

Assuming the position paper  
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*a brief introduction:*

Both in terms of academics and activism, I occupy the margins. My most recently completed project was an analysis of the dynamics of decline within the Amsterdam squatters' movement, focusing on the production of narratives within the movement to explain and shape their experience of decline. In the course of this work, I was struck by the way they became integrated into the larger tourism structure of the city, and what this had to say about politics and place. This has pushed me to rethink the intersections and interactions between tourism and activism. Currently, I am working on two projects as an effort to further investigate these relations. First, I am exploring the concept of summit hopping in terms of how it operates as a form of political tourism, and whether or not that deserves the negative connotation it often has. Secondly, on activist relief efforts in post-Katrina New Orleans, namely the way the boundaries between activism and tourism blurred at the same time they continue to be starkly drawn by participants. A parallel project in New Orleans examines the role of anarchy and anarchism in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, to examine activism in the moments when the state "disappears." Regarding activism, I have been a backstage participant in various anarchist projects, but have fallen out of the swing of things since relocating to Connecticut.

*rethinking politics:*

Social movements are rethinking the political by moving away from thinking in terms of a coherent political center. That is, they are making new maps of power, maps that open new spaces for contention and/or contentment. I believe that the strong anarchist under- and overtones of the current anti-globalization movement (which I prefer to call the anti-glob movement, since it resists not globalization but the elites' interest in turning the *globe* into a huge undifferentiated *glob* as a means of stripping power away from people), is that as spatial relations have decentralized, they have highlighted the fact that power is diffuse and cannot be found at any center. Therefore, it is necessary to politicize all spaces and places. Thus, I think the new (which are not so much new as simply newly popular) articulations between the everyday and the institutional continues to be the most significant hurdle for activists, particularly during a period in which the political imaginary and utopian thinking is so underdeveloped. Thus, the same forces that have opened up the possibilities to take horizontality and decentralization have also increased the scale at which these projects need to be imagined. Nevertheless, I think that the current theoretical work coming out from work on the World Social Forums and the recent summit protests (e.g., the G8 summit in Gleneagles) shows an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the way power operates in networks, which is a significant advancement over the debates taking place only a few years ago.

I reject the concept of "real" politics. This is a vestige of thinking in terms of a political center, in which all meaningful change must go through the primary power center. Once this illusion is dispelled, "real" politics opens up wide enough to contain a much larger and more diverse stable of practices. In addition, I don't believe it is possible, in this day of the state throwing its blanket over everything and everywhere to experiment or struggle for autonomy in a way that makes no demands. There is at least one: Leave me alone. This is perhaps the one of the biggest threats to state power. And if the state ignores them? So much the better. Revolutionary change will not come from storming the post-modern Bastilles. It will come from developing counter institutions that replace state power and help people to live as autonomous actors. The key here is not whether or not experiments appeal to the state, but rather how and to what extent they situate themselves within the larger community, and whether their autonomy comes at the price of others' freedom. Still, this is the difference between progressive and regressive politics, not politics vs. something else.

*any questions?*

My primary concerns all fall out of my interests in tourism and activism. In particular, I want to talk more about the role of travel within movements (i.e., the place for movement within movements), especially in terms of studying the anti-glob movement. I want to think about how these roles (tourist and activist) are more closely related than normally recognized (not least of which by activists themselves, who frequently use “tourist” as an insult).

On a related note, I am also interested in the ways that experiments, alternative spaces, and free zones get integrated within the larger (and seemingly) market of tourist destinations. That is, since they are involved in creating and building places of meaning, it is natural that they would attract interest from the outside. Tourist destinations are determined by their amount of “place-ness” (even in the face of the growing homogenization of major destinations). With a growing interest in “getting off the beaten path,” how has this affected such spaces and how are activists using this attention for political gain, as well as resisting the threat of being co-opted in the process?