuclear waste to Windscale as a campaigning priority. In the dense urban fabric of the UK this was virtually an inclusive 'local' issue affecting all the major urban conurbations. Finally, the announcement of new reactor construction projects produced new material sites of contestation particularly those in Northumberland and Cornwall. In each of these nuclear related milieu the cultural capital accumulated at Torness was spread both by direct participation (discursive practice) of former Torness activists and their discursive expression within movement literature. Each of these post-Torness diasporas will be outlined before concluding the paper.

From Torness to Greenham

At the final mass occupation of Torness in May 1979 the CND emblem was woven into the wire perimeter fence symbolically denoting common cause between opposing military and civil forms of nuclear technology. Accounts of Greenham acknowledge the importance of prefigurative anti-nuclear actions (Roseneil 1995). The feminist critique of nuclear science and feminist dwelling praxis developed at Half-moon Cottage represent an important example of such pre-figurative repertoires. Each of the camps at Greenham had a distinctive character and women from within the Torness Alliance were both active members of these camps and contributed to debates within CND on the gendered nature of direct action. One such individual appeared on the front cover of CND's magazine. There was thus a direct and mediated input to the peace camps from the Torness experience representing a network linkage that had been in place throughout the rise of CND via common and multiple memberships. Rudig's treatment of the anti-nuclear and peace movements as separate categories neglects the common ground between them and the influence of the former on the latter.

From Torness to the ANC

The decline of direct action at Torness coincided with the founding of the ANC as a national SMO. The ANC had strong ties to sections of the Labour movement having been funded by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and influenced by the Socialist Environment Resources Association (SERA). The organization enjoyed the support of the RTCPA and was an attempt to forge a broad anti-nuclear church. The attempt to combine feminist direct action and labour traditions quickly faltered. The first national meeting struggled to proceed beyond debating the appropriate nomenclature to address (variously) 'the chairman', 'the chair', 'convenor', 'facilitator' and so on. Elements of the decentralist, libertarian ethos of the Torness Alliance permeated the fledgling SMO however, particularly the federalist structure incorporating significant degrees of regional and local group autonomy. Ultimately the ANC

was submerged by the meteoric rise of CND following the arrival of the first cruise missiles in the UK. Once again CND's focus on nuclear weapons left the civil nuclear domain substantially unchallenged. Despite this the ANC was briefly involved in campaigning work that utilized many of the local group networks forged through the Torness Declaration of 1978. The campaign against nuclear waste transport is one such example to which I now turn as it demonstrates the mixed class basis of the supposedly middle class anti-nuclear movement.

Waste Transport – Movements and Class

From 1980 Greenpeace, the Green Party and the ANC all campaigned on the nuclear waste transport issue. The issue assumed a certain prominence in local newspapers throughout the country as editors discovered that nuclear waste was transported through their 'patch'. Similarly, local authorities and transport workers 'discovered' that they had statutory responsibilities in the event of an accident involving the release of radioactive materials. As campaigning on this issue became established union members concerned about public health and safety at work issues became increasingly important as sources of information relating to the routing and timing of waste movements. Such involvement was both overt and covert. ANC offices began to receive leaked copies of routing schedules for 'hot' shipments from naval dockyards to Windscale at a time when BNFL were denying any military linkages on public platforms around the country.

The depiction of new social movements as achieving an impact due to their middle class character within contemporary social theory (Beck 1992, Lash & Urry 1994) neglects such important contributions from traditional working class locations. The combination of routing details from the inside and the availability of widely dispersed local groups capable of exercising *citizen surveillance* lay behind the national spread of this 'local' news issue. Union members provided details, activists spotted, photographed and put out press releases and editors did the rest. The nuclear industry found itself having difficulty defending its waste transport practices at packed public meetings throughout the UK just a few short years after

the issue had been dismissed as lacking substance by Lord Justice Parker at the Windscale Inquiry.

Beyond these linkages Greenpeace was also working closely with the unions, particularly the seamen, in a successful attempt to end the UK practice of dumping radioactive waste into a deep trench in the Atlantic. The loose coalition of direct action groups formed at Torness also contributed to this process by blocking a train carrying the waste to Sharpness dock using a scaffolding tower. The strategic, but unstated logic, behind this campaign was the paralysis of the older nuclear reactors in the UK as a temporary suspension of waste movements would have quickly filled the spent fuel storage ponds effectively preventing re-fuelling and resulting in their closure. The electricity boards took this so seriously that they spent £1.6 million staging an iconic rebuttal of their critics. Before the assembled national media a train travelling at 100 mph was crashed into a waste flask. The resultant media images were used to diffuse the situation, successfully undermining demands for a public inquiry despite failing to address many of the critics' points (Collins 1988). The cessation of sea dumping did however, make the location of a terminal waste repository a priority – albeit one that industry and government have failed to deliver upon to date. The networks created through Torness contributed to this episode of activism that had within it the potential to force the closure of a significant proportion of British nuclear power stations. The industry's haste to produce a symbolically potent dismissal of their critics' case reflects both this potential and the increasing recognition that the issue was inflicting serious harm on the industry's image, particularly within local government (Welsh 2000).

New Reactors, New Opposition: Answering the WHY Question

In December 1979 the Conservative government announced a programme of ten pressurized water reactors (PWRs). Earlier the same year the PWR at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania had held the world's attention when it suffered a partial core melt-down. The proposed sites included one in Northumberland at Druridge Bay and two in Cornwall at Nascuke and Luxullyan.

The social ecology of these localities could hardly be more divergent. As a county, Northumberland retains characteristics of both feudal and classic capitalism. Examples include the number of people living in 'tied' accommodation and the continuity in family lines constituting a capitalist class with strong ties to the military and the media (Benwell Community Project 1978). At the time of the announcement the county was the location of a major deep mined coalfield as well as significant opencast workings (Beynon et. al. 2000). Cornwall by comparison was and remains something of a Celtic margin with a long history of conflictual relations with London and ties with Breton nationalists. The agricultural economy of Cornwall is also not dominated by estates, as in Northumberland. Tourism and fishing constitute major sources of income whilst tin mining has been on the decline for decades. The response to nuclear reactor proposals in each county took very different forms but had significant content in common.

In Cornwall direct action, including the occupation of the proposed site at Luxullyan to stop the accumulation of survey data, was undertakenⁱⁱⁱ. In Northumberland the residents of the village of Widdrington formed the Druridge Bay residents Association, eschewing alliances with 'radical' groups like Tyneside Friends of the Earth or ANC. The key point here is that despite such differences there was clear qualitative evidence of public concern over the inability of existing democratic process to represent local interests in the face of development classed as in the 'national interest'. Significantly, this evidence stretches across a wide range of class positions. It is worth citing some of this material here. The first three extracts come from interviews with participants at Luxullyan in Cornwall

This is a chance to actually do something to show my opposition to nuclear power and all it stands for (Milk'man' interview 15.8.81).

This is a once in a lifetime occurrence and you have got to do your bit, the opportunity will probably never arise again . . . I know what I am doing and why I am doing it. (Smallholder interview 15.8.81)

We wanted this to be a protest not only over nuclear power as a technology but also over the abuse of democracy. (Full-time local activist interview 14.8.1986)

The last respondent and her sister shared the task of being chained (by the arm) to the bit of the developers drilling rig. Any attempt to force the use of rig would have resulted in one of them losing at least an arm. The readiness to contemplate such injury is a sign of depth of commitment to some, dubious sanity to others.

In Northumberland the managing director of a medium sized local firm responded to questions about his involvement in the following manner

I've never had particularly strong views about anything before. It's quite good, for once I know the way I feel and I'll do whatever I can about it.

I'm absolutely amazed and shattered by just how difficult it is to fight the establishment. I mean I have no doubts now . . . I know that they classed us – say as trouble maker, communist, anti-establishment, subversive. And I know, like all people that are branded that way . . . that you are not, you are doing something that you believe in very much.

As soon as you start to challenge the establishment you are branded and I think there is very little you can do about it. I think you just have to be strong and carry on.

Asked about participation through formal channels like planning inquiries his response was:

that's another thing you lose confidence in once you start reading about inquiries.

It really shatters you when you think about democracy. You become, I think, anti-establishment, they force you that way. (Interview 14.4.81).

To underline the fact that their stance was not an example of the NIMBY syndrome the chair of the Druridge Bay Residents Association spoke at the launch of the ANC. Increasing contact with anti nuclear activists eroded the Association's initial suspicions and the Association remains constituted to date. Partly through its efforts the proposed reactor site was declared a nature park and has been developed by the Council for nature conservation and recreational purposes. This situated community continues to embody elements of the cultural capital accumulated during the anti-nuclear phase and remains able to draw on the diverse range of repertoires of action transmitted at that time. In this instance there is a demonstrably enduring strengthening of the capacity of this particular community to formalise and act in pursuit of its interests that only becomes clear through a sustained period within the network of networks that constituted the 'anti-nuclear' movement.

Conclusions

The central objective of this article has been to question the notion that the anti-nuclear movement in the UK failed by using qualitative data and a longer than usual time frame. By concentrating on the transmission of social and cultural capital from activist networks to situated communities confronted with nuclear developments I have illustrated a process of movement capacity building. An essential feature of this process is the increasing use and tolerance of a variety of forms of direct action within British society and an increasingly diverse range of sites of contestation.

In tracing the trajectory of the direct action alliance formed to contest the construction of a nuclear power station at Torness I have (within the limits of my resources) also demonstrated how the resultant movement community becomes dispersed across a shifting movement diaspora. Apart from the example of the subsequent interaction between this activist diaspora and communities confronted by nuclear developments this migration through the network of networks also illustrates a number of other features of the movement milieu prominent within Melucci's work.

'Declaring the stakes to society' and rendering 'power visible' (Melucci 1989, 1996) are two cases in point. The attempt at technical closure of the UK's nuclear debate via the Windscale inquiry was significantly undermined by the ensuing phase of direct action. Amongst other things, direct action forced the waste transport issue onto and up the political opportunity structure by capturing local media attention^{iv}. Countless public meetings rendered the 'power' of the nuclear industry 'visible' to a diverse range of publics with negative consequences in terms of public trust in 'the authorities'. As Local Authorities responsibilities for nuclear accidents and nuclear warfare became an area of tension between the local and national levels of the state there was a marked shift away from automatic local compliance when confronted by appeals to the 'national interest'. By the mid 1980s the national associations of every branch of local government, including those dominated by Conservative majorities, became officially anti-nuclear (Welsh 2000). The more radical adopted Nuclear Free Zone policies many of which opposed both civil and military uses of nuclear power. The hitherto unquestioned capacity of the state to implement nuclear policy became subject to trenchant criticism within a climate of hostility for the first time. Whilst this is not instrumental victory nor is it clear cut instrumental defeat – at the very least it signals a sea change in the public acceptability of nuclear power which was virtually unchallenged before the 1970s engagement began.

The 'donation of experts to the system' (Melucci 1989, 1996) included the appointment of numerous movement intellectuals (Jamison and Eyerman 1989) as NFZ officers. At the national level SMO workers certainly migrated into 'state space' with Tom Burke of FOE being the most obvious example. Having declared the stakes, rendered power visible and donated experts to the system the question becomes what becomes of the social movement? My answer here is that the social (and cultural) elements of the direct action movement that was part of the civil nuclear confrontation simply moved on. To this constituency nuclear power had always been something to be non-violent about not their reason d'être. The 1980s saw nuclear weapons establish themselves as the new issue focus requiring confrontation by means that 'broke the limits of the system'.

As Tarrow argues (1994/5: 176-7) involvement in movement politics frequently produces a radicalisation of the rest of an individual's life course producing 'far reaching . . . incremental changes in political culture (1994/5:184).' He concludes that 'The effects of social movement cycles are indirect and to a large extent unpredictable' (Tarrow 1994/5: 186). By focussing upon the capacity of named movements to advance declared campaigning objectives through available political and policy structures most new social movement analysis has in fact subordinated the complexity of movements to the predictability of known institutional structures. Such considerations have lain behind the declared 'failure' of the anti-nuclear and environmental movements (Brawmell 1989). To such commentators the disappearance of mass movements in these areas and the absence of any new mass movement to take their place represents 'an end. This is however, to expect the present and future to replicate the repertoires of the past, something that has contributed to claims that the UK movement sector was an exception in a European context (Rootes 1992).

This highlights the importance of what Melucci terms 'latency periods' - times when movement energies are expended internally on the work of identifying new objects of contestation and conflict amongst other things. With the wane of the direct action movement

against nuclear weapons and CND more generally in the late 1980s there was a widespread question mark over where activist energies had gone. Within this apparent movement nadir several processes were unfolding. There was an active process of realignment with animal rights and genetically modified seeds and foodstuffs being prominent examples (Purdue 2000). Significantly there was also an increasing tendency to contest relatively mundane features of the modernisation process starting from the premise that direct action was the preferred modus operandi rather than a tactic of last resort. In the UK elements of everyday life contested in this manner included supermarket siting and road developments (Wall 1999, Welsh & McLeish 1996, O'Doherty 1999). The 'dis-organisations' fronting such actions bear little resemblance to the SMOs of the 1970s with Earth First! (Wall 1999) and Reclaim The Streets (Chesters 2000, Jordan 1998) being prominent examples. The innumerable road protest camps that have endured for periods of time running into years at various locations throughout the UK have produced contemporary versions of the activist community / community interactions discussed here. The long-term outcome of this networking will only become clear with the passage of time and the expenditure of qualitative scholarly effort. It is however, not too early to argue that the incidence and range of sites within which direct action is used as a means of contestation in Britain have multiplied markedly. It can also be argued that public tolerance of *some* of this direct action has also increased as reflected by a range of indicators. These include the increasing involvement of more mature 'young people' (Melucci 1996: 118-32, Welsh & McKechnie 2001) in many sites of contestation and the repeated dismissal of charges of criminal damage against members of Trident Ploughshares arrested after wrecking military installations (*The Guardian*, 19,1,2001: 9)^v. Such recognisable movement actors have been joined by a host of other citizen groups using a range of direct action tactics including The Countryside Alliance, Anti-Pedeophile groups and fuel protestors.

Whilst analysing these complex developments is beyond the scope of this paper the relationship between the local, the national, the global and the ability of established

democracies to represent increasingly plural interests is clearly a central tension. Tarrow reminds us that the most liberal systems 'can be ferociously illiberal' to 'those who do not share liberalism's values' (Tarrow 1994/5:94). Chesters (2000) convincingly argues that the British state's attempt to contain the direct action diaspora sketched above through the passage of statute laws extending police and judicial powers has affectively united the movement milieu in a manner previously unimaginable. The state's attempts at transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in the aftermath of twenty years of neo-liberal ascendancy are apparently falling short of expectations. In this sense Touraine has written that these are 'ventriloquist states' i.e. states that claim to speak on people's behalf whilst in effect stifling inconvenient public voices (Touraine 1995).

It is possible that the spread of direct action reflects a growing public awareness that political leaders have declared themselves powerless in the face of economic globalisation. One consequence of this is the undermining or hollowing out of the national. If the global is determinate then political appeals to a 'national interest' become problematic. Further, the replication of the negative impacts of globalisation across a range of local communities give rise to complex interests that are dispersed but assume significant numerical proportions within a nation state.^{vi} In democracies that are based on geographical constituencies this produces profound problems in terms of interest representation, a factor that operates throughout Europe haunting plans for enlargement and further integration within the EU (Baker and Welsh 2000).

As these changing political structures struggle to integrate old SMO agendas from the 1970s in the name of 'bottom up' approaches^{vii} the rapid innovations that have taken place within the movement milieu during the closing years of the last century stand as a major challenge. A major part of this challenge lies in the dispersed but collective demand that human agency, choice, and will, not be given away and subordinated to an economic determinism that penalises the poorest sections of society and is politically intolerant of difference. Given the

failure of prevailing political opportunity structures to place environmental and social justice issue at the centre of the modern polity Tarrow's prediction of an emergent 'movement society' appears to be being fulfilled.

Accounts, such as Tarrow's, that deal with political opportunity structures and repertoires of action as structures and processes that change slowly over time have not taken into account the transformation of the movement milieu enabled by new communication and broadcast technologies. These 'instruments' of globalisation enable a redefinition of the public sphere and the ability of citizens to participate within it. Vital to economic globalisation, 'real time' communication technologies are profoundly problematic for political authorities and profoundly enabling for activists (Thompson 1995). Attempts to 'police' the virtual realm in response to the threat posed by 'hacktivism' are universal and thus potentially impact upon everyone who is 'wired'. The pervasive public concerns about 'democracy' within a technocratic society evidenced here in relation to nuclear power in the 1970s seem set to spread as government attempts to control and monitor inter-net traffic. In doing so government will become even more closely identified with the corporate business interests driving the globalisation process, reinforcing citizens' turn to movements.

Civil sociation stands as a term for this complex and multi-faceted continuum between activist community and situated citizen community that transforms the anatomy of civil society and the resultant political culture. In this sense there has been a cumulative process of capacity building utilising direct action and a range of self-help techniques since the 1970s. Given the miss-match between analysts and politicians perceptions and the lived relations of the movement milieu the potential for conflict is significant. Cabinet Minister, Claire Short described anti-capitalist protestors as 'luddites' whilst Jack Straw's criminal justice and police bill is reportedly targeted at 'drunken yobs' and environmental 'extremists' (*The Guardian*, 18.1.2001:1; 20.1.2001:1). The application of such reductionist deviance labels conceals a far more complex social reality. A civil sociation like the Peoples' Global Alliance that relies upon

the most sophisticated electronic communication techniques is not luddite. Whilst there are people with extreme repertoires on the streets the direct action movement contains many with higher degrees and decades of experience of professionally trying to save rainforests, and so on, to no avail. These people are on the streets now because, in their professional view, time is running out and prevailing political opportunity structures and the links to business are a major part of the problem. As Chesters (2000) points out Melucci argues that there is scope for a generalised conflictual movement within 'complex society'. The capacity building argued for here is part of the process through which discernable 'movements' interact with situated communities as civil societies that cumulatively transform civil society. Whilst there is no inevitable telos to this process and no guarantees, attempting to police it out of existence is neither credible nor viable. Weiviorka (1995) argued that strong, viable trades unions have always been a pre-requisite for a vibrant movement milieu. To this can be added the civil societies that simultaneously sediment concerns for environmental and social justice throughout the social fabric. Les movement society arrive?

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ⁱ Most recently the use of direct action by fuel protestors in September 2000 plainly surprised both the Government and legal establishment. More pervasively animal rights and road protest campaigns have played a major role in increasing public participation in and support for direct action in defence of local sites.

ⁱⁱ In the mid 1990s Derek Wall found similar processes operating amongst councillors confronted with controversial road developments (see Wall 1999).

ⁱⁱⁱ The presence of the editorial office of *The Ecologist* in the nearby village of Camelford was significant in beginning the direct action with Teddy Goldsmith setting up his office in a field entrance. This initiative was quickly taken over by a range of local people.

^{iv} This is not to overlook the continuing role of critical expertise, SMO and union involvement in this process. It is interesting to note the role played by local print media in this example something that studies based on national press sampling cannot easily access (see Kreisi 1995)..

^v In each of these trials juries have been exposed to the argument that the political and military ownership and deployment of nuclear weapons is illegal under international law. At least five juries have now dismissed cases against activists since 1996 suggesting that there is widely dispersed tacit public support for the position and actions of Trident Ploughshares. The state's assumed automatic right to wage war is in effect being questioned from within civil society, parts of which see the abolition of war as a political objective for the century. Within such circles, British Home Secretary, Jack Straw's talk of limiting trial by jury is simultaneously a recognition and attempt to limit such challenges to state authority using legal means.

^{vi} Localities that have experienced the premature closure of prestige factories build via inward investment in South Wales and the North East represent one such example. The farming community another.

^{vii} The steady erosion of measures to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and the virtual collapse of attempts to implement Kyoto protocols stands as a stark example here. Such procrastination only fuels the sense of urgency amongst activist groups producing further innovations in means of intervention.