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Comparative Study of Transnational Anti-Corporate Campaigns – Research Design and Preliminary Results

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Abstract

Changes from analogue to digital media technologies offer new medial opportunity structures for innovative forms of post-conventional participation in the political public sphere. From the indepth-analysis of a selection of transnational Anti-Corporate Campaigns the research project 'Changing Protest and Media Cultures' aims at investigating the use of the internet by civil society actors against the backdrop of a globalizing political arena. In particular, the project deals with the question if and how these campaigns contribute to a transformation of the public sphere with regard to three aspects: Firstly, the dedifferentiation of the dividing line between public and private action through a politicisation of private consumption; secondly, with regard to the ongoing digitalisation of political communication and thirdly in terms of the contribution of net-based Anti-Corporate Campaigns to the formation of a transnational public sphere, conceptionalized as a complex communicative network consisting of numerous interrelated issue publics. In doing so, the project carries out a comparative analysis of the main sociotechnical practices of these campaigns, highlighting in particular practices of framing, generating public attention and mobilizing public pressure, identity formation and participatory involvement of supporters as well as vertical (transnational) and horizontal (sectoral) network integration.

¹ The following presented research design and empirical results are based on the ideas and work of Prof. Sigrid Baringhorst, Veronika Kneip, Anne März and Johanna Niesyto.



Political web campaigning & democracy in the age of globalisation

As globalisation processes unfold the political arena is facing challenges of transformation. In the realms of political science in general and international relations in particular concepts of transnational democracy (Tony Mc Grew, without date) and global governance (e.g. Behrens 2004, Zürn 2006) are trying to grasp these processes of political "denationalisation". Dealing with the questions how and to what extent global governance can be said to be democratic scholars such as Rainer Schmalz-Bruns (2005) plead for a model of associative democracy which puts emphasis on the role of civil society actors. Linked to the communicative potential of civil society actors – which is not restricted by national borders² – the concept of a political public sphere comes into foreground: Starting with the idea that collectively organised civil society actors take up the role of intermediaries between the societal and political system in and through the public sphere the project aims at exploring transnational campaigns seen as sociotechnical networks³ of self-positioning towards a collective problem and self-expressing through different communicative styles in online and offline media in order to unfold their communicative power in the public arena. For campaigns as significant tools of civil society actors the aspect of gaining media attention is crucial as Western societies have undergone a transformation towards mediated societies. How can protest campaigns fulfil an intermediary function under the condition of mediatisation and denationalisation of politics? So far, only a few scholars such as Rucht (2004), Oy (2001; 2002) and Baringhorst (2004) have been analysing changing protest cultures regarding changing concepts of the public sphere and media projects. Whereas since the 1980s the changes in the media landscape such as commercialisation have been asking for an increasing adaptation to the selection criteria and news values of mass media through adventuredriven, spectacular actions of social movement organisations (see Baringhorst 1998; Berens 2001), with the diffusion of the electronic communication new medial opportunity structures have been made accessible for civil society actors and their campaigns. But "we still lack a clear

² In contrast, other models of democracy which underline for instance the idea of representation face complications related to the problems of anonymity and community-building. (see Schmalz-Bruns 205: 92)

³ In the following is referred to campaigns as sociotechnical networks in order to analyse "... how technologies are both functional implements of human practice and mediating artefacts that intervene in and reshape practices." (Foot/Schneider 2006: 15) Further campaigns are considered as "... a planned, pre-organized and sustained sequence of activities and communications geared to effect (or prevent) social change, both through a reform of institutional politicise and changes in public opinion, attitudes and behaviour." (Lahusen 1996: x)



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understanding of how the Internet and other forms of electronic communications might contribute to a historically new kind of public sphere and thus to a potentially new form of democracy." (Bohman 2004: 47). With the development of the Internet as a (transnational) public sphere Bohman sees on the one hand the chance for civil society actors to get independent from the filters of powerful gate keepers of mass media. On the other hand, he argues, that the tendency of desintermediatisation of Internet communication asks for new agencies of information evaluation and structuring. Civil society actors are major actors in the process of 'reintermediarization' of net communication, as "... they also take over the responsibility for responsiveness, which remains indeterminate in many-to-many-communication. Most of all, they employ the Internet not as 'users'; they create their own spaces, promote interactions, [...] make information available, and so on." (ibid: 55) The research project takes up Bohman's idea of conceptualising transnational public sphere as a complex communicative network of interrelated public of publics (Baringhorst/Kneip/Niesyto forthcoming b.). Contrary to the notion of a national public sphere the idea of a transnational public of interrelated publics, understood mainly as issue-related publics (see also Peters 1999) allows for more cultural heterogeneity among actors and a plurality of media and political agendas. Apart from that, public sphere is considered to be independent of the existence of a single transnational media as arena for transnational political debate.

In contrast to concepts of deliberative democracy as they are developed by Bohman, Schmalz-Bruns and others, we broaden the rather narrow range of discursive action as indispensable precondition for democratic public communication. A democratic public is defined by its open access, its topic-related openness, its orientation to issues of common good as well by norms of reciprocity of communicative participation. The norm of rationality, however, tends to reduce public communication to an elite discourse. (Part-)virtual campaigning associations enter the political dialogue and contribute to the plurality of standpoints, interests, and cultural meanings in the public. In this process campaigns of civil society actors express collective claims⁵ in

⁴ Regarding social movements and the Internet also Donk et al. state a research desideratum: "It appears that the research community has particularly neglected the role of ICTs in the extra-institutional sphere of ,politics' in which loosely structured groups and social movements play a prominent role (but see, for example, Myers 1998; Naughton 2001)." (Donk et al. 2004: 2)

⁵ Within this context the reference of campaigns to general recognised norms of social justice becomes a crucial element of communicating legitimacy for their claims.



diverse modes, such as rational, deliberative speech or expressive, visual language. The model of a communicative democracy proposed by Iris Young (1996) acknowledges these different speaking styles and thus broadens models of deliberative democracy. Here, all kind of communicative forms are included which are involving actors in connected political public spheres:

"The ideal of communicative democracy includes more than deliberative democracy, because it recognizes that when political dialogue aims at solving collective problems, it justly requires a plurality of perspectives, speaking styles, and ways of expressing the particularity of social situation as the general applicability of principles." (ibid: 132)

Furthermore, such a model of democracy recognises cultural differences (ibid: 132/133) per se existing in transnational contestation. Also, by considering difference as a resource of democracy this model is able to the include learning processes of different actors, e.g. corporations and non-governmental organisations:

"There is [...] something to be learned from the other perspectives as they communicate their meanings and perspectives, precisely because the perspectives are beyond one another and not reducible to a common good. This process of mutual expression of experience and points of view that transcend the initial understanding of each accounts for a transformation in their opinions." (ibid: 127)

In a nutshell, the project aims to explore if and how transnational Anti-Corporate Campaigns might contribute through the provision and use of web spaces to the creation of a transnational public of publics and the communication of generalized norms of global justice.

Why investigating Anti-Corporate Campaigns?

Against the backdrop of global governance and the challenge of the democratisation of the transnational political arena, campaigns targeting the market arena, i.e. corporations and/or industrial sectors, seem to be a suited object of research as political conflicts connected to economic power of multi-national corporations go beyond the nation-state because here political spaces are no longer congruent to economic spaces. Compared to national governments and international organisations multi-national corporations have gained in power in times of proceeding economic globalisation in the context of neoliberal reformist politics. To the degree to



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that the political migrates to the 'subpolitical sphere' (Beck) of entrepreneurial decisions, political protest is addressing increasingly less national policy makers but single corporations or whole industrial sectors. According to Beck, corporations have not only gained in power but have become also vulnerable and victims of their own marketing strategies (Beck 2002). As corporate public relations and product advertising communicated via mass media form conditions for the distribution of product and corporate images, the transformation in a multimedia society, and in particular the introduction, establishment and area-wide acceptance of the internet, opens up the technical possibility of the transformation of political protest in favour of consumer campaigns. The transformation of the political in terms of an increasing blurring of the dividing line between political and private action coincides with an increasing digitalisation of public communication. Following Scammell, the digital technology ,... is re-writing the rules of the marketplace" (Scammell 2000: 355). With reference to Kotler Scammell points to the fact that with the introduction of the net the basis of information of consumer decisions was improved immensely. Consequently, because of facing growing competitive pressure while product qualities are hardly changing, cultural factors of reputation of corporations become more important. Apart from these structural factors, the politicisation of consumption (Lamla 2006) is also due to micro-social factors related to changing individual identity-formation (Baringhorst 2006). The cultural coding of protest adapts to the changing technical possibilities and to individual life-worlds: ideological differences among protest actors are compensated by the simple focussing on single corporations and by 'branding' strategies of protest messages. In a playful manner protest actors parody advertising images in order to condense complex lines of arguments symbolically. Hence, the new communication technology of the internet and possibly also other digital media correlates not only with new forms of social interaction such as the loose interconnectedness of 'citizenconsumers' but also with new communication formats, e.g. culture jamming⁶ (see also examples below):

"The rebirth of culture jamming has much to do with newly accessible technologies that have made both the creation and the circulation of ad parodies immeasurably easier. The Internet may be boged down with brave new forms of branding, as we have seen, but it is also crawling with sites that offer links to culture

⁶ According to Klein Culture Jamming can be defined as "...the practice of parodying advertisements and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their messages." (Klein 1999: 280)



jammers in cities across North America and Europe, ad parodies for instant downloading and digital versions of orginal ads, which can be imported directly onto personal desktops or jammed on site." (Klein 1999: 285)



Figure 1: Campaign 'Stop Esso'

Source: http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/climate/climatecriminals/esso/funstuff.cfm [03/04/2007]





Figure 2: Campaigns 'Lidl ist nicht zu billigen' and 'deportation class'

Sources: http://www.attac.de/lidl-kampagne/?id=107 [03/04/2007] and http://www.libertad.de/inhalt/projekte/depclass/verfahren/index.shtml [03/04/2007]



For the German speaking countries a research desideratum of Anti-Corporate Campaigns can be stated. Whereas in US-American and British research within communication studies (see Bennett et al. 2004; Bennett 2003; Manheim 2001; Rosenkrands 2004; Scammell 2000), in Scandinavian political science (Micheletti et al. 2004; Micheletti 2004; Follesdal 2004; Tobiasen 2004) and British sociology (Crossley 2002) the creative media strategies of Anti-Sweatshop-Camapaigns and other corporation critical action in the context of the Global-Social-Justice-Movement were objects of research, no investigations concerning neither the political significance nor the significance of the media for the mobilising for Anti-Corporate Campaigns were carried out. Also, existing empirical analysis of transnational Anti-Corporate Campaigns focuses on campaigns targeting well-known brands like Nike (Peretti 2004) and Microsoft (Bennett et al. 2004), focuses further on the Just-Clothes-Movement (Micheletti 2004) and on labor based Anti-Corporate Campaigns (Manheim 2001). Consequently, one finds a programmatic focus on two corporations or in the case of the Just-Clothes-Movement a focus on two industrial sectors (the garment- and sport goods industries). In contrast, the research project at the University of Siegen pursuits a comparative and transdisciplinary approach and focuses on campaigns with emphasis on German speaking countries as only the geographical and thematic enlargement can offer an empirical basis for deduction of universally valid conclusions concerning the effects of digital communication on changing protest networks and cultures, and connected to the latter on the possible creation of new forms of public spheres by civil society actors.

Research questions & Methodology

In order to shed some light on the potential contribution of the internet to new modes of political participation and to the formation of a transnational public sphere based on the notion of public of publics (Bohman)⁸, it is necessary to develop a holistic approach to campaign analysis: we do not only look at campaign presentations on the net but also at to campaigns as complex social practices for democratic civil society organisations, technologies, and public spheres have to be

⁷ For an overview of Anti-Corporate Campaigns see Melanie B. Oliviero and Adele Simmons (2002; 2003) as well as Vogel (2004).

⁸ Bohman (2004) sees the Internet as a public of publics which "... permits a decentred public sphere with many levels. Disaggregated networks must always be embedded in some other set of social institutions rather than an assumed unified public sphere." (ibid: 50)



perceived as interdependent. Taking a general account on transnational campaigns Lahusen (1996) identifies the following social functions of transnational campaigning:

- Development of organised action programmes which are based on the strategic planning of interaction processes between the involved actors of conflict and on the coordination of collective actions;
- Focus on certain topics or issues;
- Generation of public attention and public pressure, as a rule through moral charging of the topics and issues and through media adjusted, aesthetic forms of protest;
- Set up and stabilization of networks, and stabilization of the own organisation through resource mobilization, offers of political participation, and mobilisation of collective identity and sense of community respectively;
- Coordination and linking-up of different spatial levels of action, in particular through integration of local, regional, national and in the case of transnational campaigns also transnational actors and arenas;
- Cooperation with actors in various societal subsystems such as mass media, politics, economics, or science.

Reducing these tasks to four crucial sociotechnical campaign practices we analyse the impact of digital technologies on Anti Corporate Campaigns by asking following research questions:

• Framing of issues and development of action plans: To what extend and how do protest actors refer to generalized norms to sustain and legitimate their claims? How do they construct frame bridges to claims of different collective actors? What kind of Internet-based tools are employed for the formulation of strategic framing? To what extent are users/individual campaign supporters invited to contribute to issue framing and action planning?



- Generating public attention and mobilisation of public pressure: How does the Internet change the process of generating public attention and pressure? What are the specific netbased tools that campaign actors employ? Do, and if yes, how do campaign websites contribute to the mobilization of protest action and to the process of 'reintermediarization' of the public sphere? To what extent is the Internet used to foster conflict dynamics in the public sphere?
- *Identity-Formation and participative involvement of supporters:* How do campaigns set up and stabilize their internal networks? What impact does the net have on resource mobilisation, political participation, mobilisation of collective identity, and sense of community? How are campaign websites and other netbased communicative means used to achieve a sense of community among campaign supporters? To what extent do expressive, aesthetic dimensions play a role on the net? (e.g. culture jamming)
- Vertical (spatial) integration and horizontal (different social sectors) integration of networks: Does the use of the Internet affect organisational structures of campaign actors? How do campaigns manage the coordination and linking-up of different spatial levels of action? What role does the Internet play for the integration of transnational action networks? (transnationalism). How broad and inclusive are campaign networks in terms of different social interest groups (churches, unions, consumer groups, development NGOs etc.)? What are the dominant types of collective actors as well as the dominant types of action networks? How is the Internet used for stabilising these networks?

In a previous step we tried to establish a contrast slide to digitalised campaigns by looking backwards to major Anti-Corporate Campaigns in the past. By mainly a secondary data analysis of the "Anti-Springer-Kampagne" and the "Brent-Spar-Campaign" we distinguished relevant features of anti-corporate protest campaigning in the contexts of the spread of public television in the 1960s and privatised television in the 1990s. (see Baringhorst/Kneip/Niesyto forthcoming a.) Parallel to this a quantitative research was carried out in order to generate a sample of Anti-Corporate Campaigns addressing German speaking audiences in the period from 1995 to 2005. Campaigns added to the sample had to fulfil the following criteria: Reference to corporations



and/or industries; involvement of German speaking civil society actors and/or addressing the German-speaking public; transnational orientation concerning the actors/organisations, addressees and/or discourses; and (also) taking place within the period 1995 to 2005. The search was carried out with the help of the search engine 'Google', websites of civil society actors (e.g. http://www.germanwatch.de), movement orientated online media (e.g. http://www.ngo-online.de) and archives of the supra-regional daily newspapers 'die tageszeitung', 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' and 'Süddeutsche Zeitung' 10. Also, the snow-ball-method was applied, i.e. other campaigns the found campaigns referred to were added to the sample when fulfilling the selection criteria. Afterwards the 109 identified campaigns¹¹ were systematized along the following categories: Timeframe, thematic focus (human rights, peace, labour rights, fair trade, environmental protection, animal rights, food/health, and freedom of media), coverage by campaign organisation (national, transnational), initiator/supporting organisation (member belonging NGO, member supported NGO, single persons, trade union, churches/religious organisation, grassroots organisation, network organisation, network), addressees (corporation, industrial sector, political institution), goals (public attention, corporate policy, legal regulation, human rights, democratisation, fair trade), discourse strategy (humanitarian/universalistic, Christian/religious, anti-capitalistic, ecological, legal/political, anti-racist, anti-imperialistic, antimonopolistic, referring to animal rights), media use (print, audio-visual, audio, Internet, emblems), on- and offline offers of participation (information, donation, membership, signature, protest letter, boycott, buycott, demonstration/action), way of linking up (online and offline, campaigns, actors intern, actors extern), and hyperlinks (Internet presentations of the campaigns). The classification into the above stated categories was done with an explanation in a free-textfield. The obtained information was coded and entered in SPSS. When referring in the following to results of the complete inventory this rough analysis is meant which can be used for a first tentative assessment to Anti-Corporate Campaigns in German speaking countries.

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⁹ Here, the following key words were entered in German and English: 'boycott', 'protest + corporation', 'protest + NGO/non-governmental organisation', 'protest + social movement', 'campaign + corporation', 'campaign + protest', 'campaign + NGO/non-governmental organisation', 'campaign + social movement'.

¹⁰ Amongst other things, the search was carried out in order to collect campaigns in the timeframe 1995 to 2000 as within this timeframe the internet search showed not many results. All in all in many cases it was not possible to get information about the starting and end points of the campaigns through the accessible published information.

¹¹ See appendix 1 for the complete list of campaigns.



Altogether the project will analyse ten transnational Anti-Corporate in-depth in order to answer the above mentioned qualitative research questions. The selection of these ten campaigns is based on their success measured in terms of the media resonance, they evoked. For this purpose a media response analysis was carried out. The archives of the supra-regional daily newspapers 'die tageszeitung', 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' and 'Süddeutsche Zeitung', and online results in Google-News and Paperball, and as far as available the press review provided on campaign website were used for the search. In a further step the following campaigns were selected with different thematic foci and high media response¹²:

- Bananenkampagne fair trade/ two media responses¹³
- Clean Clothes Campaign/Kampagne für saubere Kleidung labour rights (also: human rights)/ 13 media responses
- Deportation Class human rights/ 23 media responses
- Gendreck weg food/health (also: fair trade)/ 13 media responses
- International Campaign to ban landmines/Aktionsbündnis Landmine peace/ 18 media responses
- Lidl ist nicht zu billigen (pilot case) labour rights (also: fair trade)/ 29 media responses
- Nikeground freedom of media (public space respectively)/ 33 media responses
- Pelzinfo/Lieber nackt als Pelz tragen animal rights/ 12 media responses
- Stop Esso environmental protection/ seven media responses
- Ver.di Lidl-Kampagne (pilot case) labour rights/ eight media responses

In order to carry out the microscopic in-depth-analysis of thick case studies the project uses a mixture of methods whereas qualitative-interpretative methods dominate. In a first step and using

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¹² The average of media response is four responses per campaign. As campaigns with high media response campaigns are regarded with media response above this average. The two campaigns targeting at Lidl were selected as pilot cases whereas the other campaigns represent one thematic focus each.

¹³ This campaign was included in order to have a comparative case which did not receive high media response.



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framing and content analysis campaign artefacts such as flyers and the campaign website including all downloads are analysed. Also, with help of the issue crawler¹⁴ the hyperlink structures to other websites are explored (online network analysis). In a second step, on the one hand semi-structured expert interviews with the national and local organisers of the campaign and an online-questionnaire with the mobilized actors are conducted. On the other hand, a semi-structured interview with a representative of the targeted corporation is carried out. The interviews serve as a backup for the empirical results gained through framing and content analysis and/or serve a corrective function. In addition, analysis of online and offline media in German, Swiss, and Austrian media is made in order to gain insights about the media response and media framing of the campaign. At the moment the in-depth-analysis' of the pilot cases 'Lidl ist nicht zu billigen' and 'Ver.di Lidl-Kampagne' are all but completed.¹⁵

Preliminary results

At the first place it is necessary to look who is campaigning on the net in order to answer the question if and how the use of the Internet does affect the own organisation. The overall analysis shows that non-governmental organisations form the biggest group with 32 percent, followed by networks (30 percent) and network organisations (27 percent). With fewer than six percent each trade unions, grassroots organisations and single persons form the smallest groups. So in explicit terms protest networks (57 percent) dominate and constitute the dominant form of collective action in Anti-Corporate Campaigns (see also Niesyto 2007). The network shape of Anti-Corporate Campaigns is also reflected in the following result: In almost a third of all campaigns actors from old and new social movements are involved. Altogether new social actors are present in 95 of the 109 campaigns whereas old social movements actors are involved in only 38 per cent of the campaigns. Hence, it can be said that old social movement actors participate in Anti-Corporate Campaigns almost exclusively in cooperation with new social

¹⁴ The issue crawler is a tool of online network analysis and visualisation provided by the Govcom.org Foundation, Amsterdam, and its collaborators. For the software tool see http://www.issuecrawler.net/ [03/04/2007] and for information see http://www.govcom.org/scenarios_use.html [03/04/2007].

¹⁵ Only the analysis of the media response is outstanding.

¹⁶ Churches or religious organisations respectively do not run Anti-Corporate campaigns by their own, as only they take part in network-shaped Anti-Corporate campaigns.

¹⁷ Churches and trade unions were coded as old movement actors whereas NGOs showing implicitly or explicitly links to identity politics such as the environmental NGOs were coded as new social movements.



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movement actors. This finding corresponds to a general trend of organized and structured action of civil society actors towards networks and other types of relational and fluid organisational forms (Anheier and Themudo 2002). Here the question comes into foreground if the needs and attributes related to network structure fit to the technical opportunity structure of the Internet and vice versa. The assumption that media use correlates with the type of organisation was proved empirically by Pickerill (2001). She analysed the use of computer-mediated communication in British civil society organisations concerned with environmental protection. So far our in-depth-analysis gave also evidence of the interdependence between the self-understanding of campaign organisations and their use of the Internet. For instance, the website of the campaign 'Lidl ist nicht zu billigen' can be rather described as orientated towards mobilisation as various offers of participation are made. This reflects the "democratic imperative" formulated by Attac itself: "Societal changes can only be reached democratic, i.e. through the participation of many people. Also the action forms of Attac are orientated towards this democratic imperative." (http://www.attac.de/interna/selbstverstaendnis011101.pdf [03/04/07, translated by JN].

Looking at campaign frames and mobilisation strategies the rough analysis of the over-all inventory shows that targeting a single corporation does not form the major case. Circa half of the campaigns do also address industrial sectors and political institutions (34 percent) or also political institutions (21 percent). Only twenty-two campaigns target a single corporation; but most of the campaigns also address political institutions. This finding indicates that from the perspective of the civil society actors institutional politics still have significance and/or competence and/or responsibility in the realm of collective problems connected to the market sphere. In terms of legitimating claims with reference to generalized norms about one fifth of all campaigns are dealing with each labour rights, human rights and environmental protection. Peace and food/health form with eleven percent each the next bigger group. In total, human rights

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¹⁸ This is also reflected in the category ,discourses' and 'goals'. Here, 51 percent refer to legal-political discourses. This might indicate that protest actors tend to base their argumentation on legal references, e.g. references to national legislation or international agreements, in order to underline the rightness of their claims. Further, this might be another indication that despite societal self-organisation legislation is still seen as crucial. Also, in the category 'goals' the high significance of legislation is visible. The change, compliance with or creation of legal regulations is demanded in 60 of the 109 campaigns. But at the same time, mostly the goal 'public attention' and 'change of corporate policy' is mentioned.



are the key issue of one quarter of all campaigns.¹⁹ The comparison of the key issues with the distribution of issues points to the function of human rights, labour rights and environmental protection as 'frame-bridges' and to environmental protection as 'minor frame'. On the other hand more than half of the campaigns have a single-issue orientation. The following table shows the distribution of issues by old and new social movement actors:

Old social movement actors		New social movement actors	
1.	labour rights: 56,1%	1.	environmental protection: 36,8%
2.	human rights: 34,1%	2.	human rights: 33,7%
3.	peace: 22,0%	3.	labour rights: 32,6%
4.	environmental protection: 19,5%	4.	food/health: 18,9%
5.	fair trade: 7,3%	5.	peace: 15,8%
6.	food/health: 4,9%	6.	fair trade: 11,6%
		7.	freedom of media: 6,3%
		8.	animal protection: 8,4%

This comparison indicates that Anti-Corporate Campaigns of new social movements cover a broader range of issues as Anti-Corporate Campaigns of old social movements. While only five percent of old movements' campaigns are broaching the issues of food/health, almost 19 percent if new social movements' campaigns are dealing with it. This finding supports the hypothesis that new social movements are dealing with issues concerned with lifestyle in particular. Drawing on our first two pilot cases we find that both campaigns targeting Lidl try to mobilise consumers.

14

¹⁹ This is also reflected in the campaigns' discourses. In more than half of the campaigns one can find humanitarian-universalistic discourses (58 percent).



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While the campaign launched by the trade union ver.di addresses consumers rather subordinately (e.g. through so called clients' weeks)²⁰ the Attac campaign focuses on the mobilization of consumers as main actors of societal change. The Attac campaign targets at Lidl in order to exemplify criticised complex interrelations of globalisation. Dumping policies of discounters lead to the decrease of social welfare forms the campaign's message. (http://www.attac.de/lidl-kampagne/content/campaign/internat/dt/vorstellung_lidl-kampagne_komplett_(od).doc [03/04/07) Consequently, 'citizen-consumers' are asked to raise their voice:

"Consumers are not a flock which can not leave a direction once taken. Critical consumers are using their minds also while purchasing. They are asking the persons in charge questions concering the produte's history and demand both an explanation and the compliance with human rights and environmental protection." (http://www.attac.de/lidl-kampagne/content/reader/2 argumentation.rtf [03/04/07]; translated by JN)

Within the ver.di campaign consumers were asked to distribute postcards (see picture below) to the Lidl workers which were meant to encourage them to stand up for their workers' rights.

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²⁰ In the first place the ver.di-campaign aims at mobilising Lidl-workers through claiming humane working conditions. Recruiting new member for the union at the establishment of workers' councils can be said to be the major goals of the campaign.



Im April/Mai 2004 haben die Beschäftigten in zwei süddeutschen Lidl-Filialen Betriebsräte gewählt. Diese Betriebsräte haben gemeinsam mit den Beschäftigten und der Gewerkschaft ver.di schon viel erreicht. Die Arbeits- und Lebensbedingungen wurden deutlich verbessert:





Personalsituation

- * Viel zu wenig Beschäftigte.
- Personalausstattung hat sich durch zusätzliche Neueinstellungen verbessert.

Ladenöffnungszeiten

- Ausdehnung der Ladenöffnungszeiten am Samstag auf 20 Uhr.
- Samstags nur bis 18 Uhr geöffnet.

Testkäufe

Früher und heute

- Permanente Testkäufe mit anschlie-Benden Abmahnungen und Druck auf die Beschäftigten.
- Keine anonymen Testkäufe mehr, kein Druck auf die Beschäftigten.

Leistungsvorgaben beim Kassieren

- Mindestens 40-45 Artikel pro Minute scannen, ansonsten Abmahnungen, Kündigungen, etc..
- Kein Druck durch Leistungsvorgaben mehr.

Reinigungsarbeiten

- Verkaufspersonal ist f
 ür die Sauberhaltung des Parkplatzes und der Fenster verantwortlich.
- Für die Sauberhaltung des Parkplatzes und der Fenster wurden zusätzliche Beschäftigte eingestellt. Das Verkaufspersonal ist nicht mehr dafür verantwortlich.

Figure 3: Material of the so called clients' week

Source: http://lidl.verdi.de/aktionen/material kundenwoche/data/flugblatt betriebsraete [02/02/2007]



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Both campaigns play with culture jamming elements, thereby Attac plays stronger with corporate design of Lidl as the campaign website adopts the corporation's colours and offers also download possibilities of adbustings while ver.di adopts its website to the corporate design of the trade union and introduces playful elements such as cartoons in the print publication 'Schwarzmarkt'. Hence in both campaigns strategies of 'life-style' politics (Bennett) are pursuit to different degrees.

Differences are also obvious related to the participatory structure of the planning of campaigns. While in the case of Attac the campaign was initiated by Attac members according to Kay Schulze²¹, the Lidl campaign was set up by union officials according to Agnes Schreieder²². Correspondingly the Attac campaign defines itself as a decentralized campaign whereas strategic planning and implementation of the ver.di campaign lies in the hands of the campaign's leadership. But local groups are able to organise actions autonomously and also influence on the central planning is possible but complicated by the hierarchical structures of the trade union. Drawing on the online questionnaire²³ in both cases E-mail and mailinglists are the preferred media for coordination and organisation of action but for discussions concerning contents members of ver.di prefer face-to-face communication whereas Attac members also use internet applications. In the case of Attac also more than 20 percent of the responders stated to have contact with more than 90 percent of other comrade-in-arms exclusively via Internet. To sum up, also concerning questions of exchange about the campaign's orientation the Internet is used to a different extent.

Moving on to the question of strategies aiming at the generation of public attention in both pilot cases adaptations to selection criteria of mass media can be detected. For example both campaigns name mass media coverage as relevant for their success and aim at it through press releases. At the same time Attac uses the campaign website at first place to create an alternative

²¹ Kay Schulze worked in the coordination team of the campaign. The interview was held October 11, 2006.

²² Agnes Schreieder is considered to be the person of charge for the Lidl campaign within ver.di. The interview was held October 23, 2006.

²³ The link to the ver.di-questionnaire was sent to about 250 subscribers of the campaign mailinglist of ver.di. The results refer to the response of 38 completed questionnaires. The link to the Attac-questionnaire was sent to about 700 members of subscribers of the campaign mailinglist of Attac. The results refer to the response of 76 completed questionnaires.



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public sphere through the provision of background information and the bundling representation of collective action. In the case of the ver.di campaign the offline print publication 'Schwarzmarkt' is used next to the website to create an autonomous public sphere. Furthermore, the ver.di campaign provides a weblog and therewith a platform for dialogue between organizers, mobilized supporters and Lidl workers. In both cases the website can be seen as a tool of reintermediazation as the coordination and organisation teams bundle various actions and communication in order to present a collective voice. The function of collective protest actors as reintermediaries of communication among spatially and socially dispersed internet users and campaign supporters however does not mean that these collective actors thereby become independent of traditional intermediaries and media gate keepers. Both campaign websites make extensive use of creating a connectivity between online and offline public spaces. Most of all this is realised through the publishing of media coverage on campaign websites. By connecting their own web spaces to mass media public spheres the capacity of reintermediazation is partly restricted because other actors – like most of all journalists – serve the intermediazation function for broader publics.

Conflict dynamics in the public sphere are very different in the two cases. The Attac campaign pursuits a consensual strategy orientated towards dialogue as talks between Lidl and the campaign network took place in December 2005, but claims made by Attac referring to the master frame of global social rights have not been taken in consideration. The corporation focused on consumer orientated demands and introduced bio and fair trade products in its range of goods. Also, Lidl staffed a press officer and started various PR campaigns. In this context Attac modified further their claims, e.g. unfair trading conditions versus high product quality. In the case of the ver.di campaign one can identify a rather confrontational strategy as protest actors and the corporation did not meet. The campaign's demands have been answered by corporative strategies such as changing the company's organisational structure by introducing a member of staff responsible for social matters. Further, Lidl reacted with shutting downs of chain stores. The corporation refers to the protesters' claims as unsubstantial. Similar to Attac ver.di replies to the introduction of a press officer by claim modification such as unfair working conditions versus new offers of training possibilities. To what extent the conflict dynamics have been speeded up



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through the internet is hard to assess although on the websites of the civil society organisation the course of conflict was well documented. Interestingly, Greenpeace, as a major third civil society actor involved, seems to have benefited from both lines of campaign conflict more than Attac or Ver.di as on the one side Greenpeace gained mass media attention by publishing survey of pesticide residues in fruit and vegetables wherein Lidl came off the worst among leading supermarket chains, and on the other side the press officer of Lidl described in the interview²⁴ Greenpeace next to foodwatch as major civil society's stakeholder groups of the corporation. Also, since summer 2006 the Greenpeace magazine has been distributed by Lidl's retail shops.

All in all the analysis of the complete inventory shows that various offers of participation are made on the campaign websites while at the same time only little online interaction is made possible. Interaction usually means download of or requests for online or offline information. Apart from that websites offer transaction tools for offline donation and membership. This finding already suggests that offers of offline participation still rate high despite the potential of the Internet for a huge variety of forms of cyberactivism. In line with the latter stands the result that merely eleven percent of all campaigns has online actions/demonstrations in their repertoire whereas nearly all campaigns do call for offline actions/demonstration. Furthermore, only 24 of the 109 campaigns provide chats and/or forums whereat most of these interactive applications do not function. These findings indicate together with the fact that none of the campaigns is purely virtual that the Internet is mostly used as an additional campaigning tool. This stands in a line with the findings of Kavada: "What the [...] analysis showed very clearly is that the Internet is more used as an extension of the offline media rather than as autonomous medium with its own strategies and techniques." (Kavada 2005: 218) This finding is supported by the case studies as the campaign websites served in both cases as a mobilization tool by calling online for participation in offline actions. Though the Attac campaign offered also online participation by providing for instance a so called 'Mailomat' which could be used for sending protest emails to Lidl and ver.di provided the already mentioned weblog. Therefore, sense of community belonging is first and foremost achieved through meetings in the physical space. In the case of Attac, these meetings are rather gatherings of small groups; the website constructs a virtual

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²⁴ The interview was held December 14, 2006.



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community by bundling and connecting the storytellings and pictures of the participants. Contrary, collective identity on the ver.di website is rather constructed on a cognitive level by referring to terms of solidarity and universalistic values.

Referring to the integration of different spatial levels of networks, the frame analysis shows that on the discursive level all of the campaigns of the complete inventory refer to transnational dimension as this constituted one of the selection criteria. The biggest group form campaigns which operate mainly on the national level and refer to the transnational dimension in their communication (62 percent). In this group 41 percent present a multi-lingual website; in the group of campaigns which also operate on the transnational level 71 percent present a multilingual website. Drawing on the pilot case studies it becomes obvious that the the ver.di campaign benefits from the infrastructure provided by the transnational Union Network. While Attac calls for European action on its website ver.di manages indeed to implement international days of actions through the cooperation with foreign trade unions. In the sense of relational diffusion processes the European Social Forum and the Union Network play crucial roles. Also, ver.di calls via its website for foreign Lidl workers to send e-mails telling their experiences with the scandalised company. Non-relational diffusion processed are set up through the publishing of the European Blackbook on Lidl and through the setting of hyperlinks to similar campaigns (e.g. wakeupwalmart in the US). Also the Attac campaign links to similar campaigns in the US and in Europe which are dealing with issues of discounter politics. In the interviews both Kay Schulze and Agnes Schreieder, the campaigns' leaders, consider languages competences as barriers for transnational collective action. Looking at the national campaign networks both campaigns cooperate strategically with various civil society actors. Attac has also set up a 'cooperation mailing list'. Investigating the hyperlink structures of the campaigns shows that within the virtual campaign networks both organisations take a central role measured by in-going-links (see appendix 2). In contrast the out-going links might reflect different self-images as Attac (inclusive self-image) links more than twice to other websites as ver.di (exclusive self-image). All in all the virtual map shows that not only members of the campaign networks but also websites/actors concerned with similar issues are captured. This corresponds with the findings of the complete inventory: Many campaigns (87) link to other actors. The comparison by type of organisations



shows that all kind of actors show a high degree of networking. Similarly, Rosenkrands states for Anti-Corporate-Websites: "Generally the number of links is quite impressive." (Rosenkrands 2004: 74) In this context the in-depth-analysis will have to prove if the online ties can be considered as strong or weak ties. Research points to rather weak ties. Cammaerts und Audenhove (2003) show in their cases studies of the Association for Progressive Communications, Labourstart, attac and indymedia that all of them do network on the virtual level but the networking itself varies from strong to weak. Also, the first overall picture of Anti-Corporate Campaigns in German speaking countries shows that many campaigns (73) are linked to other campaigns. The comparison by organisation type shows that campaigns run by networks and network organisation are less linked to other campaigns as other organisation types. In this context the suggestion can be made that these campaigns already possess on the level of actors a high degree of networking and are therefore less linked to others on the level of campaigns.

Based on these first empirical findings the research team has tried to structure the use of Internet based tools related to main social practices of campaigns (see table below).

	Production	Co-Production	Online-Links	Online-Offline-Links
Framing	 Digital background information such as surveys databases (audio-)visual material such as films and audio files newsletter 	 story telling by users feedback applications such as set forms of e-mails 	 links to external expert information links to corporate websites 	 publication of campaigns' autonomous alternative media in online and offline spaces references to mass media coverage on the campaign website
Involving	 distribution of campaign's elements such as banner, screensaver distribution of alienated brands of corporation(s) under attac (adbusting) use of other creative, playful 	 publication of users' contributions to the development of campaign's elements or culture jamming on the website creation of tools of 	 links between different national subcampaigns links to other campaigns of civil society organisation initiating the campaign links within an overall 	documentation of offline-action on the net



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	Production	Co-Production	Online-Links	Online-Offline-Links
	elements such as online-games tools of personalization such as photo galleries	personalization by the users	(transnational) campaign network	
Integrating, networking	 provision of material for individual distribution such as buttons and pictures provision of tools fort he information of third parties about the campaign fora, chats, weblogs 	distribution of campaign's elements by users information of third parties about the campaign fora, chats, weblogs	 links between different national subcampaigns links to other campaigns of civil society organisation initiating the campaign links within an overall (transnational) campaign network links to other campaigns/act ors dealing with same issues links to heterogeneous actors 	documentation of offline-action on the net publication of contact data and meeting places on the net
Mobilizing	 multi-lingual campaign websites online-donation online-signature online-protest letter virtual protest actions 	 use of online-signature, online-protest letter or virtual protest actions publication of self-contained ideas of action on the website managing of the digital information flow by the users 	links to online protests of other actors	 publication of calls for boy- or buycotts publication of dates of offline-meetings/actions on the net provision of material for offline-actions on the as regards content preparations of offline-action on the net



Some tentative conclusions

The analysed AntiCorporate Campaigns seem to contribute to a multidimensional transformation of public spheres:

- In term of an enrichment of the repertoire of so called unconventional forms of
 political participation (Kaase) and a realignment of the dividing line between private
 and public actions. Appealing to the citizens as netizens consumer creates new options
 for a politicisation of the sphere market related activities.
- 2. In terms of a denationalisation of public spheres and the formation of a transnational public of publics.
- 3. In terms of a digitalisation of public communication.

The contribution of Internet technologies on the transformation of public spheres in the context of Anti-Corporate Campaigns is analysed with regard to its impact on four major social practices. First results show a rather complex and diverse picture:

- Framing: the major role of the Internet in this context is to provide a plethora of information. The analysed campaign websites offer a variety of information from mission statements to background information. However, only limited options of users to take part in process of framing and action planning are offered. Apart from that offers of interaction in terms of coproduction of information and participation on action planning vary among different actor self-understandings.
- Generating public attention and mobilising public pressure: campaign websites serve as significant intermediaries of public communication among denationalised publics. However, this does not mean that campaign publics are autonomous publics. The public attention they try to generate still mostly refers to mass media attention. Thus they are still dependent on the intermediazation of journalists as major gate keepers. Apart from that, campaign websites offer a plethora of online tools such as campaign kits for mobilisation of collective action which is most of all performed in the offline world. However, the potential of the net as a



strategic weapon for forms of cyberactivism is rarely used, and if it is used it is only done so in a very standardised mode of electronic protest mails or mailomats. Regarding the structure of conflict we find consensus as well as more confrontational conflict strategies.

- *Identity Formation*: culture jamming is the most prominent protest art of Anti-Corporate Campaigns. The analysed campaigns make various use of this aesthetic action repertoire by deconstructing corporate symbols. The internet plays a major function of providing communicative spaces for the collective creation of adbusting and other acts of culture jamming. Apart from that, photo galleries serve an important function in the process of online identity formation.
- Networking: The internet offers new chances for the social integration of complex action
 networks that is complex in terms of integrating different spatial levels of action as well as of
 integrating collective actors from diverse social interest groups. Anti-Corporate Campaigns
 are illustrative examples of integrating collective actors from old and new social movements
 and a broad range of social interest groups. The inclusivity and exclusivity of hyperlink
 networks is closely related to the type of collective actor involved.

Coming back to the initial theoretical question of whether Anti-Corporate Campaigns contribute to the construction of a transnational public sphere understood as a transnational public of publics, the first research results confirm the assumption that online communication strategies of Anti-Corporate Campaigns can contribute to a denationalisation of public spheres. They create communicative spaces for a critical debate on the violation of norms of global justice through scandalised corporate practices and appeal to a global social responsibility of internet users addressed as citizen consumers. Counterarguments mainly refer to firstly a fragmentation of public spaces in online communication, secondly to the irrationality of campaign communication in terms of moralisation and dramatising of discourse and thirdly to the dominance of strategic thinking over authentic subjective self-expressions in campaign communication. While these arguments are valid to a certain extent, they ignore firstly the fact, that transnational communication transcends the homogenous notion of national public spheres and thus allows for a higher degree of heterogeneity of communicative spaces and agendas. Network analysis as well



as the analysis of offline-online relations of campaign communication show varying degrees of "Anschlusskommunikation" between different campaigns as well as between the communicative spaces that campaigns generate and the public spaces created by traditional mass media. Secondly, moralisation and expressive communication are not per se detrimental to the formation of transnational public spheres, as long as they do not close the opportunity for critical debate and self reflection among collective actors. Thirdly, as for instance the weblog of ver.di-campaign shows, online protest campaigns can open up spaces for authentic and symmetrical communication among netizens. However, these options are far less made use of as the technicality of the net allows for.

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Appendix

1 List of campaigns by name in alphabetical order (complete inventory)

1	ous control lt
1.	.ausgestrahlt
2.	Achtung! Elch im Tropenwald
3.	AEG
4.	AG Erdölprojekt Tschad/Kamerun
5.	Aktionsbündnis gegen Aids (Leben ist ein Menschenrecht)
6.	Amerika-Boykott
7.	Anti-Pelz-Kampagne
8.	Arbeitnehmerrechte statt Maximalprofit
9.	Bananen-Kampagne
10.	
11.	Α
12.	1 0
13.	
14.	Boycott made in China
15.	Boykott den Kriegstreibern!
16.	Boykott der Musikindustrie
17.	BUKO Pharma-Kampagne
18.	Burgerbewegung
19.	Burma Campaign
20.	1 &
21.	Burma Campaign/Burma.initiative
22.	Butterfinger-Kampagne
23.	Campaign against Nuclear Testing
24.	Check your oil - save your forests
25.	Clean Clothes Campaign
26.	Clean Clothes Campaign/Saubere Kleidung
27.	Coca-Cola-Kampagne Kolumbien
28.	Coca Cola-Kolumbien (Berlin)
29.	Consumers against war
30.	Continental-Euzkadi
31.	Control arms /Waffen unter Kontrolle
32.	Courage to Refuse
33.	Daimler-Minen stoppen!
34.	Das Reiskorn im Schafspelz
35.	Deportation.Class-Kampagne; kein mensch ist illegal
36.	Deutsches Aktionsnetz Kleinwaffen Stoppen (DAKS)
37.	Die Klimakiller ausbremsen!
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38.	e off
39.	Entrüstet Daimler
40.	fair spielt
41.	Fatal Transactions. International Diamond Campaign
42.	Finden Sie das schwarze Schaf
43.	Flags of Convenience campaign
44.	Für soziale Mindeststandards bei der Drogeriekette-Schlecker
45.	Gendreck weg! - Freiwillige Feldbefreiung
46.	Gift im Essen
47.	Goldkampagne: Menschenrechte sind kostbarer als Gold
48.	Initiative Gentechfrei
49.	International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)
50.	International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)
51.	International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)/Aktionsbündnis
52.	Jobkiller Electrolux - Ich kaufe nix
53.	Kampagne gegen Gen-Reis
54.	Kampagne gegen GenFood
55.	Kampagne gegen Kinderarbeit
56.	Kampagne gegen Menschenversuche mit Pestiziden
57.	Kampagne gegen Zulassung von Diuron
58.	Keine Gartenmöbel aus Tropenholz
59.	Kentucky Fried Cruelty - We Do Chickens Wrong/ Kentucky
60.	Klimasünder ausbremsen
61.	Kriegsdividende? Nein!
62.	Lebensmittel sind mehr wert - faire Verhandlungen und faire
63.	Lidl-Kampagne
64.	Lidl ist nicht zu BILLIGen!
65.	Lieber nackt als Pelz tragen
66.	Made by Kinderhand - München gegen ausbeuterische
67.	Made in China. Billig! Und hergestellt ohne die Beachtung von
68.	Make Trade Fair
69.	McLibel Support Campaign (MSC)
70.	Menschenrechts-Charta
71.	Menschlich handeln im China-Geschäft
72.	Mit "Tempo" in die Armut
73.	Müll-Milch.de
74.	Muslim-Boykott
75.	NescaFAIR statt Nescafé
76.	Nestlé Boycott
77.	nikeground.com - rethinking space
78.	No dirty gold
79.	No war on Iraq
80.	Offensive gegen die Pelzindustrie



http://www.protest-cultures.uni-siegen.de http://www.fk615.uni-siegen.de/de/teilprojekt.php?projekt=A6

81.	Ohne Rüstung Leben e.V. (ORL)
82.	Ölkrieg in Nigeria
83.	Pestizide Peru
84.	Play fair at Olympics Campaign
85.	PowerSwitch!)/PowerSwitch! Umschalten auf saubere Energien
86.	Produzieren für das Leben - Rüstungsexporte stoppen
87.	Protest gegen die Abtreibungspille Mifegyne®
88.	Raus aus dem Kriegsgebiet!
89.	RUGMARK
90.	Ryan be fair
91.	Save the Kangaroo Kampagne
92.	Save the Sheep/ Das Elend der Schafe
93.	Schluss mit dem Gen-Mais-Anbau bei Campina!
94.	Siemens-Boykott Kampagne
95.	Social Standards for Global Players!
96.	Stop Killer Coke
97.	StopEsso
98.	Stoppt den Terror der Multis! Kampagne für Menschenrechte
99.	Stoppt die Biopiraten!
100.	Stromwechsel jetzt!
101.	Südafrika: Trinkwasser retten!
102.	Taiwan
103.	The invisible colours of Benetton Campaign
·	The Microsoft Boycott Campaign (MSBC)
	Toywar
	Umweltzerstörung auf Kredit
	Urgewald Kampagne für den Regenwald; subcampaign: Banken
·	Urgewald Kampagne für den Regenwald; subcampaign: Papier
÷	Wash and go - Webmaster gegen Konzerne



2 Map of hyperlinks (Source: Issuecrawler [11/07/2006])



