13.   Cross-talk in political discourse: Strategies for bridging issue movements on *Democracy Now!**

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Abstract

This chapter examines the ways that speakers connect movements through language use as they build support for their cause, and position it in a broader understanding of the political terrain. Using a corpus of spoken word transcripts aired between 2003-2013 from U.S. broadcast news program *Democracy Now!*, we developed a dictionary of named issue movements using corpus linguistics techniques. Semantic network analysis of issue-movement co-mentions revealed that the Civil Rights movement occupied a central role in facilitating cross-movement talk, and a purposive sub-sample of those stories was examined using qualitative discourse analysis tools to understand how and why. Several language strategies are explored that participants used to make relational connections between issue movements, and I offer some suggestions on how to approach the mixed methods analysis of cross-issue movement talk as political discourse.

Keywords

Introduction

In October of 2009, tens of thousands of people converged on the US capital for the "National Equality March." A few days later in the studios of *Democracy Now!*, a tenacious journalist by the name of Amy Goodman asked "attorney" and "longtime gay rights activist" Urvashi Vaid about how she came to speak before hundreds of thousands of people at the rally and march. She answered by first recounting her participation in the "women's movement," then the "anti-apartheid movement," in "social justice activism," and finally the "LGBT movement." "So what brings me here is a sense of the interconnection of all of these battles for justice. I feel that, you know, as a woman of color, it's not really separable for me. Racial justice, gay rights, social justice, economic justice, they're intertwined." The interview was broadcast on what was then nearly 800 TV and Radio stations, and transcribed for web distribution in what *Democracy Now!* has called the "largest public media collaboration in the country."

Some have suggested that organizing is changing, demanding intersectionality and solidarity across geography and difference (Klein 2014). Indeed, our interconnected political and economic environment appears to require increased attention to coalitions, collaborations, and networks in contemporary movement organizing. Yet much of the on-the ground organizing is done around issues. Even as movement participants converge around Social Fora and international days of action (Bennett and Toft 2009), they go back to the policies and communities that make them tick. As the excerpt from Vaid suggests, these issues are "intertwined," and those connections animate the work that many movement organizers find themselves doing.

So rather than asking *if* cross-issue organizing is an important strategy, this paper focuses on *how* people actually talk through those cross-issue connections. In doing so, we can start to get at strategy and practice by listening to what participants say when they talk about one social movement in the context of another. Indeed, a close analysis of discourse in use might help us to understand how speakers use language as an organizing tool to articulate a world where working across issues is both necessary and more effective than single-issue organizing.

In this chapter I argue that language can be seen as a form of political action, and looking at cross-movement talk can help us understand how participants draw connections between seemingly divergent issue movements as they speak to their current and potential allies through alternative or activist media outlets. I draw on a corpus of spoken word English from the daily newsmagazine program *Democracy Now!* to illustrate how participants articulated connections between movements as they engaged in political

discourse. I suggest that political discourse in social movements is organized through *issues*, and that the identification and *bridging* of social movements forms a backbone for how movement activity is understood, positioned, and made meaningful in political life. By foregrounding questions of strategy and grounding them in a critical discourse theoretical framework, this chapter aims to be helpful for academics and practitioners interested in the theory and practice of cross-issue organizing.

Doing politics: Talking across issue movements

Social movements are one of the most important venues for engaging active participation in political life and collective governance, yet they exist outside of the standard confines of electoral or representative politics. Studying the discourse of social movements and their participants *as politics* requires a twofold modification of canonical conceptualizations of political discourse. First, we need to broaden the *people* and *contexts* within which politics and political discourse is understood to happen. While progress has been made in many arenas, traditional political science conceptions of politics continue to inform political communication and political discourse research (i.e., political discourse = politicians making political speeches). While a valuable area of study, I suggest that social movements, and the spaces where they communicate within and across movements (i.e., independent, alternative, grassroots, community, radical, activist, or movement media) also offer valuable resources for examining how participants speak to each other about their political work (Atton 2002, 2003; Downing 1984; Downing, Ford, Gil, and Stein 2000). Second, we need to broaden the *political*

processes that we understand as facilitating political discourse beyond elections and voting, to include extra-institutional and counter-institutional activity. While valuable in its own right, a focus on social movements can also serve to contextualize traditional studies of politics by looking to the issues and processes that exist alongside electoral dynamics (Blee and Currier 2006; Jip 2000). Social movements are one of the most important generative spaces for surfacing, defining, and connecting social issues with dominant and resistant Discourses (Melucci 1996), and independent media can serve as logistical resources for movement participants as they build an understanding of their work (Streitmatter 2001). In an era of media consolidation and facing a hostile media environment, social movement participants have relied on independent, activist, or community media for communicating collective framing of issues and events by allowing them to speak directly to current or potential participants.

Issue movements

The civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, the LGBTQ movement, the anti-war movement, the environmental movement - these are some of the most important social movements in the political biography of the United States, each organized around changing the ways that we think and act on a single social dynamic – a single mechanism of power. As models for action, they represent narrative accounts of how to be successful in bringing about political change (Polletta 1998), with frames (Snow, Rochford, Warden, and Benford 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) and tactics (Sewell 1994) re-mixed and

modified for contemporary use. By many accounts, both historical models and contemporary movements are organized around issues: they are *issue movements*.

This may be in part due to how people think about and engage with political participation. In their analysis of why people participate in politics Han (2009) illustrates how an *issue publics* model has explanatory validity as a predictor of political participation. As Han puts it, "in politics, different people care about different things…the environment…tax policy…the economy, civil rights, or one of a myriad of other policy issues" (48). In an era of information overload, citizens selectively focus on information and opportunities for action around issue(s) that they have some personal connection to. Common reasons for issue identification include understanding that they or their family/friend network are directly affected, or undergoing a transformational experience that fostered empathy and issue salience. So, rather than being political generalists, Han suggests that people engage with politics through the issues that affect them most directly in their social and material lives. Connecting movements to issues that people already care about may increase movement salience and increase participation in collective action.

Issue theory has largely developed in social movement research as a way to make sense of frameworks for analysis, often in contrast to focusing on particular organizational sectors (i.e., social movement organizations). McCarthy and Zald (1973; 1977) adopted an issue orientation with *social movement industry* theory, recognizing that multiple movement organizations work in the same issue space – sometimes collaboratively, sometimes at odds. A rich tradition of sociology research has been built on this conception in the U.S., often under the banner of "resource mobilization" (Phillips 1991; see for

instance, Hall 1995). Adapting this framework to a digital environment, Earl (Earl 2009; Earl and Kimport 2011) has used the concept of an *issue industry* as a way to think beyond traditional social movement organizations to include government, business, and news producers who act on the issue. Communication studies work on fair trade (Bennett, Foot, and Xenos 2011), and anti-human trafficking (Foot 2016; Foot, Toft, and Cesare 2015) networks are often organized in this manner, recognizing the multi-sector character of a single-issue movement.

McAdam & Scott (2005) also integrated non-social movement organizations into their framework with *organizational field* theory, but argued for a recognition of the multi-issue terrain in which political actions often take place. They suggest that focusing on "a system of actors, actions, and relations…Rather than…a single organization or movement, or even a single type of organization or movement (population)…allows us to view these actors in context" (10). Located in the field of organizational communication, this framework pushes researchers out of the bounds of what are often organizational case studies, highlighting the inter-dependent and relational character of contemporary political action. Clearly issues are an important building block for understanding how people think and talk about movements within and across issue industries, and I would argue that developing issue theory in the context of social movements might aid in understanding the relationship between political action and the discursive production of core issues like race, poverty, globalization and gender.

Critical discourse analysts have also taken issues as organizing elements in their work, perhaps centering on immigration (Santa Ana 1999), racism (Reisigl and Wodak 2001),

or classism (Thurlow and Jaworski 2006) among others. Critical discourse analysts have used a series of lexical and grammatical patterns for identifying how power works through language to produce social categories, and to structure who has the power to make change happen (Fairclough 1992; van Dijk 1993). As our society can increasingly be seen as structured around various forms of categorical inequality (Massey 2008), how we talk about labeled groups of people is important in how we shape public policies that stratify or balance wealth and power (Toft 2014).

Several studies have focused on media outlets that have a particularly special relationship to an issue public, the most commonly referenced being the women's rights (O'Donnell 2001; Masel-Walters 1980), gay rights (Streitmatter 1995), and the labor and abolitionist movements (Streitmatter 2001). We know less, however, about media outlets that cover a range of social issues within the same platform, although existing research points to interesting insights about how participants integrate professional norms in doing this work (Eliasoph 1988; Platon and Deuze 2003) by combining journalistic practices and social justice goals through what Howley (2009) has described as a process of "articulation."

Recognizing the multi-sectoral, and multi-issue character of doing politics, this study aims to produce an understanding of what movement participants talk about as they make sense of the world. Thus, the first research question asks simply, *What issue movements do participants talk about?* While a few other researchers have attempted multi-issue typologies – namely Earl and Kimport's (2011) work on online action tactics – this project provides a counterpoint that is grounded in the linguistic markers participants use in multi-issue spoken word settings.

Cross-issue organizing

While single-issues animate movements, issues are not so easily parsed from one another, and it is becoming clear that the identification and *bridging* of issue movements forms a backbone for how movement activity is understood, positioned, and made meaningful in political life. In the wake of the anti-globalization movement, activists are increasingly forced to look across issue lines as they oppose common obstacles and craft common solutions (della Porta, Andretta, Mosca, and Reiter 2006). Projects like the World Social Forum explicitly call for cross-issue collaborations, and issues like war and climate change are forcing participants to articulate connections across geography, nationality, identity, and interest (Bennett and Toft 2009; Klein 2014). While good work has been done on collaboration structures within issue movement areas like the women's movement (Phillips 1991) or the environmental movement (Saunders 2007), there has been less attention paid to collaboration dynamics *across* issue areas, and even less to the linguistic strategies that participants use to argue for connections between them.

Discourse studies is structured around categories and meaning (often described as "cognitive schema") as the building blocks for how we practice communication (Hall 1997). In thinking about cross-issue organizing we still need to pay attention to categorization and boundary definition practices, even as those boundaries are made more inclusive, strategically ambiguous, or explicitly aligned along particular attributes. In their analysis of how collective identities become politicized, Van Dorn, Prins & Welschen (2013) point to processes of boundary drawing (identifying and differentiating groups),

consciousness raising (understanding membership in a group and the position of that group in society), and negotiating symbolic meanings (effecting the groups position in society). Applied to multi-issue communication practices these boundaries might be articulated in such a way as to foreground commonalities and background differences (Fairclough 2003).

Since not all issues are equally positioned to connect other issues, my second research question asks, *What movements are most central to bridging issue movements?* Understanding the affordances of different issue movements for bridging issues could be a valuable tool for cross-issue organizing, as participants make strategic choices in building alliances with other movement participants.

Strategies for cross-issue talk

Social movements are about issues, but the way that issues are defined and connected to each other is increasingly mediated by direct and indirect media channels. A great deal of work has documented how movements build collective messaging (Chesters and Welsh 2004) and plan events designed to court and shape journalistic coverage (DeLuca 1999). Yet even as movements become more media savvy, their messages continue to gain little attention when mainstream journalistic news norms often prefer elite sources and dominant framings (Rauch et al. 2007). Independent, alternative and community media have developed a less antagonistic relationship to social movements and the issues that they organize around (Howley 2009), likely due to their approach to power and participation in the news gathering process (Eliasoph 1988; Stavitsky and Gleason 1994).

As early as the abolitionist movement (Streitmatter 2001) and women's suffrage (Masel-Walters 1980), movement actors have published their own ideas about social issues as a way to popularize particular understandings of issues and events and in connecting dispersed adherents (O'Donnell 2001; Streitmatter 1995). Comparative analysis of how *Democracy Now!* covers movements alongside mainstream and conservative news organizations suggests that organizational form may influence the reading position of journalists viewing social movement activity as a polysemous text (Edgerly, Toft, and Veden 2011). Even as social media use increases, established and well-resourced non-commercial media outlets still serve as places where activists can talk about the issues and make sense of a multi-issue political terrain.

Several key findings from the study of social movements also provide valuable insight into how this kind of cross-issue organizing can be conceptualized. In her foundational work on how activists collaborated to build the Brazilian Youth Movement, Mische (2008) suggests that activist biographies helped participants make sense of multi-organizational (and often multi-issue) terrain, and that participants positioned their ideological and issue-oriented perspectives within heterogeneous collaborative meetings through the skilled negotiation of diverse speaking styles. Seen in network terms (Mische 2003) these connective strategies can be understood as substantiating what many who study social networks refer to as "ties," the content of which is rarely fleshed out.

By looking for speaking strategies in cross-issue organizing as they take place in alternative or independent media texts I ask *What language strategies do participants use to connect issue movements on* Democracy Now!*?* Given the significant sampling bias in

critical discourse studies towards mainstream (i.e., authoritative) texts on the one hand, and the clear differences in language practices as influenced by hybridized professional norms in many independent media outlets (Eliasoph 1988; Platon and Deuze 2003), having a clearer picture of how participants connect issue movements in actually existing language use could aid both organizers and researchers interested in bridging multiple issue movements.

Case and methods

Democracy Now! is one of the most widely distributed independent media programs in the United States. Started in 1996, this nationally syndicated hour-long daily news-magazine broadcast is currently syndicated on over 1400 public access TV stations, and public, community and low-power FM radio stations. Funded in large part by listener/viewer/reader contributions, *Democracy Now!* offers a well-resourced and professionally produced program that covers the national news for the day, and routinely sources high-profile activists, artists, authors, scholars, journalists, and politicians. The broad grassroots distribution, funding, and political reputation of *Democracy Now!* elevate the importance of who speaks and what they say, and guests on the program often appear to qualify as what Eyerman and Jamisen (1991) would call "movement intellectuals": people who develop their expertise and source legitimacy through their leadership in uncovering injustice and working for social change. Unlike many other media projects that have a local or issue/identity specific content focus, *Democracy Now!* covers movement issues across the spectrum (albeit from a progressive/left national U.S.

perspective), making it an excellent resource for researching how movement intellectuals articulate connections across issues movements.

My analysis draws on a multi-methods approach to language use on *Democracy Now!* that integrates quantitative coding and analysis with context specific qualitative tools in an iterative process for building, analyzing and interpreting transcripts from the program between 2003 and 2013 (archived online at http://democracynow.org). I worked with two undergraduate researchers to conduct a qualitative reading of just over 10,000 concordance lines of the word "movement," and identified the lexical markers for issue movements mentioned in the corpus. This qualitative coding was used to label and organize a dictionary of hundreds of issue movements that were then measured in relation to each other across the texts using a hybrid of qualitative discourse analysis and semantic network analysis (see for instance Toft 2014) to produce a network of semantic ties between issue movements. Standard measures of network centrality were used to identify issue movements that were most centrally connected to other issue movements in the text, identifying a sub sample for further analysis. The resulting (reasonably sized) sub-sample allowed me to read across *a single-issue movement* to identify the language strategies that participants used when they connected it with other issue movements using standard qualitative discourse analytic strategies.

This process reflects a dynamic engagement with two ongoing methodological conversations. First, I bring mixed methods in corpus linguistics (Salama 2011; Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2008) together with foundational network analysis methods for the measurement and analysis of words as networks of meaning (Schultz et al. 2012; Doerfel

1998). Corpus linguistics tools read electronic text as discrete linguistic units, producing standard statistical measures that assume variable independence. Network theory, however, asks us to think about the structure that those units produce as a product of their *relationship* to each other, and network analysis tools produce statistical measures that assume interdependence between variables. Second, this work bridges critical discourse theory and network theory. Network theory has drawn most extensively on relationships between people – on social relations (Contractor and Monge 2002; Monge and Contractor 2003). With the ubiquity of electronic text as data, these theoretical principles have been thoughtfully translated to work on *semantic* relations (Mottab and Badena 2013). Discourse theory, on the other hand, has long developed as a way to understand how people use language to construct social meaning as relationally contingent (van Dijk 1993; Hall 1997), and as a product of the company it keeps (Sinclair 1991; Stubbs 2001). This paper draws on discourse theory to understand what network measures might mean, and how to effectively measure those semantic relations in natural language texts.

Analysis: Talking across issue movements on *Democracy Now!*

Democracy Now! proves a rich space for the investigation of how people talk about social movements. I found that *Democracy Now!* aired mention of over 200 separate issue movements, but that a few (often historical examples) were most common. When viewed in network terms, a small subset of issue movements clearly carried a disproportional amount of weight in bridging issue movements, centered quite clearly on the Civil Rights movement. Drawing on a sub-sample of the corpus, a qualitative read revealed several

key arguments for how movements have, do, or should work together, and several grammatical constructions are outlined that help speakers accomplish them at the level of the story, sentence, or clause.

Issue movements

The first step in analyzing cross-issue talk was to read for explicit mentions of issue movements. Just over 200 discrete *issue movements* were identified as mentioned in the corpus after reading over 10,000 concordance lines of the word "movement*" (movement or movements). An issue movement mention was counted as present if the issue word(s)/phrase(s) occurred within 6 words on either side of movement* (a window of 6:6) to allow for different grammatical constructions to be included (a movement about the issue, the issue movement, the movement for the issue, etc.). These were then validated and clarification rules were developed to disambiguate and clean issue movement dictionary entries.

Viewed as a whole, the sheer number of issue movements support an argument that *Democracy Now!* is indeed a multi-issue program. Just over 20% of the stories in the sample mentioned at least one named movement (N: 1803). An average of .34 different issue movements were mentioned in each story with 8% of the stories (just over 700) mentioning more than one movement. There was also a highly unequal distribution of issue movement mentions in stories over the sample period, with issue movements occurring in anywhere from a single story to 282, with a mean of 2.9, a standard error of

the mean of 2.2, and a standard deviation of 32.6. This meant that half the movements

were mentioned in less than 4 stories, while only 13 showed up in more than 50 stories.

For instance, the Quaker movement was counted only one time over 11 years, suggesting

that it is not a significant focus on the program, and might accurately be described as of

peripheral editorial importance. Also of note is the absence of explicit mentions of several

social movement categories found by Earl and Kimport (2011) in their analysis of online

movement tactics (namely pro-privacy and the open source movements). On the other

	Stories	
Issue Movement	Number	Percent
CIVIL_RIGHTS	282	3.2%
LABOR	182	2.0%
ANTIWAR	166	1.9%
OCCUPY	154	1.7%
PEACE	148	1.7%
WOMEN	138	1.5%
PRO-DEMOCRACY	102	1.1%
BLACK	92	1.0%
STUDENT	87	1.0%
UNION	78	0.9%
ENVIRONMENTAL	72	0.8%
INDIGENOUS	58	0.7%
ISLAMIC	53	0.6%
TEA_PARTY	49	0.5%
LGBTQ	47	0.5%
YOUTH	45	0.5%
WORKERS	42	0.5%
CLIMATE	40	0.4%
INDEPENDENCE	35	0.4%
APARTHEID	35	0.4%
Total	*1803*	20.2%

Table 1. The number of stories and percent of stories mentioning the most common 20 issue movements on *Democracy Now!* 2003-2013

side of the spectrum, the Labor, Anti-War, Occupy, Peace, Women's and Pro-Democracy movements all occurred in over 100 stories, but it is quickly apparent that the Civil Rights movement was the most commonly mentioned movement on the program, appearing in nearly 300 stories over 11 years (see Table 1).

Issue movement networks

Yet descriptive frequencies examine only single-issue movements in isolation. Issue movements do not, in fact, exist as islands, but share temporal, tactical, biographical, and semantic connections (Bennett and Toft 2009; Klein 2014; della Porta et al. 2006). So, how are single-issue movements positioned within the multi-issue terrain? Which issue movements are centrally located in the network, and how might issue movements cluster together into narrative neighborhoods (movement clusters that might commonly be connected to each other)?

Network analysis offers a distinctly relational approach to movement dynamics, and has been widely adopted in social movement studies (Diani and McAdam 2003; Bennett and Segerberg 2013). To identify the relationship between issue movements as they were articulated on *Democracy Now!*, mentions of issue movements were measured as occurring in a story or not. From the perspective of network theory (Wasserman and Faust 1994), this dataset was read as a 2-mode network of relations that indicated which issue movements were mentioned in each story (see Table 2). If a story mentioned more than one issue movement, we might consider it an example of cross-movement talk, since there were explicit mentions of multiple issue movements in the context of a single (typically

issue-oriented) story. However, if we think about issue movement co-occurrence from the perspective of the corpus, we can start to examine how issue movements co-occur with other issue movements on *Democracy Now!* as a whole or how those relations might change over time. To examine these two related questions, I produced a series of 1-mode networks using co-occurrence in a story as the parameters for a relationship (often referred to as a "tie" or "edge") between issue movements (or, "nodes") (see Table 3 and 4). By converting standard 2-mode statistical data to a series of 1-mode network files, we are able to approach the data in response to different kinds of questions (Monge and Contractor 2003). A story-by-story 1-mode network might be fruitfully used to identify stories with particularly broad discussions of multiple issue movements. An issue-by-issue 1-mode network, on the other hand, can answer questions about the movements themselves, highlighting movements that connect multiple issues across multiple stories. When combined with qualitative discourse analysis tools, both lenses can be used to produce more manageable sub-samples for further analysis of key stories and issue movements based on reading network properties.

Table 2. Example 2-mode network of issue mentions in stories

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
Story 1	0	1	0	0
Story 2	0	0	1	0
Story 3	0	1	0	1
Story 4	1	0	0	0

Table 3. Example story-by-story 1-mode network

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4
Story 1		0	0	0
Story 2	0		1	0
Story 3	1	0		0
Story 4	0	0	0	

Table 4. Example issue-by-issue 1-mode network

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
Issue 1		0	0	0
Issue 2	0		0	1
Issue 3	0	0		0
Issue 4	0	1	0	

Figure 2 shows a network visualization of the ways that issue movements were mentioned in the same stories (co-occurrence) between 2003-2013 using an issue-by-issue 1-mode network (Borgatti, Everett, and Freeman 2002). Ties (lines between the circles) are present when both issue movements (circles, or "nodes") were mentioned in at least one story together. Issue movement node and label size here represent an issue movement's normalized betweeness centrality score, a centrality metric that calculates the frequency by which an issue movement is used as the shortest path between two other issue movements in the network, normalized to the overall pattern of ties. While developed as a measure of how much a person controls the information flow in a network of people (Freeman 1977), having a high betweeness centrality score in a semantic network of issue movement mentions might accurately measure the importance of an issue movement in bridging structurally dissociated issue movements through cross-issue movement talk on *Democracy Now!*. By using tools developed for investigating relationships between people, semantic network analysis allows us to analyze and visualize an abstracted birds-eye view of patterned language use as fundamentally relational.

Figure 1. Issue movement co-occurrence in stories on *Democracy Now!* 2003-2013

By looking at the relative size of each movement node and label we can see that there are a small group of highly important issue movements that play a disproportionate role in connecting other movements in the corpus, namely the Civil Rights, Occupy, Women, Anti-war, Peace and Black movements. This core set facilitate a fairly dense network, with 9.3% of possible ties observed, and other than the nine issue movements that never occurred in a story with another issue movement ("isolates" not shown), the network forms a single contiguous component. Network layout can also be used to help interpret neighborhoods of issue movements. Broadly speaking, the left side of the network is a collection of movements for national political control (Nationalist, National Liberation, Independence, Rebel), with more militant approaches towards the top (Free Aceh, Fatah, Salafi, Settlement), and the more party-based political movements towards the bottom left (Tea Party, National Socialist, Ron Paul). The right hand side of the network is a fairly integrated spread of economic, race, gender, education, and environmental movements. Anti-war movements (Peace, Anti-War, Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Occupation) appear to mediate between the economic/race/gender/education/environmental movements on the right, and the movements for political control on the left. While there are some clear preferences for connecting certain kinds of issue movements with others, heterogeneity appears to be the norm, suggesting that participants on *Democracy Now!* might offer creative strategies for making connections across potentially divergent issue movements as they make sense of their political lives. Understanding what those strategies for engaging in cross-issue talk actually are requires that we move from network analysis to discourse analysis to examine language in use at the level of the story, the sentence, and the clause.

Cross-issue talk

In order to understand how speakers engage in cross-issue talk, I produced a sub-sample for qualitative analysis that tracked a single issue movement of importance as it was connected through language to other issue movements on *Democracy Now!* between 2003-2013. I followed Baker (Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2008) in using down-sampling through statistical analysis to identify those stories that both a) referred to the Civil Rights movement (the issue movement with the highest betweeness centrality score), and b) referred to at least one other issue movement. This sampling strategy resulted in a set of 157 stories, averaging 3.3 different issue movements per story, and totaling roughly 800 individual issue movement mentions.

Qualitative analysis involved reading each story as a single statement one at a time. Rather than focusing on co-location patterns (as with concordance analysis), such a reading allows one to foreground narrative and argument, helping to unpack the "black box" of network ties (Mische 2003; Diani 2003), and making sense of how co-occurrences are accomplished in context. Using a retroductive approach (Ragin 1994), I developed a series of codes that described narrative and argumentative practices speakers employed for connecting issue movements in the text over the course of each story.

The selected arguments were grouped into four conceptual collections of argument strategies employed by hosts and guests on *Democracy Now!*. The first collection of arguments *positions movements* among other issue movements, describing how movements start movements, how movements have or do work together, and by calling for movements to work together in the future. The second collection of arguments describes *what movements share*, either by suggesting that they share the same root problem, that they share the same tactical challenges and tools, or that they share the same ethos or faith. The third practice for facilitating cross-issue talk involved describing how *people connect*

issues, either through biographies of current or deceased activists, or by autobiographical accounts by participants themselves. Finally, participants used discussion of multiple issue movements, and the Civil Rights movement in particular, to suggest that *success can happen again*. Among the most common arguments presented, claims that movements share the same structural problem or that people have or will connect issue movements occurred in over 30% of the stories examined, and claims that we need to work together and that we face the same tactical challenge in over 10%. While analyzing these examples of common argument strategies, I draw on an analysis of grammatical structure to outline how these arguments were accomplished across the excerpts. Explicit mentions of issue movements are <u>underlined</u> in excerpts.

Positioning issue movements in a multi-issue world
The first theme involved speakers positioning issue movements in relation to each other. Here I discuss three arguments participants made to this effect: describing how movements start other movements, how movements do or have worked together, and with directives that movements need to work together.

Movements start movements. In reading through the transcripts, it became clear that *Democracy Now!* routinely takes a decidedly contextual and historical approach to reporting. Current events are historicized, and whole stories focus on chapters from movement history, told in ways that repeatedly return to the present day. Excerpt 1 illustrates one instance of this, as the guest (a "long time investigative reporter") makes clear claims to how the Free Speech movement was "inspired" by the Civil Rights movement.

Excerpt 1. Coded as *movements start movements*

Title: "Subversives": How the FBI Fought the 1960s Student Movement and Aided Reagan's Rise to Power

SETH ROSENFELD:…The <u>Free Speech</u> Movement was one of the first major student protests of the 1960s. It was nonviolent. It was inspired by the <u>civil rights</u> movement. (aired 8/23/2012)

Here, the dynamic process of social movement activity is nominalized (describing a process as a named entity), allowing them to take on attributes ("first major student protest of the 1960s," "nonviolent"), and become active participants in the clause ("inspired by"). While seemingly benign, Fairclough (2003) has suggested that nominalization can serve to obscure complex social processes, and background responsibility or blame (as in "globalization"). But Fairclough also points to the possibilities for agency that being a named entity can have in structural grammar – something rarely offered to unnamed or backgrounded participants. Taken in the context of narrativizing movement history (by locating change over time and identifying causal chains), the nominalization of issue movements might also offer a mimetic quality, packaging entire stories within a commonly understood phrase, and allowing the speaker to quickly connect whole collectivities of people, practices, and events (Reinsborough and Canning 2008).

Movements work together. Another argument that connected movements as entities involved stating how a movement is or was a cross-issue movement already, as in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2. Coded as *movements work together* and *same structural problem*

Title: Grace Lee Boggs on Mass Protest and Race Politics in the Obama Era, Economic Devastation in Detroit, and the Legacy of Socialist Thought in the US

JUAN GONZALEZ: But what then characterizes the essence of that revolution that is not being reported in the headlines?

GRACE LEE BOGGS: Well, first of all, we have to understand that a revolutionary period is also a counterrevolutionary period; that there is a deep unrest, a deep destabilization, that has taken place in the structures of the society; and that this began with the <u>civil rights</u> movement. They began saying that human relations matter more than economic growth. And it came from black people, because the economic growth had been taken so much—taken place so much on their backs. And then it began to embrace <u>women</u>, people from the <u>ecology</u> movement, <u>young</u> people, who also were being threatened, of course, by the Vietnam War. And all these things came together. (aired 9/18/09)

The emphasis is still on the movements as nominalized participants themselves, but now they have begun to "embrace" people identified with different identities ("women," "young," those "threatened" by the "war") and movements ("ecology") because they share the same structural problems ("economic growth," and the degradation of "human relations"). While the process involved in building multi-issue movements is still obscured through nominalization, there is a hint at action ("They began saying") and participant categories ("it came from black people").

We need to work together. A third argument used in cross-issue talk involved a direct call on contemporary issue movement activists to work together across movements. In Excerpt 3, the guest responds to a question about proposed sanctions on Iran for suppressing the Iranian Green movement, drawing a direct simile to the Civil Rights movement ("This is a civil rights movement," "I see it as a civil rights movement"), and then suggesting that "What this movement needs…is the support of civil rights icons."

Excerpt 3. Coded as *we need to work together*

> Title: Hamid Dabashi on Iran Protests: "This is Not Another Revolution. This is a Civil Rights Movement" (aired 6/24/2009)
>
> HAMID DABASHI: I don't think this is another revolution. This is a <u>civil rights</u> movement. They're demanding their civil rights that are being denied, even within the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. From their chants that they are doing in the streets to their newspapers, to their magazines, to their websites, to their Facebook, to their Twitters, everywhere that you look, this is a demand for civil liberties…
>
> …Any support for these demonstrators, for this <u>green</u> movement, on part of official American officials is a kiss of death.
>
> What this movement needs—anything is—from the United States is, because I see it as a <u>civil rights</u> movement, is the support of civil rights icons. Reverend Jesse Jackson, Reverend Al Sharpton, these are the people who should come to its support, not official Americans…

After setting up a simile between an important US social movement, the guest argues for international solidarity by particular movement participants ("Reverend Jesse Jackson, Reverend Al Sharpton").

These calls to action are particularly distinct when comparing activist media with mainstream issue movement coverage. Rather than presenting the world as existing "out there" somewhere, with important people doing things about it, activist media routinely includes specific opportunities for action, and treats their listeners/viewers/readers as active participants in the direction of social and political change (Eliasoph 1988). This is mirrored in the slight differences between Snow and Bedford's (1988) discussion of "collective action frames" and traditional "news frames" as presented by Entman (1991; 1993), namely that unlike news frames collective action frames often include an explicit call to action. Here, this is accomplished through the use of a directive, a grammatical positioning of the audience that is more reflective of activist communication genres than traditional news genres (Lamb 2013; Eliasoph 1988).

What movements share
Talking about multiple issue movements was often done by suggesting that they shared something in common, and that we might learn from each other in our work. I discuss three types of arguments that were made about what was shared across issue movements: that movements faced the same structural challenges, the same tactical challenges and solutions, and that they shared the same ethos or faith.

Same structural problem. As people around the world experience an increasingly transnational flow of goods, services and exploitation, locating and articulating those shared structural problems can form the basis for an effective argument for cross-issue collaboration. This was clearly displayed on *Democracy Now!*, with participants routinely locating root causes and making connections to how they affect other issue movements. If we have the same challenges, it follows that we may benefit from working together, although that is not always explicitly stated. This was the argument that explains the call for unity in Excerpt 4 where the connection was quite explicit.

Excerpt 4. Coded as *need to work together* and *same structural problem*

> Title: Max Roach 1924-2007: Thousands Pay Tribute to the Legendary Jazz Drummer, Educator, Activist (aired on 8/27/2007)
>
> AMIRI BARAKA: …we need to join the <u>antiwar</u> movement with the <u>anti-imperialist</u> movement and the <u>anti-racist</u> movement, because people who want to fight against the war without seeing that war has its origins in imperialism, and that has to be countered. You have to start at the root, because otherwise, just by opposing this war, there might be a brief pause, and then there will be a war with Iran, and then there will be a brief pause, and then there will be a war with North Korea, then there will be a brief pause, and then some fool will say we should go to war with China. I mean, so it's imperialism is at the root of the problem. You know, the war is just a reflection of imperialism, sort of an unbridled attempt to, you know, claim the world.

Here, the guest (introduced as "an acclaimed poet, playwright, music historian and activist") articulates a clear call to work together ("we need to join the antiwar movement with the anti-imperialist movement and the anti-racist movement"), followed by an argument about how they share the same problem or challenge ("imperialism is at the root of the problem"). By focusing on shared structural problems, such a strategy may smooth over perceived differences in participant and tactical character.

Same tactical challenge. Similar to sharing the same structural challenge, are instances where issue movements are claimed to share the same tactical challenges and opportunities. Often this involves the civil rights movement as an exemplary model, with contemporary activists likening their strategic choices to those of past movements they seek to emulate. In Excerpt 5 a Palestinian activist connects their struggle with recent movements in Tunisia and Egypt, the Civil Rights movement, and "Ghahndi against colonialism" by engaging in nonviolence trainings and practice. Here, the host is an active participant in exploring tactical choices.

Excerpt 5. Coded as *same tactical challenge*

> Title: A New <u>Nonviolent</u> Resistance Movement Grows as <u>Palestinians</u> Mark Nakba Day with Protests at Syria, Lebanon and Gaza Borders (aired 5/17/2011)
>
> AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk about the issue of nonviolence in these protests, Fadi?

FADI QURAN: So, we train, and we plan to use nonviolence from now on in a very strategic manner, because we've been inspired with what has happened in Tunisia and what happened in Egypt, and also by the <u>civil rights</u> movement in the South and by <u>Gandhi</u> against colonialism. And yesterday's protest, for example, began by people from all age groups, from all different stratas of society, who were marching peacefully toward the checkpoint. And we were prepared. We had trained to being shot at. We were trained at, you know, being hit by the police or by the Israeli military. And we actually — most of our training and experience happens when we go to places like Al-Nabi Saleh, where Mr. Whitman was shot the other day. And we believe that through nonviolence, through using Martin Luther King's strategies and Gandhi's strategies, we will be able to achieve freedom. And we're not going to back up until we do reach that goal.

While research in mainstream media often takes the shape of a tactical frame (Boyle et al. 2004; Gitlin 1980; Hertog and McLeod 1995; McLeod 1995; Smith et al. 2001), a focus on tactics here serves to connect contemporary actions to movements largely accepted as historically legitimate and (for many people) successful at achieving some of their primary goals. The collective and inclusive naming of participants ("we") and their active role in clauses ("marching peacefully," "not going to back up") begins to specify the process underneath nominalized movements, and place agency in participant actions. Seen in the context of armed struggle between Israel and Palestine, the focus on nonviolence is presented as a primary goal of the movement. Rather than marginalizing activist issues, this argument of simile through shared tactical attributes among participants in the clause ("nonviolence") instead attaches cultural legitimacy to the guest's actions, something that is only stronger when considering that *Democracy Now!* serves a predominantly U.S. audience.

Same ethos or faith. Often canonical issue movements like the civil rights movement were used to attach meaning to current activist activities in more ephemeral ways than those found in arguments about underlying structural challenges or tactical similarity. In Excerpt 6 Bill Moyers suggests that the group of media activists he was speaking to were "to America what the abolition movement was, and the suffragette movement, and the civil rights movement."

Excerpt 6. Coded as *same ethos or faith*

> Title: Bill Moyers: Big Media is Ravenous. It Never Gets Enough. Always Wants More. And it Will Stop at Nothing to Get It. These Conglomerates are an Empire, and they are Imperial. (speaking to media activists at the National Conference for Media Reform; aired 11/16/2007)

> BILL MOYERS: …I'll keep an eye on your work. You are to America what the <u>abolition</u> movement was, and the <u>suffragette</u> movement, and the <u>civil rights</u> movement. You touch the soul of democracy. It's not assured you will succeed in this fight. The armies of the Lord are up against mighty hosts. But as the spiritual sojourner Thomas Merton wrote to an activist grown weary and discouraged protesting the Vietnam War, "Do not depend on the hope of results. Concentrate on the value and the truth of the work itself...

Statements of direct analogy claim credibility through attaching one movement with another that is widely held as legitimate and authoritative, as I have described above. But in this manifestation, the speaker uses the analogy to position the audience at the conference at which he spoke – and by extension the broadcast audience for *Democracy Now!* – as active participants in the clause ("you are," "you touch").

People connect issues

People are the center of talk news, and they were often used as models for how we can connect issues in activist work. Often this is done by participants themselves as they are asked to reflect on their experiences in multiple issue movements (see Valocchi 2007 for an example of activists narrating their social change identities). In other cases, this is done by a knowledgeable third party (often a biographer or historian). In Excerpt 7, after playing a clip of an activist speaking for themselves, a death-row inmate's biography as a social activist in a number of movements ("civil rights," "black liberation," "national liberation," "Puerto Rican independence," "anti-imperialists," with mention of "capitalism," and "war") is used by the guest to argue for the injustice of her punishment.

Excerpt 7. Coded as *people connect issues* and *same structural challenge*

> Title: Time for Compassion? Aging Political Prisoners Suffer From Illness, Decades in Solitary Confinement (aired 12/23/13)

> RENÉE FELTZ: That was Marilyn Buck speaking in 1989 from prison. Now, Soffiyah Elijah, you helped get her out. But I wanted to go back to that clip for a minute to talk about the time in which she went in, and to help us again place who these people were when they became

political prisoners and the era in which that happened. And then I wanted to see if you could talk about how your work getting her out relates possibly to other political prisoners who are also seeking release?

SOFFIYAH ELIJAH: Yes. Well, Marilyn became politicized during the <u>civil rights</u> movement and the <u>black liberation</u> movement and other <u>national liberation</u> movements—the <u>Puerto Rican independence</u> movement, for instance. And she was part of a larger movement of North American <u>anti-imperialists</u> who challenged issues of racism and capitalism in the U.S., and they also challenged the U.S. foreign policy, like the war in Vietnam. All of those factors that were going on helped to shape who she was. And she was really committed to anti-racism, and she carried that strongly in all of her messages and in her activities.

She, as you know, became more and more involved in the <u>black liberation</u> movement. She was accused by the FBI as being a person who purchased guns, produced false identification, in an effort to protect people who were targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO program. As they engaged in what ultimately was determined to be illegal activity, the FBI targeted many members of the <u>black liberation</u> movement and other <u>liberation</u> movements for frame-ups, assassinations and long periods of incarceration.

As origin stories, movements become mechanisms for narrating biographical development, noting how she "became politicized" by being "part of a larger movement" that "challenged issues." Placed in the narrative context of an individual activists life, connecting issue movements becomes a biographical choice for audience members asked to see movements as richly interrelated phenomenon. Locating movement activists across issue movements historicizes participation and presents biographical models for shaping our own experience as activists and social change agents.

Success can happen again
Finally, historically important issue movements like the Civil Rights Movement were used, implicitly and explicitly to make a claim for the future. If movements are seen as multi-modal and collaboratively authored texts, drawing intertextual connections becomes a strategic tool for legitimation (Fairclough 1992; van Leeuwen 2007). When used at pivotal moments in a contemporary movement, such references offer evidence by association, often drawing on the strategies discussed above. In Excerpt 8, an activist guest uses intertextuality to suggest simile between participating groups ("Bull Connors" and the

"Growers Exchange") in broader movements (namely, the civil rights and migrant farmworker movements).

Excerpt 8. Coded as *success can happen again*

> Title: "This Agreement Has Incredible Importance for Our Movement"–<u>Immokalee</u> <u>Workers</u> Win Agreement with Subway over Tomato Prices in Florida (aired 12/10/2008)

> MARC RODRIGUES: What we know is that this resistance on the part of the growers is a sign that our campaign is having an effect and that we are starting to make the change that we want to make, because, you know, just as the <u>civil rights</u> movement had its Bull Connors, we have the Growers Exchange. And they say that a candle burns the brightest when it's about to go out, and it appears that that's what's happening now.

These grammatical choices and argument strategies were deployed across the sample in nested and overlapping ways. We can see, for instance, the shift from a biographical argument to an argument about shared structural problems faced by different issue movements in Excerpt 7 ("the FBI targeted many members of the <u>black liberation</u> movement and other <u>liberation</u> movements for frame-ups, assassinations and long periods of incarceration") or the use of the shared structural problems argument in explaining why movements have worked together in the past (Excerpt 2) or why movements need to work together in the future (Excerpt 5). Similarly, particular grammatical choices were made across argument strategies, underlining the importance of nominalization, legitimation, intertextuality, categorization, naming participants and participant activation.

Conclusion

In increasingly complex, international and mediated political contexts, it is incumbent upon researchers interested in politics to think about the ways in which social movements offer counter- and extra-institutional opportunities for political action. Independent or alternative media are particularly valuable resources in movement activity, and given the overwhelming emphasis on elite mainstream news outlets in political communication

research, such resources might serve as a valuable corrective to dominant understandings of contentious activity.

I have argued that social movements are largely organized around issues, and that independent media are important resources for participants in the bridging of issue movements through language use. *Democracy Now!* offered a multi-issue platform for participants to identify and negotiate the connections between over 200 issue movements, but a few movements emerged as more commonly referenced between 2003-2013. By examining cross-issue talk as relationally contingent, I found that the Civil Rights movement was the most centrally important bridging resource as participants articulated connections between other issue movements on the program. A qualitative analysis of language in use showed how participants made arguments that *positioned movements* among other issue movements, described *what movements shared*, described how *people connected issues*, and that suggested that *success could happen again*. These arguments were further explored by focusing on grammatical choice at the level of the story, sentence and the clause. I found that nominalization, analogy, simile, intertextuality, and the structuring of participants, actions and categorical attributes all served as grammatical resources in articulating connections between movements. These language practices point towards strategies for multi-issue movement building, and underline the importance of media sources like *Democracy Now!* for building collective identity, connecting dispersed adherents, and facilitating cross-issue movement participation.

These findings also illustrate several key themes in helping to develop an empirically grounded cross-movement theory of action. By understanding movements as socially constructed – indeed shaped through discourse – we can examine those moments of cross-movement talk as political actions that make movements across issues, sectors, organizations, and participants possible. An examination of cross-movement talk can help

us to develop a typology of discursive tactics (or, tools for action), and begin to understand how we might conceptualize discourse strategy – i.e., how intersecting opportunities and constraints (meanings, biographies, resources, affect) may influence potential choice and outcome dynamics. Such a theory could provide practitioners and researchers alike interested in cross-issue organizing with a clearer understanding of how to make social change happen.

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