Do-It-Yourself Bicycle Lanes: Tactical Innovation and Strategic Capacity in Mexico's Urban Bicycle Movement Organizations

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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In January 2011, the attention of bicycle activists around the world was captured by news of a collective of Mexican activists called *Ciudad para Todos*[1] that, tired of waiting on their government's promises to build safer streets for cyclists, decided to paint the bike-lanes their city and fellow bicyclists needed.

This strategic campaign named *ciclovia ciudadana*[2], which took place three times in 2011, as well as the social movement organization that led it (*Ciudad para Todos*), will be used to empirically explore questions related to the relationship between tactical innovation and strategic capacity, the link between tactical actions and discursive repertoires, and the influence of the political environment in movement strategies and outcomes.

This paper will rely on McAdam's (1983) and Ganz's (2002) theories of tactical innovation and strategic capacity, respectively, so as to improve our understanding of the process and conditions by which social movement organizations create novel tactics, and the elements that make these tactics effective. However, rather than testing those theories, the

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[1] The City for Everyone
[2] Citizen's Bike-Lane

ciclovia ciudadana case study will be used to highlight important theoretical dimensions within McAdam's and Ganz's writings.

Several research questions will guide this paper, which will be divided into three sections. The first section will present a theory of strategic repertoires and explain the process of tactical innovation that informed the *ciclovia ciudadana* strategic campaign. In addition, I will explain the relationship between the tactics and discourses exercised in the *ciclovia ciudadana*. The second section will demonstrate the role of strategic capacity in the process of tactical innovation. For this endeavour, Ganz's ideas on strategic capacity will be reviewed and the case study of *Ciudad para Todos* will be used to shed light on the issue. The final section will build on the political process model to explain what factors in the political environment of Guadalajara and in the internal characteristics of *Ciudad para Todos* allowed the *ciclovia ciudadana* campaign to be effective.

In this research paper, I will argue that the process of tactical innovation is deeply linked to (and positively influenced by) the strategic capacity that a social movement organization has, as well as to the interactions between the organization and its opponents. It is the organization's capacities, and those of the individuals who compose it, which allow activists to devise novel and effective strategies. Moreover, when devising tactics such as the *ciclovia ciudadana*, movement participants experiment and create actions and discourses that are more often than not complimentary to one another. In addition, this paper will also argue that the political environment and the political *opportunities* it provides are able to – at least partially – explain the outcome (and effectiveness) of an innovative tactic such as the *ciclovia ciudadana*.

In order to make such a case, I thoroughly investigated the process through which the *ciclovia ciudadana* was devised and executed by members of *Ciudad para Todos*, as well as the interactions activists had with local authorities and journalists prior, during and after its execution. The organizational characteristics of *Ciudad para Todos* (and those of its members) were also examined in order to identify the sources of the group's strategic capacity. In a similar fashion, the external favourable conditions of the political environment in which *Ciudad para Todos* operated were analyzed so as to identify the political opportunities that allowed the *ciclovia ciudadana* to be effective.

THEORIES BEHIND TACTICAL INNOVATION AND STRATEGIC CAPACITY

Most scholarship, building upon rational choice theory, sees tactical innovation – the creative ability of insurgents to devise new tactical forms (McAdam 1983: 736) – as a purely rational process. Scholars have argued that movement actors and opponents achieve their strategic goals through *tactical interaction* (McAdam 1983), a process of rational calculations and chess-like manoeuvres. However, this rational conception of innovation has been challenged for its mechanistic conception (Iles 2009: 32). Soule (1999: 124) and Tilly (1978: 158) suggest the importance of deep resonance and compatibility of tactics with the movement's values and past experiences when explaining the success of innovations. Beyond their efficacy, certain tactics may hold a special appeal for protesters. Similarly, Jasper (1997) argues that tactics reflect the preferences and values of activists. The cognitive, moral and emotional dimensions of movement organizations inform their actions (as well as their attempts to

innovate). Protest and resistance express not only tactical choices, but also the identities, world-views and ideologies of movement members.

Although these authors provide accounts of the sources of tactics or their effects on outcomes, they do not help explain why certain organizations can devise tactics that turn out to be more or less effective than those of another organization (Ganz 2002: 1009).

Some scholars (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996) have explained movement dynamics and outcomes by examining an organization's resources, opportunities, and frames (or the variation of these among diverse organizations). Instead, Ganz (2002) compels us to look at what he calls "strategic capacity", that is, the creative deployment of human, cultural, and social-organizational resources (Edwards and McCarthy 2004: 143).

Ganz's concept of strategic capacity, coming from a social-psychological standpoint, views strategy as a creative, reflective and innovative way of adapting new conditions to one's goals (2002: 1011). Therefore, Ganz's (2002) *strategic capacity* acknowledges the influence of shifting [political] environments and interactions with others on the process of devising strategy (1011).

The *ciclovia ciudadana* case study will be analyzed by relying on the theoretical framework of the political process model. The political process model has been used for studying the mediating factors of political opportunity structures between movement protest and policy change (Giugni 2008: 1588). It highlights the influence of the social movement's particular political context on the movement dynamics and outcomes, while taking into account the movement's strategy and organization. These *political opportunities* refer to the features of

the political context that influence movement's emergence, mobilization and success (Staggenborg 2008: 17), such as the openness of the political structure, shifts in political alignments, divisions among elites, availability of influential allies, and state repression or facilitation (Tarrow 1998).

In spite of some limitations and short-comings associated to an opportunity-based model (see, for example, Goodwin and Jasper 1999), the political process model is useful in identifying several specific *political opportunities* that play out in the *ciclovia ciudadana* case study.

RESEARCH METHODS

The *ciclovia ciudadana* case study will be utilized to illustrate the process of tactical innovation that occurs within social movement organizations, and to investigate how the group's strategic capacity influences this process. The case study also provides the researcher with an empirical scenario through which to examine the political environment – and the particular political opportunities – which allowed *Ciudad para Todos'* strategic actions to be effective.

Particular attention will be given to the first *ciclovia ciudadana*, executed on January 9th 2011. Due to similarities in government responses, media coverage, as well as the activists' planning and execution of the action, the second and third *ciclovias* will be analyzed more briefly.

The unit of analysis of this research paper will be a social movement organization – *Ciudad para Todos* (CPT hereafter) – seen not as a fixed reified social entity, but as an organization composed of individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, preferences and intrinsic motivations.

The data that informs this paper is based on primary and secondary sources as well as my direct participation and experience with CPT from September 2007 until August 2008, the summer of 2010 and winter to spring of 2011, which includes the execution of the first *ciclovia ciudadana*. Being one of the initial co-founders of the citizen collective and an intermittent member allowed me to access confidential information, such as the organization's internal minutes and *Planeacion Estrategica*[3] documents, their shared Dropbox[4] folder and secret Facebook group; but most importantly their trust.

As expected, my insider status raises the potential problem of bias. However, the risk is minimized by triangulating the data with primary and secondary sources, and by utilizing member validation (see Goodwin and Horowitz 2002, Roth and Mehta 2002) – the same strategy used by Ganz (2002). In order to assert the role of a researcher and not an activist, I gave a presentation and disclosure of my research intentions during the first meeting I attended at the initiation of my research project on May the 9th 2012. Furthermore, I avoided obtrusiveness by remaining silent during assemblies and abstained from exposing my personal, political and ideological views on certain matters during informal gatherings.

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[3] Every year the collective spends a weekend in the countryside where they reflect upon the identity, strategies, goals and outcomes of the organization; as well as the future directions to follow.
[4] On-line shared document folder.

Encouraged by scholars (McCorkel and Meyers 2003, Baca Zinn 1979, Shaffir 1991, Venkatesh 2002) who discuss issues of *positionality*, I kept in mind how the research results could be affected by my race, class, educational level, gender and background; by the way I presented myself; and by the informants' perceptions of me.

Three different qualitative methods of data collection were utilized in order to answer the research questions posed initially: 13 in-depth semi-structured interviews, content analysis of 41 documents[5] and participant observation.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with ten activists from CPT and three journalists; interviewees were chosen by using purposive sampling. Insofar as I knew ahead of time which activists planned and coordinated the *ciclovia ciudadana*, and which journalists covered CPT's actions, I was able to arrange interviews with these key informants. I attempted to interview the Minister of Transportation of Jalisco and the Mayor of Zapopan[6], unfortunately they did not respond to my invitations.

Saturation was quickly reached, respondents reported similar experiences, thoughts and perceptions of the events examined and no more formal interviews were necessary. Nevertheless, some important questions were asked to individuals and groups in informal settings. The interview guides utilized throughout the research are attached in the appendix of this paper.

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[5] A list of the newspaper articles and internal documents that were utilized for the content analysis is included in the annex of this research paper.

[6] The first *ciclovia* was executed in Zapopan, a municipality which is part of the Greater Guadalajara Metropolitan region.

Movement organization members with diverse commitment levels and a direct or indirect participation in the coordination and execution of the *ciclovia ciudadana* were included in the study. Interviews were used to inquire about the organization's internal characteristics as well as the processes by which activists constructed the collective action frames, discourses and tactical strategies used during the *ciclovia ciudadana*.

I also interviewed three journalists – Valeria Huerfano from *Mural*, Patricia Martinez from *Magis* and former journalist of *Publico-Milenio*, and N.P.V.[7] from *Publico-Milenio* – who were chosen because they had covered CPT's actions for the past couple of years as well as the local community news. Interviewing journalists gave this research a different perspective than that of activists or local politician's, it also provided a valuable source of critical accounts on the actions and discourses of the involved activists and politicians. Journalists were questioned about the elements that made the *ciclovia ciudadana* relevant, the political context, as well as the process and conditions by which decision-makers were pressured by a citizen collective like CPT.

The *Mural* newspaper published nineteen stories about the three *ciclovias* from January to December 2011, which were all used for content-analysis. The discourses employed by the social movement organization to justify the tactical campaign, as well as the reactions from the local authorities were identified. The *Mural* journal was selected as the only source for two reasons. First, it is known for its thorough and unbiased coverage of local social movements; second, it was the only newspaper that *ProQuest's* database could access.

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[7] In order to protect the journalist's identity, his real name will not be shared in this paper.

In addition, I studied twenty-two internal documents – from January 2011 to May 2012 - ranging from press releases, minutes, and internal communications among CPT's members for content-analysis. Attention was given to the internal characteristics of the organization such as decision-making processes, debates over strategic dilemmas, presence or absence of salient information, creativity processes and member motivation – all important elements of a group's strategic capacity according to Ganz (2002) which could influence tactical innovation.

Participant observation was carried out during the months of May, June, and July 2012. I attended weekly group meetings (general assemblies), smaller working group meetings, street-marches related to Mexico's 2012 *arguable* electoral fraud, and several private events such as in-house informal gatherings. The primary purpose was to assess and observe the internal dynamics, decision-making processes, funding sources, leadership characteristics, strategic dilemmas and member motivation of CPT.

BACKGROUND

Back in 1994, the *Colectivo Ecologista de Jalisco* proposed a series of bike-lane projects for the City of Guadalajara. Eight years later, in 2002, the first series of lanes was finally constructed on *Avenida La Paz*. However, it was quickly erased due to the complaints of residents and merchants who believed it would negatively affect their homes and businesses. Later, in 2004, *Guadalajara2020* – an organization of socially conscious entrepreneurs –

pressured local authorities to adopt the *Via Recreactiva*[8]. The *Via* consisted of the closure of several kilometers of city streets every Sunday for the enjoyment of cyclists and pedestrians, and continues to be widely used.

Later, in October 2005 and February 2007, the ITESO Jesuit University and the *Colectivo Ecologista de Jalisco* held several forums and academic conferences about sustainable transportation. These events highlighted the urgent need to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety (Plataforma Metropolitana para la Sustentabilidad).

Ciudad para Todos originated in September 2007 when a group of disgruntled citizens decided to protest against an urban freeway[9] that had been introduced unexpectedly by the transport authority (Von Bertrab 2009: 15). At the time of the group's formation, Guadalajara faced serious problems of congestion, air pollution, car dependency, lack of public and green spaces, and urban sprawl; factors that made the streets extremely dangerous for cyclists. Since its inception, CPT's framings, actions, and strategies have been critical of unsustainable urban development, especially as it relates to public space and transportation.

Prior to 2007, the discussion about sustainable transportation and urban development came from an academic standpoint that lacked a clear relationship to direct actions; or from NGOs that followed overused and ineffective modes of action that did not pressure

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[8] The *Via Recreactiva* consists of street closures on Sunday's as a means to invite citizens to enjoy the city by foot and by bike. It started in 2004 with an extension of 11km and duration of 4hours, nowadays it extends for 65km and with a schedule of 8am-2pm with an average attendance of 140,000 people. (GDL2020)

[9] Known as the *Viaducto Lopez Mateos* the proposed freeway turned a once-ordinary avenue that crossed the city into a 16km long makeshift freeway; causing distress to pedestrians – and even automobile drivers – to cross from one side to the other.

decision-makers or attract the media's attention. Yet, shortly after the emergence of CPT in September 2007, other citizen organizations and cyclist collectives[10] that focused on similar issues of urban development and sustainable transportation emerged. They were characterized by their grassroots approach to organizing and direct action. These organizations quickly became allies of CPT and built event-based and enduring coalitions (Levi and Murphy, 2006) such as the *Concejo Ciudadano para la Movilidad Sustentable.*[11]

The work of several collectives and organizations – spearheaded by CPT – crystallized in the creation of the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan[12] in 2010. Funded by the provincial government, and designed by urban planning experts, it identified a 1,500km network of bicycle lanes and nine pedestrian-accessibility zones. If executed, the plan had the potential to transform the metropolitan Guadalajara into a livable and accessible city, and to increase the percentage share of commutes by bicycle from the current 2% to over 15% (Jalisco 2010). However, local authorities had no serious commitment towards the above mentioned plan. No budget was allocated to its implementation and politicians dismissed citizens' concerns on the matter.

Meanwhile, the urban environment continued to deteriorate. Automobile-centred projects were constructed while parks and public spaces were bulldozed (Fonseca 2009), air and sound pollution worsened by the day, cyclists and pedestrians were killed at alarming rates in road accidents, and no serious investment – nor even the promise – was being made to

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[10] GDL en BICI, Ciudad Alterna, Cámara Rodante, Pedalea, Bici 10, Mi Bici-O – among others.
[11] The Citizen's Council on Non-Motorized Mobility, worked on transportation-related topics from August 2008 until the spring of 2012, when it changed its name to *Plataforma Metropolitana por la Sustentabilidad*, with representatives from eleven citizen collectives covering diverse urban sustainability issues.
[12] *Plan de Movilidad no Motorizada* in Spanish.

reverse this situation and make the streets safer, inclusive, and accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.

Eventually, through a process of tactical innovation that this research paper seeks to examine, CPT activists developed the *ciclovia ciudadana*—a successful tactical and discursive strategy for pressuring authorities to build the bike-lanes stipulated in the City's Sustainable Transportation Master Plan, and to create safer roads for cyclists.

SECTION ONE: STRATEGIC REPERTOIRES AND TACTICAL INNOVATION

In this section, I will present a brief theoretical overview of strategic repertoires and tactical innovation. These ideas, as well as the link between discursive and action repertoires will be examined by recurring to the case study of the *ciclovia ciudadana* and *Ciudad para Todos*.

REPERTOIRES OF ACTION AND DISCOURSE

Before analyzing the process of tactical innovation, one must first examine the strategic repertoires of a particular movement organization, that is, the whole set of means a group has to its disposition, within a particular society and moment in time, for making claims of different types and on different actors (Tilly 1986, Goirand 2010).

The repertoire of a movement organization not only includes tactical actions like *die-ins*, street performances, or political lobbying; the discourses movement organizations use are also strategies in and by themselves (Melucci 1996). These modes of action and discourse are constructed through the same processes of strategy, cultural availability and contention (Kriesi 2004, Steinberg 1999).

THE STRATEGIC REPERTOIRE OF *CIUDAD PARA TODOS*

During their first years, CPT activists recurred to repertoires of action and discourse that aimed to educate and raise awareness about the urban problematic and the advantages of sustainable transportation and vibrant public spaces. They also called for an urgent shift away from a car-centred culture and development model. Movement participants found in the automobile (and the infrastructure it requires) the root of the city's problems of road deaths, environmental urban pollution, health issues, and deterioration of public and green spaces, among others (Garcia Espinosa 2011).

The types of strategies put to use by CPT targeted city officials as well as the general population. They aimed to urge decision-makers to adopt a new urban development model, while inviting the inhabitants of the greater Guadalajara to demand public policies and infrastructures that would motivate sustainable modes of transportation, especially cycling and walking.

Von Bertrab, one of CPT's co-founders, argues that direct action has been a component of the organization's activities since their origin (2009: 15). Their diverse actions include petitions; concerts and educational workshops outside of City Hall and in several city parks; public talks and conferences by experts in sustainability, architecture, and urban planning; bicycle rides attended by thousands; initiatives to appropriate public space through fun interventions and newspaper editorials, only to name a few (Garcia Espinosa 2011).

Eventually, CPT recurred to more confrontational tactics and cultural framings as a way to pressure decision-makers and become more visible in the local media (Rivera 2010, Villasenor 2011). Activists organized disruptive – though legal – camps in the building sites of overpasses and urban highways; staged *die-ins*; installed ghost bikes to commemorate killed cyclists; interrupted the local Congress session once; and even threatened local deputies with tomatoes (Nuno and Morsan 2012). These actions captured the attention of the media and gathered support from the general population. Over time, CPT became one of the most important and influential citizen collectives in the city.[13]

CPT quickly became known as an innovator group. In contrast to the typical and expected actions of other civic groups, such as marches to City Hall, or the blocking of streets with banners and over-repeated chants, CPT members utilized unprecedented modes of action and strategies that no other group in Guadalajara had used before. In addition, the use of social media strategies like *Facebook* and *Twitter*, and the filming, editing, and showcasing of their

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[13] The *PUBLICO-MILENIO* journal selected *Ciudad para Todos* as the most relevant and influential civic group of 2011 due to their actions and accomplishments (Huerfano and Herrejon 2011).

actions through *YouTube* videos made the news of this particular citizen collective spread like wildfire among Internet users and newspaper readers.

In 2008-2009 after years of political pressure and direct action, the provincial government of Jalisco finally developed a Sustainable Transportation Master Plan. It diagnosed and identified the urban problematic of transportation in the greater Guadalajara – in particular the lack of safety conditions for cyclists – and proposed, as a solution, a 1500km network of bike-lanes and shared streets. Nevertheless, local authorities did not assign any budget to the execution of the plan, and ignored citizen's complaints. Despite CPT's educational, awareness-raising, and lobbying work, and the existence of the city's Sustainable Transportation Master Plan, dangerous conditions for cyclists prevailed.

In response, activists began framing the government's urban development model as inherently undemocratic. They argued that the government's vision benefited the elite (car-owners represented only the 33% of the population) while negatively affecting the quality of life of the rest of the population (CCMS 2011). Therefore, movement participants demanded transparent and participatory models of urban development and budget allocations (Garcia Espinosa 2011).

The *ciclovia ciudadana* emerged from this context as a successful discursive and action-oriented strategy to demand the construction of safer streets for cyclists.

Table 1: *Action repertoire of Ciudad para Todos (2007-2012).*

Type of Tactic	Brief Explanation
CONVENTIONAL	
Transportation Festival	Workshops and music to educate and raise awareness amongst the general population
Conferences	Presentations and dialogues between experts in diverse urban topics
World Carfree Day (Urban Installations)	Massive bicycle rides ending with the installation of urban sculptures made out of automobile pieces
Open-air Cinema	Monthly screening of movies in parks
''No Olvides Analco 1992''	Creation of a park in a 'forgotten' neighborhood that had been marginalized after the 1992 explosions
Neighborhood Gastronomic Tour	Neighborhood walk with the purpose of exploring – and tasting – the diverse foods of a neighborhood
Jane Jacob's Neighborhood Walk	City walks with the purpose of exploring the particularities of certain neighborhood and remembering the *lessons* of urban sociologist Jane Jacobs
Walk GDL*	Walking along *Av. Inglaterra* (23km long) to protest the construction of an elevated highway
DISRUPTIVE (LEGAL)	
8m2: Park(ing)	Taking over the space of a parked automobile by establishing a community space and green area within it
Nomad Park	Taking over the space of a whole intersection by establishing up an impromptu park
Camp VS Overpass	1-month camp-out to criticize the construction of an overpass and educate the community
Citizen's Park	The creation and maintenance of a park in an abandoned area of the city with the help of neighbours in order to offer an alternative use of space to a proposed elevated highway
Citizen's Wiki-fine	Distribution of citizen-made tickets to illegally parked cars that obstruct pedestrian and cyclists walkways
Die-In	Theatrical representation of cyclists lying on the streets as if dead as a way to call for safety measures
We Are Customers Too!	Surprise mass entry of cyclists in a Mall, as well as a Flashmob, to pressure administrators to install bicycle parking so as to counter bike-theft in the zone.
Ghost Bike*	Installation of white bicycles in sites where cyclists have been killed
DISRUPTIVE (ILLEGAL)	
Ciclovia ciudadana	Creation of a citizen-made bicycle lane to criticize and force authorities to provide safe zones for cyclists

*Actions of other citizen collectives in which members of Ciudad para Todos have collaborated and/or co-coordinated

THE PROCESS OF TACTICAL INNOVATION AND STRATEGIZING

Social movement organizations and their opponents engage in a seemingly endless process of *tactical interaction*. Social movement actors devise novel protest techniques to offset their own powerlessness – while the movement's opponents create tactical adaptations to neutralize tactical counters (McAdam 1983: 736).

Through 'creative moments' (Koopmans 2004), movement participants innovate at the margins of existing repertoires of action by constantly experimenting with new modes of action (Tilly 1986). These innovations can take the form of new collective frames, behavioural routines, organizational forms, or strategic repertoires. However, the impact of *new* tactics is temporal and short-lived, a once-innovative strategy or discourse can lose its effectiveness and news-worthiness if over-utilized (Della Porta and Diani 1999).

***CICLOVIA CIUDADANA*, A PRODUCT OF TACTICAL INNOVATION**

The *ciclovia ciudadana* was a unique and innovative action executed by CPT with the help of local universities and other citizen collectives in January 9th 2011. This particular tactical campaign consisted of a do-it-yourself bicycle lane which was painted by activists using a tricycle carrying an air-compressor machine which, using special road paint, marked a line in the asphalt as the activists pedalled the vehicle. In addition, other groups of people were in charge of 'stamping' the road with bicycle stencils, as well as hanging signs from nearby posts. It

was carried out as professionally as possible considering the resources at hand: around fifty committed people, approximately $12,000 MX (roughly one-thousand dollars), as well as some donated equipment and paint.

It was the first time in the history of Guadalajara that a group of citizens publicly modified city infrastructure, clearly violating the law by painting a 5km long white line in broad daylight. However, this public exposure was not incidental—the event was executed with the purpose of attracting media attention and exposing the government's lack of commitment towards cycling infrastructure and safety. In other words, this action was equivalent to a moral, symbolic, and physical attack on public authorities.

Movement participants were aware of the risk of being repressed and deliberately created a crisis situation. They believed that should state repression arise, it would attract even more media attention. Activists were willing to be arrested in order to demonstrate the government's irresponsibility towards cyclist's safety and also drew on the irony of the situation: being arrested for doing what elected officials *should* be doing.

Shortly after the first *ciclovia ciudadana* was carried out in January 2011, the provincial transit authority announced that it would make official any bike-lane executed by citizens as long as it was stipulated in the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan. This public statement and commitment reduced the cost of mobilization – and risk of state repression – and allowed activists to execute other *ciclovias* in March and November of the same year. This surprising and puzzling reaction of the authorities could perhaps be explained as a tactical neutralization effort. By capitalizing on the activists' discourse and tolerating their actions, local authorities

were able to neutralize the discourse and actions of the *ciclovia ciudadana*. However, once the media attention died out, politicians continued dismissing and ignoring the movement's demands. The *ciclovia ciudadana* campaign was able to push authorities to accept and improve a *particular* bike-lane with public resources; but was unable to force them to construct the other series of lanes.

THE GENERATION OF A DO-IT-YOURSELF STRATEGY

This singular idea was not without precedent – for years activists had considered the possibility of modifying the city themselves and had attempted, without success, to create a citizen-generated bicycle lane. These instances served as learning opportunities through which activists identified their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external possibilities and challenges to overcome.

On July 27th 2008, CPT members tried to paint a bike-lane on *Av. Chapultepec*, a wide avenue constantly invaded by parked cars (Solano 2009). Alternatively, they decided to use tape and paper to symbolically mark the line and raise awareness on the rights of cyclists to accessible and safe bike lanes.

Inspired by collectives in other cities that painted illegal bike-lanes at night; in April 2009 four members of CPT spray-painted bicycle stencils in several streets, and invited their Facebook networks to do the same by posting *how-to* guides on a web blog (see *www.tuciclovia.blogspot.mx*). Even though the term innovation alludes to a sense of novelty

and originality, for Tilly, adoption can introduce newness to a tactic by changing its immediate context of creation (Iles 2009: 27). In other words, the *domestication* (Hayes 2006) of a tactic forces actors to dramatically improvise, in order to fit the particular mode of action into a new context which could result in tactical innovation.

It was not until the autumn of 2010 that a university professor, Carlos Lopez Zaragoza, thought of creating a bike-lane on *Av. Santa Margarita* after seeing how a white line painted on that same street for a marathon race, was respected by drivers. After researching on previous bike-lanes in Guadalajara, and discovering that members of CPT had some experience in the matter, the university professor decided to contact them.

Carlos Lopez Zaragoza went to the organization's weekly general meeting and talked about his project. Shortly after, he was accepted as a member of the organization. After a three month period of preparation, which included fund raising among concerned citizens, preparing the material, studying the City's Sustainable Transportation Master Plan, engaging in endless meetings and debates to modify the initial project, and motivating participants, the first *ciclovia ciudadana* was ready to be executed.

The previously unsuccessful attempts to paint a citizen's bike-lane combined with the fresh vision of university professor Carlos Lopez Zaragoza permitted movement participants to re-contextualize and creatively re-imagine new ways in which a citizen-generated bike lane could be implemented. Even though the idea had originated in part outside of the organization,

it was CPT's internal characteristics and previous experiences that served as the breeding ground for the final and definite *ciclovia ciudadana* campaign.[14]

DISCURSIVE STRENGHTS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE *CICLOVIA CIUDADANA*

The discourse that accompanied the *ciclovia ciudadana* borrowed elements from rights and injustice master frames. CPT activists portrayed road safety as a right that was being denied to cyclists. They portrayed the situation as a social injustice by demonstrating how safe streets for cyclists was an urgent priority, and exposing the lack of commitment and responsibility of elected officials toward these needs (Hernandez 2011). In addition, several movement participants alluded to the prevailing situation as an undemocratic one. They argued that the city's budget was mostly funnelled towards automobile infrastructure and did not respond to the needs of the majority of the population. Rather public funds were being used to serve the interests of the elite (CCMS 2011).

The *ciclovia ciudadana* was an act of civil disobedience and generated a discourse of resistance directed at politicians. . It discursively conveyed the unwillingness of organized citizens to wait for politicians to execute their mandate, and exposed the urgency of the matter. All interviewed activists said the *ciclovia ciudadana* was a *'call of attention'* to local politicians. It demonstrated the government's lack of political will and coordination while

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[14] The strategy, method, target, scope and reach of Carlos Lopez Zaragoza's original idea were deeply modified after deliberative processes within the movement organization.

showing that constructing bicycle lanes was not only possible, but even achievable by a group of citizens with limited resources.

Surprisingly, local authorities not only tolerated the campaign and made the *ciclovia* official, but also congratulated the activists for their actions. The response of Jalisco's Transit Minister Diego Monraz, was to welcome the effort of concerned citizens by portraying the *ciclovia ciudadana* as ''an expression of free speech'' (Ocampo and Monraz 2011) rather than an illegal act. Thus, one could qualify the government's reaction – or *tactical neutralization* – as a mix of lipservice and outsourcing. They adopted an activist-friendly attitude while exempting themselves from the state's responsibility to respond to citizens' needs.

Local politicians were questioned by journalists on the reasons that activists were neither detained nor arrested, for their actions were clearly illegal (Ocampo and Monraz 2011). These criticisms from journalists forced CPT members to reframe their actions as acts of civil disobedience (they call it *symbolic violence*), that is, the breaking of a law with the conscious and planned intention of exposing a situation of injustice (Ocampo and Monraz 2011, Lopez Zaragoza 2011).

The *ciclovia ciudadana* had several short-comings and was not seen as a success by some CPT members. Despite the official adoption of the bike lane by the local authorities, movement participants knew they would not be able to complete the 1500km of bike lanes included in the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan unless the government seriously committed itself to executing the plan. Instead, political actors continued to be unable – or

unwilling – to coordinate amongst themselves or to bring projects to fruition that would

improve cyclists' safety.

Also, despite the adoption of a sustainable transportation discourse by the media and

politicians, real changes in policy or in budget allocations were still not happening. Aspiring

politicians running for office constantly spoke about the benefits of cycling and mass transit,

but had no serious proposals or projects to make those ideals a tangible reality.

MORE *CICLOVIAS*: THE ACTION CONTINUES

CPT members decided to continue doing more DIY bike-lanes despite the short-comings

previously discussed. The *ciclovia* action was repeated two other times with minor changes

from the first one. On March 6th and December 3rd, activists painted another series of lanes of

7km and 3.5km in length respectively—they were both made official by the government

immediately after their execution (Nuno and Morsan 2012). As the risk of repression was

reduced, more collectives and individuals participated in the coordination and execution of

these *ciclovias*.

The fourth *ciclovia* is scheduled to be executed in October 2012, and will bring with it

several changes that could be seen as an attempt to innovate tactically. It will be three times

longer (14.5km) and more complex than previous lanes due to the need to physically segregate

automobile traffic from bike-lanes. In addition, it will be done in one of the most important

avenues of the city, *Av. Avila Camacho*, and not in the city outskirts as the previous *ciclovias*. It

will cross two municipalities and connect two existing unconnected bike-lanes, thus creating the first network of bicycle lanes in the city. Most importantly, activists hope that it will generate a competition between the mayors of Zapopan and Guadalajara to appear citizen-friendly and concerned about cyclists' safety.

CPT members have already showed a great deal of organization in preparation for the fourth *ciclovia*. They have contacted and invited other citizen collectives and students from diverse backgrounds to participate in the action. They have analyzed the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan, visited the site, tested several techniques and materials to build the road separators, and have raised approximately $60,000MX as of August 2012 (roughly five times more than the resources used for the first *ciclovia*).

THE LINK BETWEEN ACTION AND DISCOURSE

The tactic and discourse of the *ciclovia ciudadana* must be seen as two interrelated and complimentary parts of the same project.

The *ciclovia ciudadana* accomplished the diverse framing objectives of identifying a problem, proposing a solution, and calling for action. It identified government officials' incapacity to solve the problem of insecurity for cyclists and ridiculed their incompetence. It also proposed the adoption of a proactive stance and DIY approach to the problem, and called for direct citizen action. In addition, it challenged the dominant cultural car-centred paradigm while asserting the moral, environmental, social and economic benefits of bicycling

After the formal and legal channels were exhausted, movement participants realized that the state and its institutional-bureaucratic mechanisms of citizen participation were ineffective to implement the much needed bicycle lanes in the city. In other words, decision-makers were either unable or unwilling to resolve the experienced grievance.

This particular cultural framing allowed movement participants to devise an innovative and potentially effective solution to the problem. That is, they proposed mode of action that urged citizens to actively participate and solve the problem *themselves*. The *ciclovia's do-it-yourself* approach allowed activists to overcome the government's incapacity. Throughout this process of citizen empowerment, movement participants re-signified their current situation, their capacities, and the possibilities for action.

This particular discourse helped legitimate and make possible the *ciclovia's* form of action— a process that Benford and Snow (2000: 627) refer to as the *frame-event dialectic*. Conversely, the mobilization of the *ciclovia ciudadana* also shaped the meaning and structure of the discursive strategy (627). For example, participants no longer portrayed their actions as *fun* public interventions, but as civil disobedience targeting the injustices created by Guadalajara's decision-makers.

Finally, the *ciclovia's* discourse and action were powerful symbolic tools that activists utilized to criticize the government and promote cycling while actually *constructing* the bike-lanes the city and their fellow cyclists needed.

SECTION TWO: ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC CAPACITY

In this section, I will begin by providing a brief overview of the theories pertaining to strategic capacity and will examine the strategic capacity of the social movement organization *Ciudad para Todos*, in relation to the *ciclovia ciudadana* campaign.

STRATEGIC CAPACITY

Ganz (2002) compels us to look beyond the resources or the political opportunities and threats a social movement organization faces. Rather, if we wish to better understand a movement's dynamics, strategy, and outcomes, we must study their *strategic capacity*, the creative deployment of human, cultural, and social-organizational resources (Edwards and McCarthy: 134). If we are to think of strategy as a creative or innovative thinking process (Ganz: 1011), then we must turn our attention toward the leaders' biographies, contacts, networks and repertoires; as well as the organization's deliberation processes, resource flows, and accountability structures. These dynamic components are the dimensions from which strategic capacity can originate, and which link directly to the three main elements of an organization's strategic capacity, as identified by Ganz (2002: 1012): salient knowledge, heuristic processes, and motivation.

Salient knowledge alludes to the member's access to local information – or action repertoires – that can facilitate effective problem solving. *Heuristic processes* permit actors to utilize the salient knowledge to devise creative solutions by their capacity to imaginatively

re-contextualize their understanding. *Motivation* is necessary to sustain actor's participation, mobilization and engagement.

THE STRATEGIC CAPACITY OF *CIUDAD PARA TODOS*

Three key factors related to strategic capacity are central in analyzing CPT's tactical innovation, as well as in explaining how and why the messages and actions of CPT were credible, well-received and effective: 1) expertise, 2) creative and fun actions, and 3) non-partisanship. The first two can be directly related to the three above-mentioned central elements of an organization's strategic capacity identified by Ganz (2002). This research has identified (*non*)*partisanship* to be another potential source of strategic capacity for social movement organizations. Furthermore, the internal characteristics of the organization – specifically their horizontal structure, accountability structures, and funding sources - also played a crucial role in the process of designing innovative and effective strategies, as well as in the way the group's actions were perceived by other actors such as the media, the government and the general population.

These elements – or sources – of the strategic capacity of *Ciudad para Todos* will be now examined in detail.

Expertise

CPT is composed of a diverse array of members with high levels of formal education, leadership and expertise in various subjects, and access to manifold social networks. It is this

diversity which allows the *leadership team* to devise alternative and novel ideas that can evolve through processes of deliberation and negotiation (Ganz 2002). All members have university-level education – something uncommon in Mexico – and are experts in their field: architecture, urban planning, environmental science, graphic design, psychology, law, political science, information technology, philosophy, sociology and film-making, to name a few (see table 2).

The members' expertise makes the group unique and strong—what they say is backed up by information and solid arguments. Their academic background makes their voice credible and reliable to the media and the general population (Huerfano 2012, Martinez 2012, and Perez Vega 2012).

Their distinct backgrounds and areas of expertise allow movement participants to access diverse sociocultural networks, which are potential sources of strategic repertoires or salient information.

Creative Actions

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue that creativity – what they call the *projective element of agency* – allows actors to generate possible trajectories of action (971). Put differently, members' creativity allows the group to experience processes of re-contextualization and *bricolage*, which in turn aids them in the design of new strategies to accomplish their goals.

CPT members have identified that in order for a tactical action to be effective it has to be original and fun. Their intervention-based actions are eye-catching and fun. While being critical of the government's urban development and making a direct attack on authorities' legitimacy, actions like the *ciclovia ciudadana* constitute an experience that movement participants immensely enjoyed.

Contrary to most civil society groups who frequently march towards City Hall – a clearly over-repeated and unsuccessful strategy – CPT has characterized and distinguished itself due to the originality in their actions (Huerfano 2012). The creativity exercised in CPT's public interventions not only draws the attention of media and decision-makers, it also engages and empowers small numbers of local citizens.

Education, the opportunity to travel, access to diverse sociocultural networks both within Mexico and abroad has allowed movement participants to experience creative processes. The impetus of creativity might also come from the challenges and conflicts of social life (Emirbayer and Mische: 984). In fact, many of CPT's actions have emerged in reaction to the government's development projects and decisions. In these situations, decisions and actions must be taken in short time and strategies must often be of *low-cost* and *high-impact*.

Non-partisanship

Even though non-partisanship is not mentioned by Ganz in his 2002 study of strategic capacity, this research paper argues that this particular quality – rare in other social movement organizations in Guadalajara – allows this group to devise effective strategies. Since the origin

of the group in 2007, the collective was seen by members and external actors as a *truly* citizens

based organization with no political ties or aspirations of entering the political sphere.

Table 2*: Member's age, gender, educational attainment, area of expertise and whether or not they are University professors.*

CORE GROUP [24 members]					
Codename	*Age*	*Gender*	*Educ*	*Expertise*	*Prof. Status*
A.R.	40	M	BA	Design	
A.P.	35	F	PhD	Literature	Yes
A.B.	29	F	BA	Law and Politics	
L.A.G.	24	F	BA	Architecture	
J.S.	27	M	BA	Philosophy	
B.H.	26	M	BA	Media	
B.M.	27	F	BA	Architecture	
C.Z.	42	M	PhD	Philosophy	Yes
E.Q.	22	M	BA	Media	
F.R.	40	M	BA	Architecture	
E.M.	29	M	BA	Technology	
F.H.	26	M	BA	Media	
G.R.	38	F	BA	Film	Yes
J.M.	28	M	BA	Technology	
J.Z.	25	M	BA	Environment	
J.N.	28	M	BA	Film	
K.P.	30	F	MA	Media	Yes
M.R.	49	M	BA	Environment	
M.R.	24	F	BA	Environment	
M.U.	26	F	BA	Economics	
M.S.	30	F	BA	Environment	
N.B.	36	M	MA	Law and Politics	Yes
P.A.	34	M	BA	Technology	Yes
J.O.	24	M	BA	Environment	

Median Age 30 years (Min: 22 Max: 49)
Gender Distribution Male 62%   Female 38%
Education Distribution BA 84%   MA 8%   PhD 8%
Expertise Composition Environment 21% Media 17% Architecture 12%
(predominant areas of Technology 12%   Philosophy 8%   Film 8%
expertise) Law and politics 8%

*25% of the members are University Professors

Not being affiliated with or supportive of any political party in particular has given CPT the ability – and the *political freedom* – to criticize and congratulate any politician from any political party when necessary. It has also given them the capacity to negotiate with any decision-maker from any political force without compromising themselves for a certain agenda or political figure.

Being non-partisan does not entail being apolitical. CPT has always been a politically active group—constantly lobbying authorities, criticizing political actors, and publishing communiqués, press releases or declarations that urge decision-makers to adopt certain strategies and models of urban development.

CPT has also gained credibility as a transparent organization and reliable source of information through its non-partisan status. Journalists expressed the trust they have in a *truly* citizen-based collective with no political aspirations, interest in accessing power or impetus to manipulate information for a desired goal (Huerfano 2012, Perez Vega 2012, Martinez 2012).

A group identity has also been built around their characteristic non-partisanship. CPT activists constantly talked about the importance of building a bottom-up grassroots democracy in Mexico that is participatory and deliberative. They identify in traditional politics – hijacked by the interests of political parties and *de facto* power groups – the root of the nation's underdevelopment and the main obstacle to democracy. For example, when invited to work

with a political party during the 2012 elections, CPT activist Alfredo Romano rejected the offer and highlighted his non-partisan identity by stressing "*Yo soy un CPTero.*"[15]

Internal Organizational Characteristics

In addition to expertise, creativity and non-partisanship, the organization's internal characteristics such as their organizational structure, decision-making processes, accountability structures and funding sources are of particular relevance for understanding and examining the group's capacity for devising strategy.

CPT is a collective with a horizontal structure and a consensus-based decision-making process. Despite the lack of a formal mandate or written rules, through trial and error the movement organization has developed a spoken agreement of membership rules. In order to ensure the citizen spirit of the collective, members must not have ties with the government or with a political party. Even though everyone is invited to the weekly general assemblies, only those that have earned the trust of the core group – through time and participation in actions – will be invited to become members. Through the membership status, participants gain voting rights and access to the secret Facebook group in which all the 'quick' decisions are taken and where confidential documents are shared.

The decision making process aspires to be completely consensual, although it is flexible according to the situation. Small unimportant debates will be solved quickly—even if consensus is not totally reached, a decision will be made as long as a majority is in agreement. On the contrary, for important relevant decisions – such as the position of the collective on certain

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[15] I am a CPT [member].

matters, or the types of actions used during a tactical campaign – total consensus must be reached before moving forward. In cases where a decision must be taken and consensus is not reached, the group will call for a majority vote.

So far, the movement organization has successfully solved the potential problem of what Jo Freeman (1972) called the 'tyranny of structurelessness'. The group has remained grassroots and action-oriented while still being able to make relatively fast decisions, and has built a deliberative processes of decision-making in which all members participate equally. As Polletta (2002) has argued, consensual methods of decision-making – especially among diverse leadership teams – allow for effective and ground-breaking strategies to emerge (10). Or in Ganz's words, deviant perspectives lead to innovative choices, and develop group capacity to perform strategizing tasks more creatively and effectively (2002: 1017).

There is no formally elected leader that represents the organization, however, there are *moral* or *charismatic* leaders who have been in charge of lobbying politicians for the past four years, and/or have been the movement's spokespersons and co-founders. In addition, there are *self-selected* project leaders who will coordinate specific initiatives (e.g., the *ciclovia ciudadana*). These leaders, according to Ganz (2002: 1018) will be more likely to possess skills and intrinsic motivations associated with creative work. Project leaders will coordinate a small working group with the ability to take small decisions and carry out necessary research and actions.

Despite the relative autonomy of small project leaders, as a way to assure accountability, the final decisions of every working group (and project) will be ratified through

consensus by the whole collective in the general assemblies and/or through the secret Facebook group.

The funding sources of CPT come from informal sources and from multiple constituencies. The group has not applied for status as a formal NGO that could receive money from foundations or government bodies for two main reasons. First, they believe that receiving money from tax-payers– from an opaque and corrupt government that does not consult citizens on how the budget is allocated – would be against their principles and demands for participatory democracy. Second, they fear that receiving money from an official source would restrict their actions and discourses – especially their critiques of government and the state.

Nevertheless, CPT manages to receive funds from multiple constituencies – such as raffles or external donations– which allow for more strategic flexibility due to the autonomy for greater room to manoeuvre, keeping the focus of the organization in the necessary actions to carry out, and not in paying bills (Ganz 2002: 1017).

SECTION THREE: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, POLITICAL PROCESS AND THE POLITICAL OPORTUNNITY STRUCTURE

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE *CICLOVIA CIUDADANA*

What factors of the political environment can explain that shortly after activists painted the *ciclovia ciudadana* – a clearly illegal act – Transit Minister Diego Monraz and Zapopan City Mayor Hector Vielma not only tolerated the action and recognized it as an official bike-lane, but even congratulated the participants for their effort?

Even though the *ciclovia ciudadana* did not bring with it policy adoption or change, or a drastic shift in public spending, its political impact is seen as successful by movement participants for several reasons. First, the bike-lanes were made official immediately after the action was carried out, so that in 24 hours the movement was able to achieve what years of legal and formal actions could not. Second, the necessity of constructing bike-lanes became part of politicians' public agenda and discourse, and repeatedly captured media attention.

My analysis of the *ciclovia ciudadana* case study, discussed below, identifies three principal elements of the political context in Guadalajara that allowed CPT's mobilization and collective action frames to be effective: access to elite allies; division among political actors; and the pre-electoral context. In addition, as Goodwin and Jasper (1999), Giugni (2008) and Dosh (2009) have noted, public opinion – especially in the context of elections – plays a crucial role in the political environment of social movement activity and outcomes.

Access to Elite Allies

Access to elite allies was crucial for the *ciclovia's* outcome insofar as the activist-authority relation provided valuable information as well as a carrier of the organization's claims into the state apparatus.

This relationship between activists and figures of authority did not suddenly emerge during the *ciclovia ciudadana*. For years previously, CPT leader – particularly Felipe Reyes and Jesus 'Negro' Soto – built ties with relevant political actors by sitting on municipal committees, participating in negotiations, and attending countless conferences and events related to urban development. They also had many experiences of 'argumentative encounters' through newspaper articles, interviews, and academic symposiums. It would be impossible to claim that the *ciclovia ciudadana* would have been made official shortly after its execution if Transit Minister Diego Monraz and Zapopan City Mayor Hector Vielma had not been allies – at least in a discursive sense – with CPT prior to this tactical campaign. Furthermore, one could make the argument that these ties were also part of the organization's strategic capacity.

Prior to the movement's actions, movement leader Felipe Reyes was in communication with both Hector Vielma, the Mayor of Zapopan – the municipality in which the *ciclovias* were carried out – and Jalisco's Transit Minister, Diego Monraz. With the help of a trusted colleague who worked closely with the City Mayor, Felipe Reyes was able to call Hector Vielma's personal line the night before the action to disclose the intentions of the citizen collective, and to be reassured that there would be no police repression. The morning of the *ciclovia ciudadana* action, as activists were stopped and questioned by transit police, Felipe Reyes communicated with Transit Minister Diego Monraz through Twitter to remind him of his commitment and support of sustainable transportation collectives. Minutes later, the Transit Police received a call and left the scene.

Thus, committed activists pushed against the limits of decision-makers' authority and created a well-covered crisis situation in which they tested politicians' support of the movement and the movement's demands. The eyes, cameras, and twitter accounts of the city were focused in on the reactions of politicians. Put another way, CPT members orchestrated a situation in which the most viable or less costly action that politicians could take was to accept the *ciclovia ciudadana*.

Divisions among Political Actors

The division and competition among political actors in a context of government incoordination is able to explain an incapacity and unwillingness to construct Guadalajara's bicycle lanes. This particular problem was addressed by citizen-generated actions – as exemplified by the *ciclovia ciudadana* case study. Importantly, it was addressed by citizens who had an uncompromising non-partisan stance.

Over the course of my research, I discovered that certain politicians were in fact allies of CPT and had the intention of constructing bike-lanes in Guadalajara. Their good intentions were stopped by opposing politicians who did not want the party in power to complete successful projects due to the electoral repercussions that it could bring. In other words, opposition parties did not want the current decision-makers to do a good job – at the expense of cyclists' safety and the common good – because that would make it easier for them to gain voter support in the next elections.

For instance, Transit Minister Diego Monraz had expressed several times the need and urgency to shift towards a sustainable model of urban transportation (Huerfano 2012) but his

good intentions were blocked by other political actors. However, when the bike-lane was built by citizens – who, as I said, were not supportive of any political party – the authorities from different parties had no better option than to approve the bike-lane. By rejecting the intervention, they would negatively affect their public image as well as that of their parties. By supporting it, they could capitalize from the citizens' actions and improve their reputation.

Pre-electoral Context

In January 2011, when the *ciclovia ciudadana* was executed, the electoral aspirations of the political actors involved – in the context of internal party elections – were influential for the effectiveness of the movement's strategic repertoire, and its outcome.

In the 2012 election, Hector Vielma (from the PRI) and Diego Monraz (from the PAN) were running to become their party's candidate as Jalisco's Provincial Governor and Zapopan's Mayor, respectively.

Both decision-makers thought they had sufficient opportunities to position themselves within their respective parties and knew that repressing citizen activists would generate bad publicity and turn down voter support. This idea is supported by Almeida (2003) and Dosh (2009), who have shown that electoral contexts put pressure on to-be candidates. The use of repression could generate negative publicity and destabilize the legitimacy of the state's actions.

The *ciclovia ciudadana* became a 'spotlight' through which politicians could show themselves as friendly, helpful, and supportive of citizens' concerns (Ocampo and Villasenor 2011, Fonseca 2011) as a way to boost their popularity and capitalize on the citizens actions.

Not only they tolerated the action and did not repress the movement organization, they also

congratulated the activists' efforts and offered them help and resources – such as paint and

labor – for their subsequent activities.[16] For instance, Transit Minister Diego Monraz, made a

particular effort to take advantage of the citizens' activities by showing up on his bicycle during

the second *ciclovia ciudadana* and allowing himself to be photographed by journalists –

something clearly uncommon and deliberate (Huerfano 2012).

In conclusion, these three political opportunities can explain the particular political

context that allowed movement participants to execute the *ciclovia ciudadana* in such an

effective manner, with a particular noticeably outcome, and without even being arrested!

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Ciudad para Todos was able to devise an innovative tactic, the *ciclovia ciudadana*, with

the ability to offset the organization's powerlessness and introduce a *do-it-yourself* approach to

local organizing, while simultaneously accomplishing diverse outcomes. The *ciclovia ciudadana*

exposed the government's lack of coordination and incapacity to provide safe streets for

cyclists; it called for citizens' direct action; and challenged the dominant cultural car-centred

paradigm while actually physically constructing the series of lanes cyclists needed. In addition,

the crisis situation generated by the *ciclovia ciudadana* was eye-catching and newsworthy,

attracting the attention of media and politicians alike. However, local decision-makers were

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[16] This offer was rejected by CPT members by exhorting the Transit Department to put those resources to use by
simply '*doing their job*' (Nuno and Morsan 2012)

able to neutralize the tactic by adopting a citizen-friendly attitude, tolerating the *ciclovia* and

acknowledging their lack of responsibility, though without a proactive commitment on their

part to finish the other series of lanes. In other words, politicians exempted themselves from

their responsibility by relying on the citizens' *noble* actions and giving them 'permission' to

continue doing *ciclovias*. Thus, it will be interesting to see what the fourth *ciclovia* will bring in

terms of tactical innovation and interaction, when it is executed in October 2012.

As defended throughout the paper, the strategic capacity of a movement organization

positively influences the process of tactical innovation. The internal organizational

characteristics that allowed CPT to generate effective strategies included: the expertise of their

members, their capacity to devise creative actions, and their non-partisan status. These

elements granted them the knowledge and sociocultural networks necessary for devising novel

actions, made their message credible and reliable, transformed the act of struggle into a playful

experience, and gave them the necessary political freedom to strategically maneuver within the

political environment. Nevertheless, it must be said that these capacities were triggered by the

fresh ideas and challenges that university professor Carlos Lopez Zaragoza brought into the

organization.

The political environment in which a movement operates is crucial in explaining its

outcomes. Particular political opportunities such as access to elite allies, competition and lack

of coordination between government officials, and a pre-electoral context can help us

understand the outcome of the *ciclovia ciudadana*. Communication with key political actors –

Transit Minister Diego Monraz and Zapopan Mayor Hector Vielma – both prior to and during

the actual event, allowed CPT to mitigate the risk of being repressed, and aided in the official adoption of the *ciclovia*. The competition between the above-mentioned political actors (in a pre-electoral context) forced these aspiring politicians to not only accept the citizens' actions as a way to keep their public image safe and unpolluted, but to also see beyond their party interests and assure the citizen-made *ciclovias* be officially implemented and respected.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The collective action put forward by the *ciclovia ciudadana* campaign brought new discourses of democracy into the political arena. Movement activists demanded participatory and deliberative forms of democratic governance and urban development. The *ciclovia ciudadana* strategy and the process by which it was generated, as well as the organizational characteristics of CPT, all expressed that message. In other words, *the medium was the message.*[17]

The novel and effective *ciclovia ciudadana* strategy *was* a symbolic action and discourse with the ability to empower ordinary citizens and criticize the government's incapacity to fulfill its responsibilities, while actually resolving the problematic by building the much-needed bicycle lanes. Furthermore, it was a useful and powerful tool in Mexico's democratization struggle and construction of social capital (Cadena-Roa 2003).

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[17] The form the medium takes is in and by itself part of the message. This famous phrase was coined by Marshall McLuhan.

The *ciclovia ciudadana* became a source of inspiration and an adoptable, effective strategy to challenge authorities and accomplish goals. Local newspapers, web blogs, and web 2.0 social networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* acted as diffusion networks (McAdam 1982) that permitted activists in Mexico and abroad to imitate the *do-it-yourself* approach of the *ciclovia ciudadana*. For instance, organized citizens in Guadalajara, Mexico City, and Jundiaia (Sao Paulo), Brazil executed their own citizen-originated bike-lane actions shortly after CPT's first *ciclovia* was executed.

Finally, this paper also points out to the importance of researching identity and solidarity when trying to understand the strategic capacity and process of tactical innovation a social movement organization experiences. As Dosh (2009: 92) argues, identity not only produces strong solidarity ties among movement participants and differentiates an organization from other actors and organizations, it also encourages and sustains innovation as an ''innovator group'' identity is formed.

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APPENDIX

<u>1. Interview guide for activists (in Spanish).</u>

❖ Me podrías decir que hacías antes de formar parte de CPT y que te hizo involucrarte en esa organización?

❖ Me podrías decir que tipo de acciones usaba CPT antes de la *ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Tu dirías que fueron exitosas o fallidas?

❖ Se siguen usando por CPT?

❖ Me podrías decir, para ti, en que consiste la acción de la *Ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Responde a un problema?
   Ofrece una solución?

❖ Que ventajas o desventajas tiene sobre las acciones que hacían antes?
   ♦ Tu crees que es una acción novedosa, innovativa, original?
   Crees que fue 'exitosa' o 'fallida' ?

❖ Me podrías decir con que mensajes, ideas, o metáforas motivaron a la gente a participar en la *ciclovia ciudadana*? O por lo menos para aceptarla y apoyarla?

❖ Como respondió, o reacciono el Gobierno a la *ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Y como respondieron los medios (la opinión publica)?

❖ Y como respondió la ciudadanía?

❖ En caso de que estén planeando diferentes acciones futuras, en que se parecen, o difieren, de la acción de *Ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Que lecciones les trajo la *Ciclovia ciudadana*?

❖ Me podrías decir como se tomaron las decisiones de la acción *Ciclovia ciudadana* dentro del grupo?
   ♦ Probe: Utilizan el consenso o la votación por mayoría?
   Cual es la estructura del grupo, hay lideres?

❖ A la hora de tomar las decisiones y planear esta acción. Me podrías decir si el grupo tenia información del contexto político?
   ♦ Probe: Tenían contactos dentro -o fuera- del gobierno que les compartieran información pertinente?

❖ Ustedes creian que era un buen momento para una acción de este tipo? Pension que serial reprimidos?

❖ Como se financio la *Ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Se consideraron otros medios para reunir fondos?
   Porque se eligió esa opción sobre otras?

❖ Tu consideras que se usaron los recursos económicos y humanos de manera eficiente?

2. Interview guide for journalists (in Spanish).

❖ Tú consideras que el Movimiento Ciclista y de Sustentabilidad Urbana esta posicionado en la agenda mediática?
   ♦ Probe: Desde cuando?
      A partir de que evento(s)?
❖ Que organizaciones, instituciones, o personas consideras fuentes de información en temas de movilidad sustentable y/o recuperación de espacios públicos?
   ♦ Probe: - Consideras que *Ciudad para Todos* tiene credibilidad en sus mensajes/acciones?
❖ Consideras qeu los mensajes de CPT resuenan en la cultura del lector promedio/tapatío promedio?
❖ Como ha sido tu experiencia al cubrir este movimiento?
❖ Me podrías decir, para ti en que consistió la acción de *Ciclovia ciudadana*?
   ♦ Probe: Como fue tu experiencia al cubrir estas acciones?
❖ Observaste alguna modificación en las acciones tomadas por la organización en la segunda *Ciclovia ciudadana*, en relación a la primera?
   ♦ Probe: Cuales? Porque?
❖ Tu consideras que los miembros de CPT tienen conocimiento sobre como funcionan los medios?
   ♦ Probe: Los mensajes y acciones de la organización son *mediatizables*?
      Que factores harían sus acciones mas mediatizables?
❖ Has tenido problemas en colocar estas temas en la agenda del periódico?
   ♦ Probe: Que discusiones has tenido con el editor al respecto?
      Qué percepciones le dan tus colegas de otras secciones.
❖ Me podrías decir cuales fueron las fuerzas y debilidades de CPT en su intento de posicionarse mediáticamente?
❖ *Esta es una pregunta proyectiva para descubrir como percibes a la organización Ciudad para Todos*: Si *Ciudad para Todos* fuera una persona, como serian sus gustos, consumos, mentalidad, carácter, personalidad, características físicas?
❖ Sientes simpatía hacia esta organización ciudadana? Porque?
❖ De la primer nota que escribiste sobre CPT has observado alguna modificación en las acciones tomadas por la organización en relación con la última nota que has escrito sobre el mismo tema?
   ♦ Probe: Cuales? Porque?
      Me podrías describir el contexto de la primera y ultima nota que escribiste sobre CPT
❖ Tu consideras que las autoridades y políticos se sienten presionados por las acciones de *Ciudad para Todos* que han sido cubiertas por los Medios?

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