

THE ‘RETURN TO TRADITION’ AND IMPLOSION OF ATTAC IN DENMARK*

Version 1.02, May 2006

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

Doctoral Student in Communications,
Columbia University, USA.

rkn2103@columbia.edu

Work in progress, please do not cite
without author’s permission

* I would like to thank the participants in the ‘Media, Culture, and the Politics of Small Things’ mini-conference, May 6, 2006 at the New School for Social Research for insightful comments and far more food for thought than I could possible process and fit into this paper.

February 24, 2001, Copenhagen. More than a thousand people are crammed into a too-small room, listening to a spectacled, greying Frenchman raging against America and neo-liberalism. Is this the way they say the future is meant to be? It was, at least for a short while. The future had a name, and it was ATTAC – and those gathered that night were not only passive listeners, but also, more importantly, some of the many people interested in creating a Danish branch of this growing transnational movement. In the course of the next eight months, its trajectory in Denmark goes from the early enthusiasm of large numbers of activists riding a wave of positive media coverage and popular sympathy to awkward attempts at explaining away why only 134 people attended the national convention formally founding ATTAC-Denmark on October 6-7. How did that happen, why, and what did it entail?

Here, I address these three questions with both hands and one eye firmly on the particular case at hand, and with the other eye squinting towards the broader issue of the potential of movement-organised and people-driven politics in contemporary liberal democracies. Understanding the implosion of ATTAC in Denmark is important in itself, but potentially even more so insofar as it can shed light on what it takes to generate ‘people-power’ in a terrain where the internal opposition of institutional politics seems unwilling to ‘go it alone’ and where the supposedly preconstituted agents of progressive politics that successive generations of theorists have dreamt up – ranging from the proletariat to the ‘ontological multitude’ – have once again let down their prophets.¹ In a situation where those forms of sedimented collective identity (whether organised around class, religion, ethnicity, or nationality) that survive in the face of ‘liquid modernity’ and the ‘fragmented world of the social’ seems to have absolutely no necessary relations to whatever one chooses to conceive of as progressive politics, but, if anything, rather with reaction and defence of the status quo, a central question for those who believe in human-driven political progress is *how* the mobilisation and organisation of forms of transformative political subjectivity is possible in very diverse and uneven social terrains.² As a general stance, I refuse to believe that external forces make such political mobilisations inevitable or impossible, and instead insist that people always have the *potential* to make a difference. The case analysed here provides potentially broader insights into the challenges involved in the attempt to realise such a potential, difference because it demonstrates that ATTAC’s relative failure was *not* the product of external determinations, but of the proponents’ own interaction.

In making this point, I concretely trace how interactions between ATTAC’s proponents led to its implosion into obscurity and passivity as it became increasingly defined by a

‘return to tradition’. What this entailed will be spelled out in details below. The concrete micro-interactive reasons why this happened are in the concluding part of the paper linked explicitly to the broader issue of the potential of mobilisation through a discussion what it takes for movements dependent on interactively generated power to pursue fully political aspirations. One thing is the presence of a fully political thrust, something my case allow me to take as given – but another is the way in which this project is fleshed out in practice. This is something those who came to define ATTAC in Denmark sought to do through the imposition of a traditional organisational model of consensus and homogeneity that eliminated not only the disagreements and differences that had characterised the movement’s emergence – but also the people-power potential precisely this had generated. I therefore end by suggesting that movements must reject the royal road of Gramsci’s traditional ‘modern prince’ in favour of a post-traditional one of ‘movement mediators’, people harnessing difference and disagreements behind fully political projects they *identify* with without attempting to reduce everything to *identity* with them.³

Introduction – The Emergence of ATTAC

To fully appreciate the severe character of ATTAC’s implosion, one has to keep in mind both its dramatic *entrée* and its political thrust. No nascent movement in recent Danish history have appeared with such initial force. ATTAC, originating in France, but by the time it in December 2000 first appeared in Denmark firmly established internationally with over eighty-five thousand members of its more than fifteen national organisations, provoked both the Social Democratic prime minister and the Liberal leader of the opposition to take a stance. Its demands were the centrepiece of a whole day of parliamentary debate. It led to the formation of ‘Counter-ATTAC’, a small group of liberalist and conservative parliamentarians vehemently opposed to its proposals. It spawned numerous editorials across the board from all major newspapers. It generated broad sympathy, enthusiastic activism, and massive media coverage from the first day it appeared in Denmark.

In the media, ATTAC was framed as transcending all the cleavages that have traditionally defined social movements in Denmark, especially of a political bent, as being on the left or the right, counter-cultural or pro-establishment, pro or con the EU.⁴ It was said to be the quintessential post-modern movement, organised as a decentralised network where people could opt in and out as they pleased, and participate online without being physically present.⁵

Both internationally and nationally, ATTAC may appear at a first glance to pursue only a very specific set of demands. A central one is even build into its name, which stems from a French acronym, *Association pour la Taxe Tobin pour l'Aide aux Citoyens*, translatable as the *Association for a Tobin Tax to Aid the Citizens*. The remaining specific demands are stipulated in the international Platform that all national ATTAC-chapters have adopted as their own in a more or less direct translation – to penalise tax havens, prevent the generalisation of pension funds, promote transparency in investments in developing countries, and a general annulment of the public debt of developing countries.⁶

Judging from this list, ATTAC could look like one of the organisations out to ease the sufferings of the poor – another Jubilee 2000, another Make Poverty History. However, the motivation build into the movement's name, the claim that its specific demands are to be fulfilled for the 'aid of the citizens', and not particulars such as the poor or the needy, hints at its broader aspirations. ATTAC presents itself as fundamentally a popular movement for the expansion of democracy to encompass issues raised by different processes of globalisation. According to the international Platform (and the Danish platform is identical),

more generally, the goals are:

- to reconquer space lost by democracy to the sphere of finance,
- to oppose any new abandonment of national sovereignty on the pretext of the "rights" of investors and merchants,
- to create a democratic space at the global level.

It is simply a question of taking back, together, the future of our world.⁷

Viewed through the lens of a post-Marxist version of Gramsci that will be discussed more fully below, this captures the movement's double political thrust. Negatively, it says 'no' to the Margaret Thatchers of this world and their TINA-doctrine ("there is no alternative"), offering instead the rallying cry "another world is possible". Against a dominant discourse (often named 'neo-liberal') that ties the terms 'democracy' and 'the market' closely together and cast the issues ATTAC deal with as beyond the control of individual men and intentional action, the movement represents a counter-hegemonic thrust.

Positively, it pursued an alternative hegemonic project that takes it beyond resistance into the realm of what I here conceive as the fully political. Its alternative is organised around the term 'democracy' and references to 'the people'. It is a project aiming at expanding the agenda of established political institutions to deal with global problems, generate popular participation in decisions on public matters pertaining to globalisation – in total, to subject new important questions to the self-government of people.

It was as such, as a reinvigoration of democracy, as a post-modern and cleavage-transgressing fully political movement with concrete demands linked to broader concerns with an alternative to what was, as, in singular, *the* social movement of the future present in the present, that both left wing and mainstream media framed ATTAC when it emerged in Denmark.⁸

Some of this was hype, but some of it was also hope. ATTAC-France and other national branches had already demonstrated that the movement could be organised as a significant power, the German branch that was at this point languishing also demonstrated the risk of failure.⁹ These differences underline that the study of a transnational movement's emergence in a national context is not a simple case of 'methodological nationalism', but sensitivity to the empirical fact that the main differences in the relative success of ATTAC branches are precisely national, and not regional or local.

As was the case in all of Scandinavia, the initial emergence of ATTAC in Denmark was not only characterised by massive and generally charitable media attention, but also the mobilisation of a large number of sympathisers from many different backgrounds.¹⁰ The usual suspects turned out in force as intellectuals, journalists, artists, trade unionists, NGO activists, and party members from across a wide range of the political spectrum (Conservatives to Communists) flocked around the banner raised. These brought experience, name-recognition and monetary resources. What was even more distinct and important about the emergence of ATTAC was, however, the even larger number of previously unengaged people that was mobilised. Veterans and inexperienced proponents came together and interacted through a full range of informational systems, ranging from op-ed debate in national newspapers, over debate on the homepage of one such (*Information*), an online debate on the commercial host Groupcare.dk created in March, and to local committees established after the February meeting. It appeared as if there was only one minor detail standing in the way of the ATTAC's immediate success in Denmark: It did not yet exist as a social movement, let alone an organisation. People flocked around a name, the position associated with it based on media coverage and the dissemination of knowledge about it through informal networks, and the transformative potential everyone believed it had.¹¹ As I will show, it was precisely the interaction process through which its diverse proponents institutionalised it as a social movement organisation that brought about its implosion.

The rest of the paper will analyse this through the following steps. First, the reasons for focussing on micro-interaction are fleshed out through a comparison with alternative explanations of the process at hand, and the somewhat unorthodox theoretical triumvirate of Hannah Arendt, Erving Goffman and a post-Marxist version of Antonio Gramsci that allow for the theoretical identification of the interaction is introduced as an alternative. The second part of the paper highlight how the proponents' expressive interaction gave the movement some independence from media framing, produced different and changing definitions of the situation, orchestrated precise groups of participants, and led to particular ways of institutionalising the movement as an organisation.¹² The third and final part sums up the analysis through the notion of a 'return to tradition' and the metaphor of the 'implosion' of ATTAC in Denmark and discuss the broader issue of what it takes to sustain the type of power movements such as ATTAC are dependent on if they are to pursue a fully political agenda.

1 Against the illusion of necessity – an interactional perspective

It is so easy to be insufficiently curious. Why pay careful attention to the actual processes of interaction when we all know that social movements go through a cycle of emergence, organisation and collapse, when we all know that everything is different after 9-11, where activism was supposedly channelled into anti-war efforts, or when we all know that the alternative globalisation movement was delegitimised in Scandinavia by its real and alleged ties to the violence at the EU summit in Gothenburg (Göteborg) in June 2001? Why? A concrete reason is the very real and significant differences between the trajectory of ATTAC in Denmark and Norway, movements and organisations one would expect to suffer symmetrically from these external factors. These differences suggest that something more than the operation of necessity beyond the reach of the individuals involved is at play. Where ATTAC-Norway is still covered by the media, publishes books and magazines, counts its membership by the thousands, and have recently mobilised four thousand people for a demonstration in Oslo, its Danish sister organisation is practically ignored by newspapers and television, no longer manages to publish even its own newsletter or maintain its home page, never exceeded 252 paying members, and have managed only negligible mobilisations. The comparison with the movement's development in the similar context of Norway suggests the absence of *necessary* causes behind its failure to sustain momentum in Denmark. ATTAC-Denmark did not disappear, and ATTAC-Norway did not vindicate the hype. However, ATTAC-Denmark

did implode, while ATTAC-Norway in contrast did sustain the hope in a much more public and active fashion.¹³

Two analysts have tried to account for the fate of ATTAC in Denmark. Bolette M. Christensen has focussed on the active, constructive role adopted by the newspaper *Information* in the initial emergence of the movement, and the way in which it later turned away from the movement.¹⁴ She has furthermore detailed how activist energies were sapped through tedious debates with staunch ideological critics of the movement.¹⁵ Despite the light her analysis sheds over the role of *Information* and of external critics, it does not take into account that ATTAC in Norway survived a similar adoption and later turning away by the paper *Morgenbladet*, and that the period she highlights as one where opponents are bogging down the fledgling movement's activists predates the period where the debates on the movements own on-line forum are most intense and numerous. Erik Christensen has focussed on how ATTAC as an emerging social movement was confronted with rhetorical patterns of inclusion/exclusion that forced it to position itself either within or in opposition to 'the system' and its hegemonic discourse.¹⁶ Here, ATTAC ended up in opposition, and suffered exclusion. His analysis rightly highlights this general tendency and the importance of the formative period where the movement was largely unable to react to challenges and misframings, as it had no ways of speaking up in coordinated and authorised ways. It does, however, fail to account for *how* the movement failed to maintain a status as transgressing the dichotomies he list, why it ended up on the oppositional/excluded side of them, and most importantly, what agency was involved. Again, the contrast with Norway is instructive, as it demonstrates that the people involved could have negotiated the challenges differently, and did so in a situation where for instance the media framing was largely identical to what was found in Denmark.

Instead of caving in to the illusion of necessity or sticking to external views focussing on the movement's midwives and opponents, the perspective adopted here focus on precisely the agency involved in the minute details of the micro-interaction that constituted the movement. The approach is modelled over Jeffrey Goldfarb's investigation of what he calls *The Politics of Small Things*.¹⁷ The ambition to understand what ATTAC was, politically speaking, about (to better appreciate what its proponents did not manage to sustain) pursued here have led to a slightly different configuration through the addition of a post-Gramscian perspective to the perspectives of Arendt and Goffman. Though all three main authors are somewhat dated in ways the paper will distance itself from with a

little help from some theoretical friends, they can be combined to produce a powerful understanding of how a type of power can be generated through identifiable forms of interaction, and what such power can be used for.

The central point appropriated from Arendt is the insight that there is a type of power that “corresponds to the human ability not just to act but also to act in concert. [This kind of] power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together”.¹⁸ In the bracketed addition to the quote, we have already parted ways with a dogmatic exegesis of Arendt, as this sort of power is here understood as only one type – others, many of which Arendt would attempt to banish to categories such as ‘violence’ and ‘strength’, exists, but are not to be pursued here. The central idea is that ATTAC’s thrust as a democratic alternative was dependent upon the generation and sustenance of precisely this sort of power. As it did not occupy the seats of government, editorial offices of media or the commanding heights of the economy, ATTAC depended on people coming together and *making* it powerful – it depended on people-power. Arendt not only allows us to perceive the existence of this type of power, she also point to two of its defining aspects. First, contrary to possession of powerful means with an existence of their own, this kind of power is *generated* through interaction, and can therefore also cease to exist if interaction is transformed or stops. Secondly, it is tied to the existence of a *group*.¹⁹ The precise wording of the quotation above provides the link to Goffman. Contrary to Habermas’ interesting misreading, Arendt does not tie power to *consensus*, but to precisely *concert*.²⁰ She does not, however, provides us with many tools for analysing actual instances of such generation of power through interaction.

Therefore, enter Goffman. Who would provide a better starting point for analysing the orchestration of this concert than the sociological master of stage metaphors? The perspective appropriated from him is one that focuses on how interaction between proponents, interaction conceptualised as “the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions” combine to produce over-arching ‘definitions of situations’.²¹ In this case, a definition that allowed ATTAC to be and become even before it acquired a shared identity, culture, or organisational reality.

The properties of the precise period I am studying are therefore also the reason why I do not approach ATTAC through the lens of social movement theory. Despite their other merits, all the main approaches in this tradition define a ‘social movement’ as being characterised by a

‘collective identity’ – the relative expediency and eventual character of was precisely amongst the main stakes of the interaction I am analysing.²² When I here refer to ATTAC as a ‘movement’, I do so because its proponents did so well before social movement theory would recognise it as such. Precisely the fact that ATTAC did eventually become a movement of the traditional sort in October is the reason why I do not employ an alternative social movement approach like Gerlach’s SPIN-model, where movements are seen as segmented, polycentric, and integrated in networks.²³ This captures how ATTAC looked in May, but definitely not in December. The approach adopted here is closer to Melucci’s later focus on the ‘subterranean networks’ from which movement’s as traditional social movement theory understands them emerge as *outcomes*.²⁴ The relations between those involved in the interaction that potentially lead up to such an outcome is here understood through Goffman’s notion of a ‘team’ as making up Arendt’s above-mentioned groups.²⁵ Instead of collective identity, shared relations to a social structure, or precise organisational positions, Goffman’s teams are defined by their expressive interdependence. A team is a number of people who have to co-operate even in the face of the disagreements and differences they may have if a certain definition of the situation is to be maintained, and this captures precisely the position those who rallied around the name ‘ATTAC’ found themselves in. Whatever anyone did in the name of the movement had consequences for the overall definition of the situation of ATTAC’s emergence – whether or not other proponents agreed or not.

What I am concerned with here is to trace in concrete action and interaction how definitions were brought to converge in precise and shifting combinations of agreements and disagreements, sets of legitimated participants, and where embodied in ways of organising that were recognised, and by being recognised and (sometimes temporarily) honoured by those involved provided the working concert that made ATTAC in Denmark what it was until it became a traditional organisation precisely through the break-down of the definition of the situation that had tentatively allowed a quite diverse team to interact. This interaction was what gave the team some independence from media framing, allowed ATTAC to appear on its own and due to the concert that animated it – and presented the promise of power to transform social reality.

The analysis of how it worked will take us beyond Goffman’s focus on face-to-face interaction in two ways. First, the emergence of the movement will also be traced both in ‘media frames’ predating and often external to proponent interaction.²⁶ By ‘media’, I mean the modern institutionalised and mainly corporate mass media of print, broadcasting, and print- and broadcasting-like use of the Internet. These media are overwhelmingly run along the economic

logics of contemporary institutions and the work routines of the journalistic profession, and mainly communicate through a centre-to-many form of communication with relatively little consequential many-to-many or one-to-one interaction amongst those at the receiving end, and is therefore better understood as action of some externality relative to the movement and its proponents.²⁷ But secondly, the interaction between these also has to be understood not only with reference to its face-to-face dimension, but also as it took place in the four different ‘informational systems’ listed above.²⁸ Defined by their specific structuration of perception and circulation of interaction, defined by their precise technological forms of mediation and the culturation of these, the informational systems are not necessarily completely separated from the media – as the example of op-ed debate suggests. But their defining trait as interactive environments is that they allow for consequential many-to-many interaction. Though media coverage in the case of ATTAC clearly ‘anointed’ certain celebrity activists as future leaders of the movement and disseminated specific versions of what it was, the interaction in alternative informational systems both circumvented the select one’s ascension to positions of authority and provided alternative information about what the movement was that reached beyond those involved. If in heyday of mass media “the processed image ... *become* ‘the movement’ for wider publics and institutions who have few alternative sources of information”²⁹, the low transaction costs and potentially wide reach of computer-mediated-communication today gives movements and their proponents not only tactical means of organisation, but also alternatives to fight back against media framing³⁰ – and both they and the public are aware of this: one person, taken aback by the way ATTAC was presented by the media frame after the Gothenburg summit used *Information*’s chat room to ask “Who are you, ATTAC?”,³¹ and activists gave their answers. Those who were in doubt could at this point in time type in ‘ATTAC’ on their search engine, and find out what the proponents thought it was.

The central point therefore remains that if one wants not only to register the movement’s existence and map its mediated appearance, but also understand how actual proponents sustained it in a way that for a time managed to generate a power of a precise political character, the movement should not be reified as an agent nor reduced to its media appearance. Instead, it will be analysed as it was enacted and expressed through team interactions that entailed an element of human freedom and creativity because they cannot be reduced to the outcome of external coercion, reflections of more fundamental, necessary processes, or to its appearance in mass media. *Qua* Arendt, the movement existed in its concert, in its precise patterns of agreement and disagreement, and *qua* Goffman, these patterns can be subject to sociological analysis that help one understand

how they work. To identify how this happened in practice involves pinpointing where, at specific stages of the movement's emergence, the 'action' was.³² Goffman talks about 'fateful' action as action that is, in contradistinction to simple activity, both consequential and problematic, both have the potential to produce something and the potential to fail.³³ This is not a hard-and-fast distinction that can immediately be read off from activity under analysis, but a distinction along these lines is possible in retrospective, as an analytical judgement of which patterns of interaction in the end mattered in generating, sustaining, and later failing to sustain, the power of ATTAC-Denmark.

What this failure *meant* requires a grasp of what ATTAC was *about*, and this is what a post-Marxist version of Gramsci provides.³⁴ What was lost when ATTAC imploded is not only the non-instrumental political space that Arendt values so highly, nor simply sets of vaguely amusing patterns of interaction for Goffmanians to catalogue. The appearance and power-potential generated in the period where ATTAC's working concert allowed for team co-operation between a diverse and broad set of proponents was involved in the kind of hegemonic political struggle Gramsci was concerned with, and that Laclau and Mouffe have elaborated into a full-fledged theory of the political.³⁵ Indeed, co-founder and then-president of ATTAC-France, Bernard Cassens, explicitly invokes the very term hegemony when he describes the movement's political aspirations in an interview with *New Left Review*.³⁶ This does not mean that ATTAC can be reduced to its political dimension. It was clearly much more. But not to recognise it, and, out of simple disdain for the idea that movements can have instrumental political goals, reduce it to its cultural dimension or role as a 'prophet' or 'sign' of what is to come is a denial of the fact that people may actually mean it when they say they want to take back the future of our world.³⁷

Laclau and Mouffe provide the means for grasping the precise nature of ATTAC's political trust. For them, 'hegemony' signifies the properly political as a combination of a positive conception of the social *and* the exposition of the negative essence of an existing conception by incarnating surplus meanings excluded from it.³⁸ It is through this lens ATTAC's ideologically derived political thrust has been identified above. The negative dimension took the form of an attack on the spontaneous consensus of the neo-liberal narrative of globalisation that reigned in the space of appearance before ATTAC emerged in Denmark.³⁹ This is the previously hegemonic narrative that for instance the liberalist Member of Parliament Jens Rohde tries to reinstate when he claimed, "we cannot de-invent globalisation. It is there. To fight it is like fighting bad weather."⁴⁰ Clearly, the idea that another world is possible is excluded from this conception. Against such

naturalisations of a certain and particular version of globalisation, ATTAC expanded the domain of politics and put the question of what form globalisation should take on the agenda. It was not the case that it was not possible to *think* outside a neo-liberal common sense before ATTAC, or that no one did it. But in public, it *appeared* as if no one but a largely discredited extreme left did so. No conceptions of alternative worlds were articulated. This observation identifies the counter-hegemonic element of ATTAC's thrust; the central significance of the slogan 'another world is possible'. The positive dimension pertains to how this thrust was coupled with ATTAC's alternative way of making sense of the world, including its concrete proposals for alternative organisations of the social – affirmative statements about *what* other world is possible (and desirable). ATTAC's thrust acquired its fully political character precisely because it did not only say 'no', but also involved constituents of an *alternative* hegemonic project. This project stood in an antagonistic relationship with the existing order since it laid claim on some of the same positive signifiers – 'the people', 'the future', and, most importantly, the universally positively validated signifier of 'democracy'. By linking 'democracy' and 'the people' against the neo-liberal linkage of 'democracy' and 'the market', ATTAC created an antagonistic fracture between itself and the existing hegemony.⁴¹ 'Democracy' cannot simultaneously be *both* what neo-liberalism's proponents say it is, and what ATTAC says it is. The confrontation between claims that the existing order is as it should be and the push to 'create democratic space at a global level' denies each other's full identity. Either there is already democracy when it comes to global markets – and then ATTAC's political project is superfluous. Alternatively, there is not, and then the neo-liberal order is not what it claims to be. These two conceptions of the social cannot coexist peacefully in the same space of appearance, ATTAC is not politely asking 'this thing you call democracy, is it really so?' It is asserting 'the thing you call democracy *is not so*, until it has been reclaimed by the people from the markets'. This double political thrust is part of ATTAC's international Platform, of what the movement ideologically speaking *is*. The political importance of its proponents' interactions comes from the derived questions of whether it can make itself appear in public (to manifest its challenge) and generate power to pursue its project.

2 The interactive production of ATTAC-Denmark

This part will demonstrate how and why ATTAC-Denmark imploded from a diverse team to a marginal organisation. Its emergence made publicly visible how the existing hegemony had maintained its stable character through an exclusion of the idea of political action at a global level,

and this negative thrust opened up a more unfixed terrain for struggle over what globalization would mean. But, as said, attempts to assert its own positive, alternative conception of the social where predicated upon the generation of power through interaction. A crude quantitative overview (figure 1 below) gives a sense of where the interaction took place throughout the year analysed.

INTERACTION IN DIFFERENT INFORMATIONAL SYSTEMS, 2001

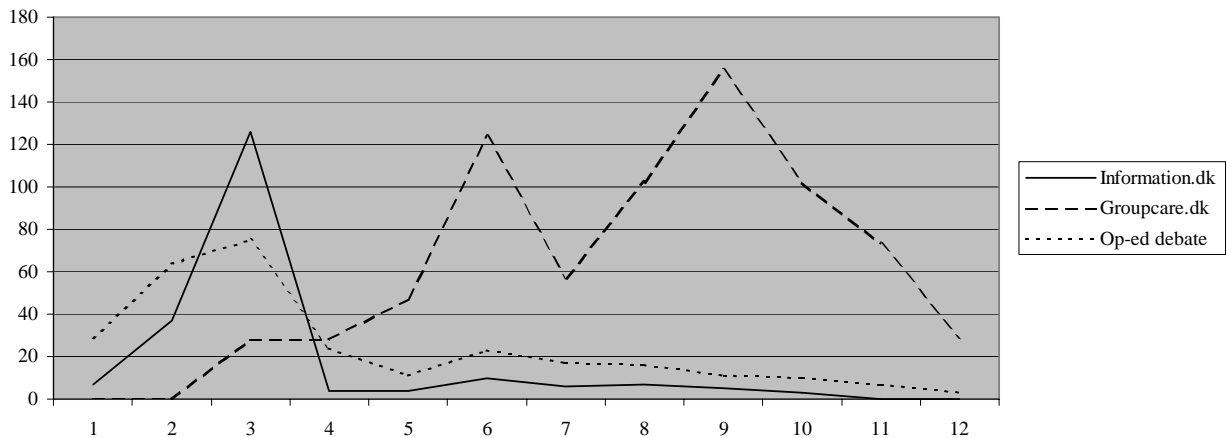


FIGURE 1 – The diagram is based on the total material gathered from the three quantifiable informational systems. Each line marks the number of interventions registered in each system in each month of 2001. Interaction in local committees is not included. As the systems have different entry requirements and transaction costs, they are not directly compatible, but they give a sense of the overall changes. See appendix A for details of the material.

The analysis presented in this part divides the year into three phases, partly based on patterns in the interaction, partly with reference to external events and proponents’ reactions to them. The first phase goes from the emergence of the name ‘ATTAC’ in December 2000 and until the grand meeting (on February 24) that changes the situation by sparking the formation of the first local committees and the independent online debate on Groupcare. Phase II deals with a period where the interaction migrated to these new informational systems, and trace its patterns up till the events at the Gothenburg EU-summit on June 14-16 accentuated a number of challenges the movement’s proponents increasingly realised they faced. The last phase deals with the period from Gothenburg until the founding national convention formally establish ATTAC-Denmark as an organisation on October 6-7.

Though the focus here is on the interaction between proponents of the movement, the broader concern involves the appearance of ATTAC, which involves more than its expression – the introduction has already made a fist move at situating the analysis with reference to the media coverage, and passing reference to the media/movement interplay and other external forces will be

made throughout the analysis. Everything has been read in the light of the media coverage, and especially in phase I and II, this is of central importance to understand the action. Figure 2 gives a quantitative overview over the fluctuations in the coverage throughout 2001, a year where ATTAC received almost 50% more press coverage than for instance Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (the Danish Federation for the Conservation of Nature), the country's largest social movement.⁴²

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, 2001

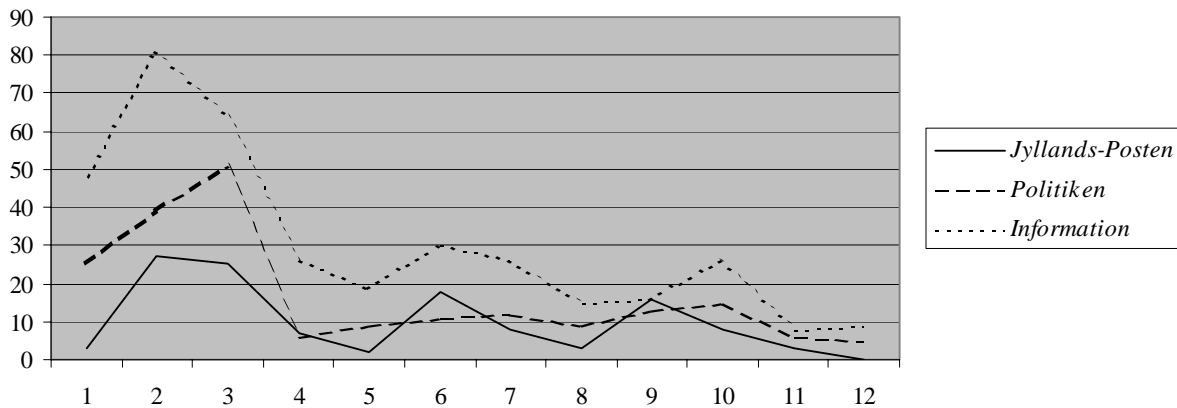


FIGURE 2 – Based on all 689 units containing the term ‘ATTAC’ published by the three papers in 2001. See appendix A for details on the material.

Phase I (January-February)

The media coverage of ATTAC begins tentatively with 19 articles in *Information* in late December. But this is only a start. January and February 2001 mark ATTAC's rise from name to team status and nascent movementhood. This phase is important because it covers the period of both the initial media framing of ATTAC and the first interactive expressions of ATTAC by its proponents. It thereby capture the period in which ATTAC appeared as that which inspired the first wave of hope and moved beyond being merely a name, becoming a team where people could realise ambitions of participation.

Its development in this phase is strongly influenced by the active and constructive role played by *Information*.⁴³ As figure 2 shows, the newspaper covered ATTAC much more extensively than other papers, and in addition provided the first informational systems where it was expressed through interaction. These systems were made up of its op-ed pages as part of the wider op-ed system, which were allowed to be flooded with ATTAC discussions, an online debate hosted on its homepage, and a series of meetings culminating in the grand meeting held on February 24. In this phase, *Information* provides room for more than fifty percent more debate than *Politiken*,

and more than three times more than *Jyllands-Posten*.⁴⁴ Apart from purely informal communication, these two newspapers provided the main alternative spaces for debating the movement through their part in the wider op-ed system. *Information*'s activities are explicitly aimed at preparing the founding of a formal ATTAC organisation in Denmark as a part of the transnational movement. At the grand meeting, local committees are established to work towards this goal. After February, *Information* adopts a more passive role, though it throughout the year continues to be the newspaper covering ATTAC most generously.

It is important to keep in mind that the first local committees are only established in March and that the formal founding of the national organisation only takes place in October. Until then, ATTAC had no organisational reality or formal underpinnings. It appeared solely through the media framing and the expression of it by its proponents and those they debated with. When proponents identified themselves with the movement through the use of self-descriptive terms like 'ATTAC activist' and 'ATTAC sympathiser', they created a team and claimed an authority to express what ATTAC was and was to become. As long as this authority was not publicly contested, ATTAC achieved self-representation through the appearance these people gave it. Their expression of the movement became quantitatively ever more pronounced through the phase - op-ed pieces by proponents of the movement for instance making up almost half of the very substantial amount of news units registered in February. ATTAC's place in the space of appearance was increasingly defined by the team, and less and less simply by the media frames. The working concert established by interacting proponents as to how to define the situation of ATTAC's emergence is analysed here in order of the agreements, disagreements, and legitimated sets of participants that characterised it.

Across the board of media coverage and informational systems analysed, everyone shared a definition of the situation where ATTAC appeared as a movement with democratic aspirations, that pursued concrete goals everyone seems to recognize, a movement that represented an alternative to the then-dominant narratives about - and political agendas for - globalisation, and a movement that was expected to come to incarnate a certain specifically post-modern organisational form.

Both *Information* and *Politiken* highlights the democratic aspirations of ATTAC in editorials framing the nascent movement.⁴⁵ An activist writing on *Information*'s online debate state the agreement in no uncertain terms: "The most important thing about ATTAC is that it fights for democracy - for the people's rule."⁴⁶ Even *Jyllands-Posten* does not deny this in its first major treatment of the movement, an otherwise critical editorial.⁴⁷ The harmony between frame and

expression when it comes to the democratic nature of the movement is but one reflection of the positive coverage it received initially. Though some journalists and op-ed writers from the very outset try to cast the movement as politically extremist, its general legitimacy is not put into question.

Nor are its concrete goals. Four are almost always listed, namely the introduction of the Tobin Tax referred to in the movement's name, debt relief, abolition of tax havens, and ethical guidelines for the investment of pension funds.⁴⁸ It is notable that these will later become the subject of intense internal debate in the movement and lose their truth value as some activists critical of their precise wording and the attempts of other activists to limit the movement to activities that can be directly linked to these come to realise that the oft-referred to 'four demands' are the product of a journalistic abbreviation of the above-mentioned list of demands found in the international Platform.

The combination of ATTAC's democratic aspirations and concrete goals is recognised even by staunch critics such as the editorial board on *Jyllands-Posten* as representing an alternative to the dominant narrative about and political form of globalisation.⁴⁹ This centre-right paper was generally more critical of the movement's aspirations, casting it as anti-modernist, but still in this period recognised and covered its challenge as legitimate. Forces that were more sympathetic were even more univocal in their praise of the emergence of an alternative – *Politiken* and *Information* published editorials explicitly lauding ATTAC for trying to produce a positive alternative. Politicians from the centrist Social Liberals to the extreme left post-Communists do so.⁵⁰ Activists and spokespersons from NGOs and trade unions concur. All highlight the timeliness and importance of ATTAC as an alternative.⁵¹ The Social Democratic Foreign Minister captures the agreement nicely in an op-ed piece on February 23 in *Politiken* by stating that: “[existing] globalisation requires an alternative. Therefore, an initiative like ATTAC must be welcomed.” At this point, ATTAC's positive, hegemonic project is clearly taken seriously and given publicity.

It is not only when it comes to the overall thrust, content, and character of ATTAC as a political movement that its initial appearance in the media is characterised by broad agreement. This is also the case when it comes to the organisational form that the movement is said to have or expected to assume. The movement is described in terms of the buzzwords in vogue; it is supposed to become an incarnation of the future in the present. It is said that ATTAC will be based on a globalised network-organisation, on loose associations of grassroots groups that transcends

particular political loyalties. It will be “a contemporary Internet-borne, energetic, and lively initiative.”⁵²

Based on these agreements, a team structured around the name 'ATTAC' and the aspirations associated with it created itself. Negatively, it publicly said 'no' to the dominant narrative about globalisation. Positively, it appeared as suggesting an alternative. On the team, those who chose to get involved then further agreed to disagree about different themes concerning what ATTAC should become. Whereas the role of proponents in terms of the agreements analysed above in this phase where mainly the activity of affirming the media frame by saying yes, indeed, ATTAC was democratic, had concrete goals and democratic aspirations, and would assume a post-modern network form, the team's interaction was the defining action when it came to define the disagreements and legitimations of participants that will be analysed below. Here they illustrated the independent importance of micro-interaction by leaving behind the media frame and defining their own situation. In the process, they elaborated the expression of ATTAC, and the media coverage came increasingly to shift its focus from external commentators and privileged celebrity statements about the movement, and onto covering this interaction. Here, the accepted and continuously thematised disagreements included ATTAC's more precise stance on globalisation, its position on the European Union, and the breadth of the coalition it was expected to forge. The latter two are of central importance for the argument pursued here, and will be scrutinized more carefully.

The agreement to disagree over whether ATTAC is about fighting the EU started out as a debate facilitated by journalists at *Information*. The EU-critic Niels I. Meyer, who was among the celebrity activists involved in the initial phase, attacked claims made by Ejvind Larsen, one of the journalist-activists from *Information*, to the effect that ATTAC *had to* embrace the EU as a mean to its ends.⁵³ The disagreement over the pros and cons of the EU as a mean for pursuing ATTAC's goals continued in subsequent newspaper and online debate.⁵⁴ For some, this was the litmus test of ATTAC's political credentials. One left-wing sympathiser made this clear when he on *Information's* on-line debate wrote that he was still “rather critical of ATTAC, as it apparently has not taken a stance on EU's role in the neoliberal globalisation.”⁵⁵ For many, however, this lack of a stance was at this point a deliberate choice – both activists associated with the pro-EU movement *Nyt Europa* and the EU-skepticist movement *Junibevægelsen* highlighted that ATTAC had to remain open to people with different stances on the EU.⁵⁶ Unassociated activists concurred.⁵⁷ This marks an early example of proponents asserting their independence by expressing the movement in

conflict with the media frame. The media framing initially presented the pro-/con-EU disagreement as a conflict that had to be solved from the outset by a choice of either one or the other.⁵⁸ Some activists and sympathisers agreed, but the majority of the people involved in the widespread debates cast the disagreement as one that there was room for in the ATTAC team – even as one that for strategic reasons should be kept open to be able to attract as many people as possible.⁵⁹ This agreement to disagree became part of the media frame.⁶⁰

The EU-issue is linked to the second important ‘agreed disagreement’, one over the political breadth of ATTAC. Celebrity activist and chairman of the mainstream development NGO Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke Christian Friis Bach, who was commonly called upon by journalists to speak on ATTAC in the first phase, and who also himself wrote op-ed pieces about it in the newspaper debates, made it clear from the outset that though he thought of himself as a moderate, and other proponents as of a leftist bent, “differences of opinion between various branches of ATTAC does not hinder ... agreement”.⁶¹ Similar sentiments were expressed from all sides - from revolutionary socialists⁶², from members of centre parties like the social liberal party Det Radikale Venstre⁶³, and from numerous unassociated activists on *Information*’s online debate.⁶⁴ Though some of the same activists who insisted on a con-EU stance raised the question of “whether the breadth does not have limits?”⁶⁵ the majority agreed to disagree and thereby leave ATTAC without a precisely expressed political position on the left-right spectrum, just as it had no clear position on EU. It is instead, as one activist put, of pre-eminent importance that “the broadest possible front [is able to] amass behind ATTAC”.⁶⁶ In the initial media framing, it was asserted that ATTAC would transcend dichotomies like left/right and pro-/con-EU, but quickly, this framing seems mainly to serve as a pretext for upping the dramatic stakes in individual newspaper articles – will ATTAC be captured by the left, will it become an anti-EU movement? The proponents’ agreement to keep disagreeing about these issues for the time being represented their affirmation that ‘no, it will not’. It will tolerate disagreement and differences.

Now the question remained, of course, who where to participate in the broad front? And how precisely – should they for instance get to participate in the formation of it? Or only be let in once its foundations had been laid? One thing is abstract breadth - the rhetorical answer offered is clear and in line with the ambition: ‘the people’ are to participate.⁶⁷ But another thing is the reality of coalition and movement building. The precise ways in which this empty signifier is fleshed out reveal a set of important dissonance between on the one hand *who concretely* are articulated as

legitimate participants in the build-up of ATTAC, and on the other who both the apparent agreement on ATTAC's organisational set-up-to-be as a network of organisations, and the way in which the French branch was set up would make one expect to see in the movement. The particular set of participants came to be of decisive importance when disagreements turned into internal conflict later on.

The February agreement on who is to participate is clear: "ATTAC must be build as a grassroots movement made up of individual persons."⁶⁸ A few argue for the possibility of organisational membership, but are ignored.⁶⁹ This is most likely because they sin against the other side of the agreement on participants, namely that the *reason* why ATTAC must be organised based on individuals is that the movement must remain "independent of party interests or other forms of partisan embrace."⁷⁰ The barb in this and similar remarks has four targets, all associated with the emergence of ATTAC in December and January. It is aimed at the trio of the EU-movements (Nyt Europa and Junibevægelsen), the political parties (Social Democrats and various socialists) and the established NGOs (Mellemløkeligt Samvirke and others). They, the past in the present of institutionalised politics, are perceived to be trying to revitalise their own stagnant and passive membership basis by associating themselves with the future in the present, with ATTAC. In addition, it is aimed at *Information* and its attempts to impose its frame as a specific consensus upon the nascent movement. The conclusion is clear; "ATTAC must and shall be born without midwifery by the establishment in the established 'organisational Denmark'."⁷¹ Thus, even people with considerable resources, like the Social Democrat Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who try to link ATTAC fairly strongly to other movements from the outset, are ignored.⁷²

A tension exists between the agreement on the assumption that ATTAC will assume the form of a network association, and the agreement on individuals as the movement's constituents. How can ATTAC be an association of movements if other organisations are illegitimate as participants? The tension is eased by the implicit introduction of a temporal dimension. The working concert established in February is that ATTAC shall establish itself as an atomistic movement made up of atomistic individuals *before* it can enter into the networks and associations necessary to pursue the goals agreed upon and become what people expressively agree it shall become. The 'established organisational Denmark' can join once ATTAC has itself become established.

Interestingly enough, it is not mentioned at any point in the coverage or the later internal debates how much this differs from how the original French branch was organised. Bernard

Cassens, president and co-founder of ATTAC describes how his “first move was to bring together the organizations—not the individuals—that had responded to our appeal. This was a basic strategic choice: to build ATTAC out of existing structures, whether trade unions, civic associations, social movements or newspapers.”⁷³ In Denmark, the basic agreement was that ATTAC should *not* be build out of existing structures, as it was feared that these would take over the movement, thereby making it loose its specificity and squander its potential. Therefore, all the constituent elements Cassens named are outside the set of participants legitimated by the agreement expressed in Denmark. The significance of this set lies in its exclusiveness, which is best illustrated by listing the organisations and individuals who initially expressed interest in having some sort of role in the build-up of ATTAC, but who fall beyond the set of participants invested with the legitimate right to express ATTAC and play a role in its emergence. Cassens’ trade unions, civic associations and social movements clearly belong to the establishment of established organisations – and indeed the main national federation of trade unions (LO), and individual leftist trade unions (Murerarbejdsmændenes Fagforening, Pædagogstuderendes Landssammenslutning) stand back from early expressions of support and interest and do not engage in the organisation of ATTAC.⁷⁴ Similarly, established development NGOs like Mellempøkeligt Samvirke and Ibis, and Christian (Pax Christi) and environmental (Gaia Trust) NGOs stand back, despite having shown interest. The pro- and con-EU-movements (Nyt Europa and Junibevægelsen) back out as well. When it comes to newspapers, *Information* is the only major institution that has been involved, and it also steps back from its initial activist role. Finally, political parties are also displaced to the outside of the set of legitimated participants – and thus prominent Social Liberals, Social Democrats, Socialists and post-Communists who had expressed interest in participating in the build-up of the movement respectfully retreats. Their retreat is unfathomable without close attention to what proponents of the movement say and agree to express. They keep their distance, despite a media frame assigning them a place in ATTAC, and despite the fact that *Information* has explicitly invited many of them to take part in the formation of the movement.⁷⁵ Why? Because its proponents express an agreement on the legitimate set of participants that does not include them. The consequences kick in later. It is important to keep in mind that the organisations and institutions named above make up most of the established organisational centre-left in Denmark, and that few individuals with substantial name-recognition, resources, and experience exist outside them.

Did this mean that ATTAC was in the end build exclusively by the previously unengaged? Not entirely. Some people ignored the agreement and crossed the line, often in the act

‘disassociating’ themselves from the organisations they come from by underlining that they participate as individuals. People with roots in the post-Communist Enhedslisten, the marginal far-left group Internationale Socialister, and the socialist monthly SALT engaged themselves in the movement – and came to play a central role that outshone the previously unassociated and the smattering of people with low-level ties to the organisations that stood back. The people with acknowledged ties to established organisations and parties that got involved where faced with often intense criticism and some suspicion as to their intentions. But their resources, competences and high levels of activity where welcome and key in the building of the movement. I shall return to the implications of this role in the analysis of the later phases.

Phase II (March – mid June)

A superficial look at the newspaper coverage and op-ed debate from the period from the grand meeting to the new situation that the Gothenburg events confronted the movement with would suggest that phase II is relatively unimportant. Large parts of the debates where cast in terms familiar from January and February. However, the similarities in content obscure the important shift the creation of new informational systems mark in where action is possible, and is. The aftermath of the February grand meeting marks the establishment of the first informational systems that allowed ATTAC activists and sympathisers a back region away from the glare of media attention and the constraints of dependence on sometimes inaccessible and always-fickle op-ed debates, and on *Information*’s online debate with its connotations to the newspaper’s initial somewhat paternalistic role. In early March, local committees are established all over the country. These constitute the first face-to-face informational systems for the establishment of the movement. On March 6, an online debate with space for sharing files is established on the commercial host Groupcare.dk. The local committees and their activities are open, and sometimes visited by interested individuals and journalists covering the movement. Similarly, the Groupcare debate is freely accessible, and several journalists subscribe to it. Thus, the two systems are far from impenetrable, but they still structure perception differently than the highly publicised informational systems of op-ed debate and online debate on for instance *Information*’s home page, as they require those interested to actively seek out information. These systems greatly enhance the proponent’s capacity to ‘painstakingly fabricate’ the ability of their interaction to express something beyond itself.⁷⁶ Increasingly, they are not only people attending meetings, discussing globalisation and so on, but also a team who by doing this in terms of a certain emerging working concert and in certain informational systems enact ATTAC

and generate publicity and power for it. The bare fact of the creation of these two systems shows the importance of phase II, as they mark ATTAC's increasing independence, not from mediation, but from mass media. Compared to the interaction in the op-ed debate and on *Information's* homepage, the new systems are in this phase characterised by much richer and dense texture of interaction that gives ATTAC more and more independent substance. From March on, people who want to find out more about ATTAC will, for the first time, find debates and information online, telephone numbers to activists and meetings being held – and not only media coverage and media institutionalised debate.

In phase II, external media framing declines in importance, as it is less massive and consists mainly in reiterations of facets familiar from phase I. Similarly, the importance of the informational systems that allowed for interactive expression of the movement by proponents in phase I wanes. There was still quite a bit of activity in the op-ed debates and on *Information's* online debate, especially in the beginning of the period. However, when it comes to making ATTAC what it becomes, what goes on there is inconsequential compared to the online interaction on Groupcare and the embodied interaction in local committees.⁷⁷ In phase II, the action of articulating the movement simply migrates to the online and face-to-face back regions established.

This secession from almost complete dependence on mass media allows for the development of relations of increased externality between ATTAC and these. These relations are less and less defined solely in terms editorial and journalistic considerations of newsworthiness, and increasingly by more substantial agency on behalf of a name that though it has yet to signify a formal organisation has by now achieved some autonomy and reality beyond the press coverage.

In the new informational systems, team-specific roles and resources are developed that for the first time invest some people with a status that will give them a newsworthiness beyond what their already existing celebrity or lack thereof may suggest. Those interviewed by journalists covering ATTAC are no longer celebrity activists with pasts in other movements, but activists who have established themselves in ATTAC. Groups are created, press releases formulated through torturous and prolonged online and face-to-face debates, and new meetings are organised and invested with authority to pursue the institutionalisation of ATTAC. A national seminar is called on May 19, and about 200 people attend. Here, it is decided to formally found ATTAC-Denmark in October, and groups are organised to prepare the national meeting where this is to happen.

Thus, closer scrutiny of the new informational systems provided by the Groupcare online debate and the local committees reveals important action below the radar of what analysis of media coverage would have identified. Here, additional agreements and disagreements are defined, some of the existing ones are challenged, and the legitimated participants order themselves in new ways. The interactional processes that brings this about is analysed below.

The most important new agreement arising is that ATTAC needs an organisational structure to maintain an identity and to pursue its goals in practice. Whereas people engaged in the op-ed debates and on *Information's* online debate heap scorn on the idea that the exiting new movement will need anything as old-fashioned as a formal structure,⁷⁸ a different working concert is formulated on Groupcare, and pursued in practice in the local committees and the groups organised at the May seminar. According to this back region concert, which is confirmed by my interviews, ATTAC needs to “find out how it shall organise and make decisions, ... [only when this has been realised] can we take decisions and pursue activities in the name of the movement.”⁷⁹ The external pressure mounting through criticism from the liberalist-conservative ‘Counter-ATTAC’ and critical questions raised and left unanswered in the press adds to the pertinence of organising so that ATTAC can maintain a self-defined identity by standing “united as a movement externally (towards for instance the press) – but remain different internally.”⁸⁰ To turn the interaction space into an expression and a type of power that can pursue ATTAC’s political goals, a formalised concert between its proponents is deemed necessary. As the movement makes itself expressively increasingly independent of the media institutions and its proponents increasingly understand it independently from the media frame, ATTAC starts to loose the self-evident identity the frame had initially provided – and the problem arises: “I am an ATTAC sympathiser, but I do not quite know what ATTAC stands for.”⁸¹ “ATTAC must make itself more clear”⁸² – a delicate process which to maintain a potential for a broad coalition behind the full political thrust requires a way in which this can be done without identifying the movement in a way that will critically undermine the hype and hope that initially gave rise to it. The questions raised do not have a clear addressee who can respond, because ATTAC has not yet taken a form that allow for authorised articulation. Thus, at this point, answers are only expressed through media framing and the interaction between proponents – and has to be produced there, which takes time and is uncertain and, in the eyes of some, undemocratic.⁸³ Now, ATTAC is increasingly being asserted as more than a name over

which journalists can exercise almost total discretionary power, but its proponents agree that proper self-definition will take a more formal organisational structure.

There is, however, no agreement as to what form this organisational structure shall assume. The media frame and working concert established in phase I assumed the adoption of a post-modern organisational form as a matter of course, and this agreement is not put into question in the media coverage, op-ed debates or debates on *Information's* online forum – but it is challenged on the movement's new back stage.⁸⁴ Writes an activist on Groupcare: “real punch requires a formal form of organisation. An anarchical network ... can work quite nicely as spontaneously self-organising, but if it is to be influenced to move in a certain direction, it has to be affected by a formal structure.”⁸⁵ The explicit distancing from a network form of organisation sums up one position in this debate, one that favours a classic centralised modernist structure. Others, however, still insist that a network organisation can move in a certain direction. One of the most active writers on the Groupcare debate suggests a form for the movement based on the idea that the people who chose to get involved already come with the ‘certain direction’ needed, and just need to be provided with “the cultural space that must be the backbone in and frame for ATTAC-Denmark”.⁸⁶ For him, and those who share his view, this space that shall be organised on the Internet, involve both individuals and groups, and must maintain debate. This is initially another example of an agreement to disagree, but in contrast to other issues, this is a score that will eventually have to be settled – something that occurs in phase III.

The debate that marks the agreement to for the time being agree to disagree about what precise organisational form the movement is to assume is linked to another important disagreement that emerges in this phase, namely over by what means ATTAC's goals are to be pursued.⁸⁷ One thing is that the movement's proponents in practice engage in a full continuum of activities ranging from activist demonstrations, over informational activities and consciousness-raising, to attempts at lobbying.⁸⁸ Another is that this is explicitly thematised in the internal discussions on Groupcare as something people disagree about – some argue for putting more emphasis on activism such as the demonstrations that are to take place in Gothenburg.⁸⁹ Others try to dissuade activists from expecting too much from this and instead want the movement to focus on informational activities.⁹⁰ But all in practice agree that people on the ATTAC team can disagree about this.

The action in phase II perpetuates the agreement on who the legitimate participants in the construction of ATTAC in Denmark are, but takes this into a new stage where the first internal groupings are named. Though the majority of activists abstain from other- and especially self-classification, some begin to use terms like ‘moderate’ ATTAC-member as opposed to ‘leftists’ or ‘revolutionaries’ to navigate and interpret the debates.⁹¹ The dividing line between moderates and leftists is tied to the disagreements that emerged in this phase. ‘Moderates’, who often have no previous movement experience, are identified with network-organisation and a taste for informational activities and lobbying as means. Their name derives from an accepted perception of them as generally less left-leaning than those they disagree with. These, the ‘leftists’ who are often veterans with experience from other movements or parties, are the proponents of modernist organisation and activism as a mean. The two camps are not clearly delimited, nor exhaustive or fully cohesive, but important correlations between those identified by the use of these terms and ways of engaging in the movement – there is clearly some substance behind the terminology. The ‘moderates’ are very active on Groupcare, while the ‘leftists’ dominates local committees and various sub-groups established to prepare the founding general meeting in October.⁹² The consequences of these differences in informational home turf surface when disagreement turns to struggle after the events in Gothenburg – for the time being, they are just examples of the differences ATTAC contains on its team.

Phase III (mid-June-September)

The EU-summit in Gothenburg was something of a Seattle experience in Scandinavia. Large, varied and colourful peaceful demonstrations dominated the streets of the city. A few serious and violent clashes between police and protestors dominated the media coverage. After the summit, the media frame started shifting to a more sceptical coverage of ATTAC, something that may be part of the explanation as to why fewer new people join the team in the fall – but can hardly explain why many of those already involved, who very well knew that the movement had in no systematic or intended way been involved in the violence, started to leave.⁹³

For ATTAC in Denmark, Gothenburg and its aftermath served as a catalyst that accentuated the challenges its proponents had gradually agreed it faced. It became clear that self-definition of the movement’s identity in the face of a sometimes hostile, and at least uncomprehending public and press took an organisational form that could produce a more rapid and clear authoritative action recognisable as ATTAC’s than what the existing informal networks

allowed for. On June 15, Danish public television aggrieved the damage done by several newspaper stories framing ATTAC's involvement in Gothenburg as violent or at least sympathetic to violence by broadcasting an interview where a single rank-and-file protestor was identified simply as an 'ATTAC-member' and made to represent and speak for the movement. The young activist employed the opportunity to condone violence as a political mean, and blame the Swedish authorities, the police, and the 'fascists' for the confrontations and clashes that had occurred. Immediately afterwards, op-ed pieces and new postings on *Information's* online debate started to question the movement which had previously predominantly been framed as peaceful – the thrust was clear: “If ATTAC does not distance itself strongly from violent conduct, the organisation will be stone-dead.”⁹⁴

Moderate activists on the Groupcare debate reacted immediately and with direct reference to the clip: “ATTAC should be able to put together a press release over the weekend where we: 1) distance ourselves from those who want to change the world through hatred and violence”.⁹⁵ This distancing was, however, easier to ask for than to accomplish – as the flurry of press releases over the next few days demonstrates.

One press release was written by two veteran leftist activists, approved by majority decision by a small group of predominantly leftist ATTAC activists present in Gothenburg, and did distance the movement from violence, but also stated, “the police bear a large part of the responsibility for the fact that the violence escalated.”⁹⁶ This point became the key to the press interpretation of it – and indeed to internal debates over it.⁹⁷ Another press release, organised around what shall later become a key term in the internal debates, namely the idea that what some protesters had participated in was not violent, but “unpeaceful”, is made available on-line at 09:50 AM for comments. It is sent out 11:40 AM, signed by the single leftist activist who wrote it in his capacity as coordinator of a local committee.⁹⁸ Other people suggested that ATTAC should write a press release expressing solidarity with the protestors who fought the police.⁹⁹ Finally, on June 22, the national coordination group, the closest thing ATTAC in Denmark at this time is to an authorised leadership, send out its own press release, “condemning violent demonstrations.”¹⁰⁰

Six days is not a lot of time. Three different press releases can be read in a few minutes. The difference in their relative authority to speak on behalf of the movement is easy to ascertain, if one wants to. However, given the operations and pace of mass media institutions, this is not effective PR. The media frame was shifting quickly, to the detriment of ATTAC – with no firm

evidence, the movement's name was associated with violence at the summit in several articles in the printed media that perpetuated the image the broadcast media had produced.¹⁰¹ The initial charitable framing that had dominated most media had already shaded into an increasingly sceptical perception of the movement's means, ends and potential, but Gothenburg marks a shift – during the summit, the framing becomes decidedly negative. Critics of the movement, from independent commentators to the liberalists and conservatives in Counter-ATTAC immediately exploited the opportunity to reiterate their criticism of ATTAC by linking it to violence – an editorial in *Jyllands-Posten* refer to ATTAC as 'stone-heads', critics insinuate the movement does not distance itself from violent confrontations with the police.¹⁰² While most newspapers does mention the movement's attempts at distance itself from the violence, they also cover the internal disagreements – even a very sympathetic paper like *Information* writes that ATTAC is “in doubt” about how to interpret the events.¹⁰³

And they *where* in doubt as to what ATTAC should do, and quickly realised that they also lacked formalised ways reducing the complexity of agreeing on it and doing it in concert. In the face of the onslaught, an activist writes on Groupcare: “I hope we can have a good internal debate before we make hasty statements to the press”¹⁰⁴ But at the core of the problem Gothenburg presented ATTAC with is the point that sometimes precisely hasty statements to the press is what it takes to maintain an element of self-control over a movement's identity. When the public asks, like the above-mentioned person on *Information*'s online debate, “Who are you, ATTAC”, something has to be done, or others will produce an answer.¹⁰⁵

After Gothenburg, it was agreed that ATTAC had to try to express what its proponents thought it was in direct opposition to parts of the changing media frame, and that this would require a finalisation of the movement's formal organisation. The different press releases where not simply differences, but expression by teammates who disrupted the appearance of ATTAC as a – admittedly internally disagreeing – team expressing a single definition of the situation. Phase III consists of the period where the action circled around the two challenges this presented the movement with, starting after the summit, and ending with the formal founding of ATTAC-Denmark on October 6-7. What will be analysed in the rest of this part is how the disagreements over ATTAC's identity as expressed through means and ends turned into an internal antagonistic conflict, and how the outcome of this shaped the decisions on the organisational form. Gothenburg

itself did not *cause* the conflict – if this was the case, the movement in Norway would have had one as well and they did not – the *interaction* led to the conflict. Analysis of it will make it clear why ATTAC in the end made a ‘return to tradition’ when it was formally founded in October, and thus in turn provide the key to understanding the movement’s implosion.

The events in Gothenburg were channelled into the existing disagreements over the means and ends in a way that produced an antagonistic *internal* conflict between two different definitions of the situation. And with the Geneva G8-summit lurking in the horizon, it is not allowed to rest. The two definitions could not be reconciled into a working concert as an ‘agreement to disagree’, because each of them in the eyes of their opponents denied the very identity of ATTAC.¹⁰⁶ For some, what happened in Gothenburg was that a few violent protestors destroyed everything the large peaceful demonstrations and happenings could have achieved. For others, Gothenburg showed that the authorities will not allow serious manifestations of dissidence, and that those who want to protest have to be willing to run the risk of potentially violent clashes with the police. In terms of what it meant for what ATTAC should do, the adoption of either one of these irreconcilable situational definitions would make the movement something *fundamentally different* from what their respective adherent thought it was – and that they were part of and active in.

Some people did not want to be part of an ATTAC that even discussed violence. A moderate writes on Groupcare: “ATTAC must, as a movement for democracy, *always* condemn and prevent [violence].”¹⁰⁷ For these people, if the movement even *discuss* violence as a mean, it ceases to be a movement for democracy, and therefore, given the agreement shared since January-February, cease to be ATTAC in anything but name. The antagonistic position is clearly articulated in reply: “there are political forces in ATTAC who want to exploit the stone-throwing protestors ... [and] turn ATTAC into yet another parliamentarian talking shop, with no activism, no action, no demonstrations. ... in reality [the moderates] does not really want ATTAC to be a movement that activates the population in a fight against neoliberalism, for another world”.¹⁰⁸ For people of this view, ATTAC cease to be ATTAC if it loose its character of an activist movement, even if this involves engaging in activities current authorities consider illegal and illegitimate. If it recoils from activism, it will loose the political drive that is supposed to animate it, and loose its connections with the broader struggle for another world carried out under the auspices of for instance the World Social Forum. If ATTAC rejects that that struggle may entail events like those in Gothenburg, it

becomes just another part of the established and bankrupt sphere of traditional political institutions and organisations. Thus, the disagreement over means that already emerged in phase II is now turned into a conflict between moderate proponents of peaceful action and leftist proponents of non-violent action. This does not only mean that the interaction ceased to incarnate concert and the generation of power and publicity behind the movement's political project. The conflict does not express ATTAC, but disrupts the expression and for a moment means that there ceased to be a common overarching 'we' in the name of which the elaboration of a *modus vivendi* could be demanded. There is no third part to which one can be loyal if one cannot reconcile oneself with one's teammates. It is one thing to disagree about means in the abstract, as was previously the case; another to discuss concretely whether and when violence is an inherent risk or even part of the pursuit of certain ends, given the inclinations of existing political institutions. Now, concrete instances of what activism and informational activities entails are taken to represent performative expressions of its identity - which is what parts of the public took the clashes in Gothenburg to be.

And the protagonists adopt the ontological terminology. A moderate states one version clearly: "ATTAC *is* to be a movement with a narrow agenda working through informational campaigns" (the emphasis is mine).¹⁰⁹ The concrete means to be employed are newsletters, publications and participation in public debate, in addition to happenings oriented towards the generation of publicity around these informational activities. Another position is that ATTAC would not have been what it is without the inclusion of the revolutionaries and activists who have not only participated in the clashes, but also makes up a very active part of the movement's grassroots activists.¹¹⁰

Now, just as no-one would distance themselves from 'information' in the abstract, no one is opposed to activism in a conceptual sense, but what the word has come to signify at this point is also a number of means collected under the headings non-violent and non-peaceful – including civil disobedience, attempts at breaching police lines and force ones way into closed meetings, and similar strategies that have previously lead to numerous violent confrontations between the ever-present police and their adversaries – the 'black box', Ya Basta, Tute Bianche, Monos Blancos. For those who defined the situation in Gothenburg as one where the violent minority undermined the potential pursued by the peaceful majority, these concrete means must be rejected by ATTAC.¹¹¹

The link between ATTAC's identity and the means it can use is underlined by the way in which the discussion of its overall political ends re-emerges in connection with the means-discussion. What is hovering in the horizon here is the realisation that the existing proposed articles

for the formal organisation ATTAC-Denmark includes a passage spelling out that the movement's purpose is to fight neoliberalism, a definition of the enemy that is absent from the international Platform (though the term is often invoked in the rhetoric of especially French ATTAC-activists). With reference to the platform, moderate activists start to question the enshrinement of this phrase in what is to be the organisation's founding documents, and propose its replacement with what they perceive to be a less partisan term, namely the "unregulated financial globalization" that the international Platform talks about.¹¹² This discussion lasts until right before the founding meeting in October. In the final exchanges in the week up to the meeting, moderates tries to settle the case by invoking what they think is at stake in defining one's enemy as 'neoliberalism' the way the leftists have done. If "ATTAC's articles states that we reject neoliberalism [in the definition offered by the leftists], then we distance ourselves from market economy in all cases. And then ATTAC is an exclusive gathering of people to the left of the Socialist Party."¹¹³ The argument offered by the moderates is that the term 'financial globalisation' is more politically neutral in terms of the left-right spectrum, but still defines an enemy to fight. The leftists are not moved, however, and insists on keeping the term 'neoliberalism' – *even in face of what they recognise to be its consequences*. One writes in reply: "no, ATTAC will not become a group of people to the left of the Socialists Party [if neoliberalism is the enemy] ... but a group of people to the left of, well, the ultra-liberal Kim Behnke, Venstre [the Liberal Party], and sometimes the Social Democrats."¹¹⁴ What this acceptance entails is important in light of the breadth-rhetoric – judging by the result of the parliamentary election two months later, accepting that the movement can be identified with a position on the left/right spectrum that is to the left of the Social Democrats means that one adopts a position to the left of 91,4% of the electorate.

The analysis above only demonstrates how the internal antagonism came to expression in the interaction. What makes this something more than simply a vitriolous virtual dispute is what is hinted at above by reference to the involved's affiliation with the more or less cohesive internal groupings of 'moderates' and 'leftists'. The antagonism turned into a substantial conflict because it was animated and embodied by the fractions that had already emerged over the spring and summer, and who now came to understand themselves in terms that did not seem to allow for rapprochement. The development is captured succinctly by the way in which one of the people involved in the internal struggle metaphorically refer to the moderate and the leftist groups as "roads" that part and lead in different direction. They are no longer moderate ATTAC-members and leftist ATTAC-members, different fellow travellers disagreeing along the way, but proponents

of a moderate ATTAC and a leftist ATTAC.¹¹⁵ And the metaphor is recognised and reiterated by opponents.¹¹⁶ But if the antagonistic logic of the struggle, and the expressive stakes involved are best understood at the level of online debate, its outcome is best understood through analysis of face-to-face interaction in local committees. This is where the action was; this is where the conflict was decided.

As earlier mentioned, the activities of local committees had previously involved a whole continuum of different activities. In this phase, they shift increasingly towards the leftist/activist end of the spectrum as the committees are increasingly defined by and dominated by leftist activists. The local committee in Århus can serve as an example of the development because it simultaneously display the general tendency of the movement to be increasingly defined by leftists, and also was the location of the most aggressive attempt by moderates to fight back in the register of face-to-face interaction – but too late.¹¹⁷ From June onwards, it becomes increasingly clear to the moderates in Århus (who are very prominent participants on Groupcare) that the performative expression of their local branch in off-line registers is not only *done* by leftists, but also done quite differently from what they think it is agreed that it *should* be done. Leftists have organised the bus-trip carrying activists to Gothenburg and play a central role in the wording of the press release discussed above. They ignore protests raised at a monthly meeting, and organise a recruitment campaign in the name of ATTAC where they also distribute material from their own political organisations, International Socialists, SAP (Socialist Workers Party), and KAP (Communist Workers Party).¹¹⁸ They refuse to distance the movement from the clashes in Gothenburg, and play a central role in organising participation under the name ATTAC-Denmark in the protests at the Genova G8 summit in July, fully anticipating similar troubles – again in the face of moderates arguing against ATTAC's participation.¹¹⁹ By dominating the off-line situations, the leftists take upon themselves the name of ATTAC and both speak for it and perform it without letting themselves be contradicted by the moderates. They generate visibility and media coverage of their *action* while the moderates are engaged in what is in this phase the mere *activity* of debating in online forums that because the leftists ignore them have ceased to be backstages, but a simply separate stages at this point. Realising the decisive importance of the off-line register, which they have till this point largely ignored in their activity in the movement, a group of moderates in July try to launch a counter-offensive by organising in what they dub the 'course-group', the name being an allusion to their ambition of getting ATTAC back on what they perceive to be the right course. The group try to achieve two things, both explicitly directed against the leftists. They want ATTAC

to distance itself from violent clashes, and they want to redefine the ambition of amassing a broad coalition behind ATTAC as including the exclusion of leftist extremists and other externally affiliated groups they feel are highjacking the movement.¹²⁰ One moderate describe the ambition: “We want to clarify the differences within the movement and provoke people to choose what way ATTAC is to develop”.¹²¹ The differences are clarified by the angry leftist responses to this embodied and organised attempt to fight them: The ATTAC they see themselves as incarnating is fighting against “neoliberalism”, and does this through activism that may be non-peaceful, but does not deserve the rubriquet ‘violence’ “those in power are behind the real violence” – and activism that is of decisive importance if the movement is to succeed: “if we do that [leave behind activism], another world is no longer possible”.¹²² Moreover, the people behind these beliefs simply outnumbered the moderates in the off-line interaction in local committees who are behind the embodied expression of the movement that the moderates in the online register of Groupcare lacks the means of contradicting.¹²³ A flurry of papers formulated *outside* the online register hammer home the leftist definition of the movement in practice while the moderates are contained in forms of interaction that are in this decisive situation inconsequential as decisions are simply not taken there, but in the local committees and subgroups where the leftist numerically and in terms of sheer activism dominate the movement.¹²⁴

It is thus at the level of off-line face-to-face interaction that the moderates loose the internal conflict. Their position is still enacted in the online debate for a time afterwards, but the substance of their position is crumbling as they start to feel estranged from the movement and leave it one by one. One key figure amongst the moderates put his problems with the course taken into words in Groupcare: “I would very much like a clarification as to what ends we strive for and what methods we will come to use, as they are of decisive importance for my continued association with ATTAC.”¹²⁵ A ‘we’ is still used, but it is coupled with a disassociation between the activist and the movement he has been involved in the expression of through the separation of the ‘me’ and the movement in the last phrase. This statement is made by the man who in June jokingly wrote online that it was “important that ATTAC Denmark did not become synonymous with [me]”¹²⁶ – this is certainly no longer a danger. What is a very real danger is posed as a question by another prominent moderate, who ask: “have we come to a break-up, or can we still connect the threads?”¹²⁷

Maybe the proper question would have been if those deciding on the team’s ‘we’ still *wanted* to connect the different threads. The antagonisms that erupted in this phase made the

situation look like a choice between maintaining an identity of ATTAC they could live with, *or* connecting the threads made up by the different groupings under a very abstract nominal name. Faced with this, the majority opted for consensus around the leftist articulation of ATTAC's identity and privileged it over holding the threads together, and many prominent moderate activists do not even make it to the founding general assembly. One writes on Groupcare: "one by one, we leave. We cannot be bothered anymore."¹²⁸ So did numerous sympathisers and previously active people as ATTAC during the fall lose most of its popular support.

Therefore, these people also fail to leave a print on the other important disagreement that necessarily must come to an end in this phase. This is the question of what organisational form ATTAC is to assume. It is not antagonistic in the way the conflict over means and ends is, but it ceases to be possible to leave it as an agreement to disagree, because a decision has to be made – something *particular* has to be put down on paper to found the movement.

A group was set down at the May national seminar to prepare this – Statutgruppen, comprised of seven people, five of whom do not distinguish themselves in the internal debates, two of whom appear as leftists. In phase III, the action of defining the organisation's formal blueprint revolves around this group, originally created to prepare the work of fleshing out the intentions the May meeting laid out for the articles. As already discussed, this monopoly on action was not in place in phase II, where there was a lively online discussion on Groupcare that marked out an agreement to disagree between the network organisation proposed by moderates, and the modernist organisation proposed by some leftists. What happens in the fall is that after central moderate activists have receded to the background, if not left the movement completely, no one articulates the network position. This amounts to an absence of a proposal as to what it would mean for ATTAC to assume the network form of organisation that it was initially agreed to assume it would. This perspective remains nothing but an empty abstraction.

Instead, three positions appear in the discussion. The first is the proposal backed by the majority of Statutgruppen. This is a modernist form of organisation, characterised by ideological consensus around the controversial notion of 'neoliberalism' and a form that will enforce this consensus by homogenising the set of participants by allowing only individuals as members, not creating any forms of participation beyond membership (which requires accepting the full articles, including 'neoliberalism' as the movement's enemy), and not making any provisions for any form of organised networking with other movements, but only informal 'cooperation'.¹²⁹ The second is

offered by the minority of Statutgruppen, and is an anarchical proposal, where “all members are spokespersons for and political leaders in ATTAC-Denmark”.¹³⁰ In the light of the aftermath of Gothenburg, this does not appear very attractive, and is not supported by anyone after its publication online – it is merely stated as an alternative to the modernist proposal of the majority. The third position is that of appearing as if you have not understood where the action is. One unaffiliated activist who has been amongst the most vocal on Groupcare launches his own alternative proposal.¹³¹ It is simply left to hover in the vacuum of a lack of response and lack of substantial backing. Contrary to in the disagreement over ATTAC’s organisational form in phase II, this is not a time where just anyone can suggest just anything and expect a serious reaction.

This silence marks the end of an era in the short history of ATTAC in Denmark. There is no more substantial disagreement, no real differences amongst the participants. The anaemic discussion surrounding the formal founding of the movement is the last substantial animation of the online register, and the last apparent disagreements in the movement. Where the Groupcare was used for many-to-many debate for months, it now serves increasingly as a form of one-to-many mean of disseminating information about movement activities. This makes up increasing parts of the activity here from September and onwards.¹³² From October on, there is almost no debate on Groupcare. The newly created home page of the movement hosts no substantial interaction either. The online register for expressing ATTAC consists in increasingly infrequent newsletters and the bare existence of the home page. The Groupcare interaction loose the rich texture it had from March to August, and becomes a non-interactive combination of simple information and singular statements without replies.

The real embodiment of the movement also seems to stagnate. In the spring, thousands had participated in the founding of the local committees, many of whom where quite active for a while. In May, it was possible to mobilise around 200 people in the exam period for a national seminar focussed on something as unsexy as preparing the organisational founding of the movement. Now, the budget for the upcoming founding national convention is based on an expectation of 350 paying participants. But ever since June, more people have left than joined the movement.¹³³ In the end, only 134 people show up for what is supposedly the most important meeting so far in the movement’s development.

3 The 'return to tradition' and implosion of ATTAC in Denmark

The national convention is the first time authoritative democratic decisions are made as to what ATTAC-Denmark *is*. It marks the point where the team that has until now expressed the movement through their interaction is replaced by an organization that will formally incarnate the name's referent beyond its appearance in media and interaction. The decisions made at the convention as to what this organization shall be simply sanction the causes of the movement's implosion. The concrete questions raised here have been how, why, and what happened in the process that lead to this. The answers are summed up in the idea that ATTAC made a 'return to tradition' – a phrase I use to point to three interconnected aspects addressing each of the questions raised.

First, it is the story told above about *how* ATTAC's proponents through their interaction (which the contextualisation of the analysis has demonstrated was of independent importance for the outcome) arrived at an organisational form that left behind the hype, hope and potential the movement's emergence and initial framing gave rise to.

Secondly, it captures *why* it went that way, why the moderates evacuated the movement in the fall as leftists who had organised more forcefully in the comparatively traditional spectrum of the local committees and groups turned out to have captured the forums where the real action was at a decisive point, and therefore triumphed over those animating the comparatively post-traditional online register when internal conflict broke out.

Thirdly, it sum up the *outcome* of the interactive processes, the fact that the bearer of the name 'ATTAC' ceased to be a broad team characterised by disagreement and difference, and came to be a small traditional organisation defined by a narrow ideological consensus and internal homogeneity reinforced by strict in/out, member/outsider distinctions. This is what the result of the founding amounts to, and this is what leads to the implosion.

Ideologically, the national convention sanctioned and enshrined in the movement's articles, statements and political platform an emphasis on *consensus* that did not allow for the previous disagreements. The questions of whether ATTAC is fighting 'neoliberalism' or 'uncontrolled financial globalisation', and the question of whether it does so in 'non-violent' or 'peaceful' ways, are settled authoritatively.¹³⁴ Having already won the battles in the local committees, the leftists now win the war by means of the vote – at this point, they and those who vote with them simply outnumber everyone else. Their victory is carved into the organisation's formal structure and

authoritative organs. §2 of the articles of ATTAC-Denmark states clearly that the movement fight “neoliberalism” by “non-violent” means.¹³⁵ This is emphasised in the press releases formulated at the meeting.¹³⁶ That this is not merely an abstract consensus is underlined by the national committee elected. Three of the five people chosen are leftists who have been heavily involved in the internal conflicts.¹³⁷ No moderates make it. The consequences of these choices become clear in January, where leftist start to patrol the few instances of debate on Groupcare, using references to the articles to make it clear to remaining moderates that ATTAC is “not about countering the negative consequences of liberalism, but about being against neoliberalism”.¹³⁸

What used to be a team characterised by difference thus emerged as a homogenous organisation that left behind ATTAC’s previously assumed cleavage-transcending character. The committee elected puts the movement squarely on the left part of the left/right cleavage, as three are publicly known as, and represented in the press coverage of the convention as, members of the post-Communist Enhedslisten and Internationale Socialister. Where the team appeared as bridging the gap between counter-culture and the establishment, now even *Information*, the most left-liberal of all Danish dailies, is categorised by members as part of the ‘bourgeois media’. Revealing what will become an increasingly obvious counter-EU undercurrent contravening the idea of a transcending the pro-/con-EU cleavage, the national convention also – in face of moderate protests – agrees to cast the EU as a direct addressee of criticism.¹³⁹

Organisationally, the national convention eschewed the idea of a post-modern network based on opt-in, decentralisation and online participation in favour of a traditional form of organisation.¹⁴⁰ The idea of a network or ‘movement of movements’ is absent from the articles. No forms of collective membership or other association for groups is allowed for.¹⁴¹ Only individuals can be members of the organisation. And they have to buy the whole package. In opposition to the idea graduations of participation and affiliation, the organisation is build around a logic based on full dedication and membership or lack thereof – no middle terrain is allowed for.¹⁴² This form reinforces the narrow ideological consensus and internal homogeneity through its strict in/out, member/outsider divisions and demand for full commitment.

Shortly after the convention, one of few the remaining moderates bring up the crucial question of whether ATTAC in its new incarnation can still realise the original ambition of generating power and publicity behind a fully political project through the amassment of a broad coalition.¹⁴³ The replies by the victorious leftists are univocal - “there is no doubt that ATTAC-Denmark will

develop into a serious movement presenting a real alternative to neoliberalism” and that the movement will mobilise “thousands of members”.¹⁴⁴ This is not just rhetorical hullabaloo – otherwise it would make little sense to spend resources on printing ten thousand inpayment forms.¹⁴⁵

The subsequent development proves the optimism to be ill founded. The movement that involved thousands in the spring never exceeds 252 paying members and never manage to play a powerful of public role in Danish or international politics. The trajectory of ATTAC in Denmark goes from the disagreeing and internally different team’s generation of power potential and publicity through interaction, through the return to tradition, and to the implosion of the movement into a largely unnoticed, powerless, dense core of leftist activists. The movement did not cease to exist, but it failed to organisationally assume a form that could generate power and publicity to pursue its full political thrust.¹⁴⁶ Compared to the way ATTAC has been organised in France and Norway, it is clear that the potential to provide such an underpinning is what was lost when moderates and most un-associated sympathisers left the movement.¹⁴⁷ Without it, ATTAC, in terms of hegemonic politics, remains nothing but empty radicalism.

What remains is to identify whether and how the precise way in which ATTAC-Denmark imploded can be linked back to the broader issue of movement mobilisation and the political potentials and problems of micro-interaction. My case suggests that a central challenge is how interaction can be orchestrated in a way that *maintains* disagreement and difference *behind* a project to generate a power that will make it more than an ideological abstraction moored in a marginal organisation. Only the proverbial ‘more research’ can determine the wider ramifications of my analysis, but it seems to be the case that *even* in a situation where the constituents of lively interaction *and* an overall ideological definition of the project *are already given*, the precise orchestration of micro-interaction is the key to continually sustaining the power it takes to pursue a fully political project. The challenge is not so much a problem to formulate an ideological challenge to a present order, as to harness the power of disagreement and difference to pursue it.

This is what ATTAC to some extend has managed to do in France and Norway, while the powerless Danish branch imploded due to its drive towards consensus and homogeneity. The idea that difference and disagreement is today a necessary part of movement based mobilisation of political power stands in contrast to both the intuitions of the leftist activists and the common sense of traditionalist organisation. Gerlach’s general point that many internal logics in movements drive

them towards centralisation, Gamson's emphasis on conformity, unity and the centralisation as effective movement strategies and most importantly the fact that Bennett can quote a French ATTAC employee to the effect that "the main problem for ATTAC today concerns the unification of the movement and the way to give it a more unified content" all suggests that this is not a trivial point.¹⁴⁸ Unless one can depend on the mobilisation of preconstituted social groups, the traditional form of organisation oriented towards the creation of a collective identity through the eradication of differences and disagreements between the Self, the Other of one's compatriots, and the Third of the team seems to lead to the fragmentation of movement politics into finely differentiated organisational cores that resemble the 'parties without partisans' and may operate quite effectively in corporatist negotiation or as the basis of guerrilla resistance against whatever, but in the contemporary social terrain seems eminently ill-suited for the mobilisation of the potential of people-power for positive progressive politics. The key to this seems to be an organisational form that can maintain the differences and disagreements behind a project that both Self and Others identify with as their Third (team). Here, the danger is the fragmentation of the team, as it happened for ATTAC-Denmark when people started talking about different roads for the movement.

The troubles that the multitudinous ATTAC organisations in France and Norway face every day in their attempts to harness their different constituents underline that this balance is never easy. The media-driven challenges that ATTAC-Denmark faced further stress this. The mass media seems to have traditionalist expectations when it comes to covering movements – they want leaders, unified ideologies, and homogenous followings. What goes on may otherwise be covered as anarchy, vagueness, and internal strife.¹⁴⁹ Movements still need to organise to be able to maintain a shared project and produce authoritative statements in times of crisis – as Melucci argue, there is a persistent need for not only coordination, but also public representation.¹⁵⁰ The concrete challenge for movement *politics* is to provide this in a way that does not take away the potential to generate power through interaction. The contrast to more successful national branches in similar contexts like Norway underlines the independent importance of how a movement's proponents handle this challenge in a process that is not exhausted by external determination, but involves an element of human freedom. The antagonism that prevented ATTAC-Denmark from maintaining its breadth was not externally determined, derived from Gothenburg, nor imputed by the media – it was the outcome of underdetermined interaction, and the way the conflict it produced was settled – something that was *also* driven by internal interactions – was what led the Danish branch down the road to consensus, homogeneity and powerlessness in implosion. This seems to show a very

practical side of movement politics with hegemonic aspirations – such aspirations are dependent on power, and power beyond the possession of means is the outcome of interaction amongst participants of real breadth, not rhetorical claims to broadness. Populism is not enough. It takes people. The challenge that faces the proponents of a movement that wants to pursue a political alternative is how to give it a broad *reality* that can generate power and publicity behind a project that will otherwise remain an ideological fantasy.

Contrary to the way in which the classical movements of modernity (the labour struggle in Europe, nationalist struggles for independence) did this by linking a collective identity (sometimes created through very concrete forms of coercion, like beating up ‘scabs’ or banning undesirable languages and persecuting ‘strangers’) with a political project along the lines of what Gramsci would call a ‘historic bloc’, this seems in today’s more complicated social structure to necessitate a less substantialist operation. Instead of a collective *identity*, something like a collective *identification* with a team-project that will allow those involved to be simply equivalent in a certain sense without being reduced to homogeneity.¹⁵¹ In line with this idea, the subject of people-powered hegemonic politics may today be more properly understood as a network than as a bloc, because the real embodiment of its thrust requires a degree of disagreement and difference.

Contrary to the ideas of people like Rheingold or Hunter, this is not a ‘smart mob’ or ‘network army’ model of spontaneous mobilisation without leaders and brokers.¹⁵² We have yet to see such a form pursue anything but at most negative resistance to what is. *Political* network mobilisation takes hard, practical work, and the case of ATTAC in Denmark suggests that the successful pursuit of this has to be thought along the lines of a new model of activism instead of the traditional figure of, for instance, Gramsci’s ‘modern prince’ and its orientation towards unity and homogeneity. Post-traditional hegemonic politics will take something more like ‘movement mediators’, who are sensitive to the idea that the generation of people-power instrumental for *political* purposes depends on interactional and organisational room for difference and disagreement linked through self-reflexive identification with a team-project. What is needed to realise this potential is activist who identify with the Third of the team-project even when the Other of the other fractions of the movement are fundamentally different – and sometimes obnoxious. Movement mediators are people who can flesh out what Bernard Cassens’ advice to national branches of ATTAC ‘stick to what unites you, avoid what divides you’ means *in practice*, how a movement at odds with itself can emerge in the space *between* consensus and fragmentation, in the space of disagreement and difference. This domain on the one hand presents a real potential for political

power because it is based on people's capacity for freedom in action. Precisely therefore, it also entails a risk of failure – as shown by the return to tradition and implosion of ATTAC in Denmark.

¹ Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri 2004, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Routledge, London & New York, p. 221.

² Zygmunt Baumann 2000, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, UK; Axel Honneth 1995, *The Fragmented World of the Social*, SUNY Press, USA; Russell J. Dalton & Martin P. Wattenberg (eds) 2002, *Parties without Partisans*, Oxford University Press, USA & UK.

³ Alberto Melucci 1996, *Challenging Codes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK), p. 345.

⁴ Most importantly the editorial by Jørgen Steen Nielsen that put the movement on the agenda, 'Til (mod)angreb', editorial, *Information*, December 20, 2000, see also for instance 'Et kærkomment signal til politikerne', *Politiken*, February 25, 2001, 'ATTAC breder sig i Danmark', *Jyllands-Posten*, February 15, 2001.

⁵ 'Oprør fra neden', *Politiken*, January 13, 2001, 'Bevægelsen: Et globalt netværk slår rødder', *Information*, February 10, 2001.

⁶ Platform of the International Movement ATTAC, ATTAC-Danmarks grundlag. All quotes from Danish have been translated by the author.

⁷ Platform of the International Movement ATTAC, ATTAC-Danmarks grundlag.

⁸ 'Noget nyt er på vej', editorial, *Information*, February 7, 2001, 'En ny start', *Politiken*, January 27, 2001.

⁹ Marcos Ancelovici 2002, 'Organizing Against Globalization: The Case of ATTAC in France', *Politics & Society*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 427-463 and Sarah Waters 2004, 'Mobilising against Globalisation: Attac and the French Intellectuals', *West European Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 854-874. I fail to understand why these authors present ATTAC as an anti-globalisation movement when the movement clearly presents itself as an *alternative* globalisation movement. See also Felix Kolb 2004 'The Impact of Transnational Protest on Social Movement Organisations: Mass Media and ATTAC in Germany', in Donatella della Porta & Sidney Tarrow *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, Rowman & Littlefield, USA.

¹⁰ See for instance 'Der er noget galt i politik', *Information*, February 21, 2001, and 'ATTAC er for de uplettede', *Politiken*, February 25, 2001, see also more substantial statistical analysis in *Mandag Morgen*, nr. 9., 5. marts 2001.

¹¹ This also marks the difference between the case at hand and the case of Gitlin's analysis of the SDS where the "processed image" became the movement that in its organisational reality predated the image. Here, the media frame and interactional expression predates the movement's organisational reality. See Todd Gitlin 1980, *The Whole World is Watching*, University of California Press, USA, p. 3.

¹² More prosaic points about the material this analysis is based on is dealt with in appendix A.

¹³ When Sveinung Sandberg in an otherwise insightful analysis suggests that ATTAC 'disappeared' in Norway, he seriously underestimates the comparative success of the Norwegian branch – see Sveinung Sandberg 'ATTAC – oprøret som forsvant?', *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, 2005/1, pp. 60-72.

¹⁴ Bolette M. Christensen 2002, 'The Case of ATTAC: A case of constructive journalism', MODINET Working Paper no.1.

¹⁵ Bolette M. Christensen 2004, 'Organizing a social movement organization by means of the Internet: Deliberation or staging?', MODINET Working Paper, no.6.

¹⁶ Erik Christensen 2003, 'En retorisk analyse af den fanske Attac-bevægelses fødselsproces – fra eksplosiv inkludering til massiv ekskludering', Arbejdsrapporter fra Institut for Økonomi, Politik og Forvaltning – Aalborg Universitet, 2003:1.

¹⁷ Jeffrey Goldfarb 2006, *The Politics of Small Things*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

¹⁸ Hannah Arendt 1970, *On Violence*, Harcourt Brace, New York, p. 44.

¹⁹ Hannah Arendt 1998, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, p. 199.

²⁰ Jürgen Habermas [1976] 1985, 'Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power', in his *Philosophical- Political Profiles*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.).

²¹ Erving Goffman 1959, *The Presentations of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday Anchor, USA, p. 15.

²² Adding network theory as an emerging fourth approach within social movement theory in addition to the canonical ones of political opportunity, resource mobilisation and cultural framing, examples of definitions of social movements as sharing a 'collective identity' can be found in all four – see, respectively, Sidney Tarrow 1998, *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press, USA & UK, p. 4-5; John D. McCarthy & Mayer N. Zald 1977, 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, No. 6, pp. 1212-1241, pp. 1217-18; Alberto Melucci 1985, 'The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements', *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), pp.789-816, p. 793; and Mario Diani 1992, 'The Concept of Social Movement', *Sociological Review*, 40: pp. 1-25. For an attempt to analyse ATTAC in different national contexts through a lens that assumes collective identity, see Vicki Birchfield & Annette Freyberg-Inan 2005 'Organic Intellectuals and counter-hegemonic politics in the age of globalisation: the case of ATTAC' in Cathrine Eschle & Bice Maiguashca (eds.) *Critical Theories, International Relations and 'the Anti-Globalisation Movement'*, Routledge, London, pp.154-173.

²³ Luther P. Gerlach 2001, 'The Structure of Social Movements: Environmental Activism and its Opponents', in John Arquilla & David F. Ronfeldt (eds.) *Networks and Netwars*, RAND Publications, USA, for an analysis of ATTAC that

assumes that it 'favours' such forms of organisation, see Brigitte Le Grignou & Charles Patou 2004 'ATTAC(k)ing expertise', in Wim van de Donk et al (eds.) *Cyberprotest*, Routledge: London and New York, pp. 164-180.

²⁴ Melucci 1996, op.cit., p. 4.

²⁵ Goffman, op.cit., p. 104.

²⁶ For a conceptualisation of media frames, see Gitlin, op.cit., p. 7.

²⁷ John B. Thompson 1995, *The Media and Modernity*, Polity Press, UK; John McManus 1995, 'A market-based model of news production', *Communication Theory*, 5 (4), pp. 301-338; Graham Murdock & Peter Golding 1989, 'Information Poverty and Political Inequality: Citizenship in the Age of Privatized Communications', *Journal of Communication*, 39 (3), pp. 180-195; Joseph Turow 1992, 'The Organizational Underpinnings of Contemporary Media Conglomerates', *Communication Research*, 19 (6), pp. 682-704 and Doug Underwood 2001, 'Reporting and the Push for Market-Oriented Journalism: Media Organizations as Businesses', in W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman *Mediated Politics – Communication in the Future of Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

²⁸ See Joshua Meyrowitz 1985, *No Sense of Place*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, p. 35.

²⁹ Gitlin, op.cit., p. 3.

³⁰ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ali Mohammadi 1994, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, reminds us that this is not only possible due to the Internet, but also through earlier forms of informal networks of 'small media' operating against the grain of the 'big media'.

³¹ 'ATTAC har allerede ødelagt sig selv', by Normann Aa. Nielsen, www.information.dk, June 15, 2001.

³² See also Goldfarb op.cit., p. 8.

³³ Erving Goffman 1967, 'Where the action is', in his *Interaction Ritual*, Pantheon Books, New York, p. 164.

³⁴ This means Antonio Gramsci 1988, *An Antonio Gramsci Reader* (edited by David Forgacs), Schocken Books, New York, re-read in the light of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe 1985, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Verso, London, where the last residues of his class-essentialism is left behind.

³⁵ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe 1985, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Verso, London. See similar sentiments in Goldfarb's discussion of negative denial and democratic affirmation, op.cit., p. 40.

³⁶ Bernard Cassens, 'On the Attack', *New Left Review*, 19, Jan/Feb 2003, p. 56.

³⁷ Despite the many other merits of their work, Melucci's (1996, op.cit) and Touraine's work is marred by this tendency to dismiss explicitly political goals as simply something imputed on movements by 'ideologues'.

³⁸ Laclau & Mouffe, op.cit., pp. 93-96.

³⁹ The term 'neoliberalism' is not uncontroversial, most often used as a term of critique, and one that proponents of what I will here assume go under that name are not always comfortable in identifying with. Mod-ATTAC, for instance, prefer the term 'liberalism'. Talking about a 'liberal hegemony' would, however, invoke somewhat misleading connotations, as what we are concerned with here are mainly articulations of the relations between institutional democracy and global markets. A short discussion of its role in Denmark is written by an academic involved in ATTAC, Anders Lundkvist 2002, 'Den danske ny-liberalisme', *SALT*, Volume 11, Issue 6, pp. 10-12. For discussions of its prominence in Europe more generally, see for instance Alan W. Cafruny and Magnus Ryner (eds.) 2003, *A Ruined Fortress? Neoliberal hegemony and transformation in Europe*, Rowman and Littlefield, UK and Dieter Plehwe, Gisela Neunhoffer, and Bernhard Walpen (eds.) 2006, *Neoliberal Hegemony: a Global Critique*, Routledge, UK.

⁴⁰ Op-ed piece in *Jyllands-Posten*, February 20, 2001. See also editorials in *Jyllands-Posten* (February 18, 2001) and *Politiken* (January 14, 2001) and numerous of the criticisms of ATTAC launched on www.information.dk. What is interesting to note is how these statements change from initial affirmations of a consensus to becoming particularistic interventions in a debate.

⁴¹ The underlying conflict is the question of whether the outcome of the aggregation of individual market choices can play the same role in a Democracy as expressions made collectively through parties, organisations, movements, and individual actions by people invoking the notion of 'the people'.

⁴² In the three newspapers analysed systematically, ATTAC is covered in 689 units. 469 mention Dansk Naturfredningsforening.

⁴³ This for Danish journalism and media culture untraditional role has been analysed in Christensen 2002 and 2004, op.cit.

⁴⁴ See figure 1 and 2 for graphic overviews

⁴⁵ 'Globale spilleregler', editorial by Lars Mogensen, *Information*, January 29, 2001, 'En bevægelse med stykker – og svagheder', editorial, *Politiken*, January 27, 2001.

⁴⁶ 'ATTAC – at tage udviklingen i egen hånd', by Lars Ørn Rasmussen, www.information.dk, February 20, 2001.

⁴⁷ 'En dødssejler', editorial, *Jyllands-Posten*, February 18, 2001.

⁴⁸ 'Til (mod)angreb', editorial, *Information*, December 20, 2000, 'Tobinskat er ikke utopi', op-ed by Christian Friis Bach, *Politiken*, February 2, 2001, 'ATTAC breder sig i Danmark', *Jyllands-Posten*, February 15, 2001.

- ⁴⁹ The editorial in question is strictly speaking from the next phase (March 10), but it reflects the general acceptance of ATTAC as something important and serious across the media and political landscape in Denmark.
- ⁵⁰ Parties that span 50,5% of the electorate, judging by the 1998 election-result.
- ⁵¹ 'Globale spilleregler', editorial by Lars Mogensen, *Information*, January 29, 2001, 'En bevægelse med stykker – og svagheder', editorial, *Politiken*, January 27, 2001.
- ⁵² Quote from 'De er bare imod', editorial, *Information*, February 15, 2001. See also 'Verdensmagere', *Information*, February 24, 2001, 'Græsrodderne blæser til kamp' *Politiken*, January 22, 2001, 'ATTAC BØR VÆRE EN FOLKELIG BEVÆGELSE', by Arne Thomsen, www.information.dk, February 16, 2001.
- ⁵³ 'Europæisk: At berøre det hellige', op-ed by Niels I. Meyer, *Information*, January 4, 2001. Response to 'Hvad er ATTAC uden EU?', comment by Ejvind Larsen, *Information*, December 29, 2000.
- ⁵⁴ Consider for instance attempts by prominent pro-EU Social Democrats like the minister of the environment Svend Auken and Member of the European Parliament Helle Thorning-Schmidt to claim ATTAC for the progressive pro-EU cause – *Information*, February 24, 2001. On the other hand, the EU-skepticist movement *Junibevægelsen* argues against a positive view of the EU.
- ⁵⁵ 'kritisk!', by Michael Rützou, www.information.dk, January 31, 2001.
- ⁵⁶ See op-ed pieces in *Information* by Kim Elmore and Anders Lundkvist on, respectively, January 6 and 8, 2001.
- ⁵⁷ An early example is 'Hvad er opgaven?', by Jean Fischer, www.information.dk, January 8, 2001.
- ⁵⁸ 'Hvad er ATTAC uden EU?', comment by Ejvind Larsen, *Information*, December 29, 2000.
- ⁵⁹ 'Fyld Grøfterne I EU', op-ed by Rasmus Lindblom in *Information*, February 16, 2001, 'ATTAC er IKKE bare imod!', by Britt Nøhr Jensen, www.information.dk, February 26, 2001.
- ⁶⁰ See for instance 'Et kærkomment signal til politikerne', *Politiken*, February 25, 2001
- ⁶¹ 'Tobinskat er ikke utopi', op-ed by Christian Friis Bach, *Politiken*, February 2, 2001.
- ⁶² 'Overvejelser om ATTAC', by Peter Kjær self-identified as member of Internationale Socialister, www.information.dk, February 13, 2001.
- ⁶³ 'Udfordring til midterpartierne', op-ed by Sven-Åge Westphalen and Flemming Peter Schultz, *Politiken*, February 25, 2001.
- ⁶⁴ 'ATTAC bør være en bred folkelig bevægelse', by Arne Thomson, www.information.dk, February 16, 2001 is but one example.
- ⁶⁵ Member of parliament for far-left Unity List, Søren Søndergaard, 'Har bredden ikke en grænse?', www.information.dk, February 14, 2001.
- ⁶⁶ 'Skuffende Attac møde', by Christian Rohmann, www.information.dk, February 13, 2001.
- ⁶⁷ 'ATTAC BØR VÆRE EN BRED FOLKELIG BEVÆGELSE', by Arne Thomsen, www.information.dk, February 16, 2001, 'Derfor skal vi gå til ATTAC', op-ed by Christian Friis Bach, *Politiken*, February 24, 2001, 'Gødning til spirende ATTAC i Danmark', *Information*, February 26, 2001.
- ⁶⁸ 'Bevar bredden', op-ed by Annemette Danielsen, *Information*, February 13, 2001.
- ⁶⁹ 'Fyld Grøfterne i EU', op-ed by Rasmus Lindblom in *Information*, February 16, 2001. This proposal emerges again later on, but is continuously ignored by the dominant strands of the movement.
- ⁷⁰ 'Attac mod partiinteresser', op-ed by Tom Døllner, *Politiken*, February 26, 2001. See also 'Bevar bredden', op-ed by Annemette Danielsen, *Information*, February 13, 2001.
- ⁷¹ 'Bevar bredden', op-ed by Annemette Danielsen, *Information*, February 13, 2001.
- ⁷² 'Gå demokratiets vej', op-ed by Helle Thorning-Schmidt, *Politiken*, February 25, 2001.
- ⁷³ Cassens 2003, op.cit., p. 42.
- ⁷⁴ See for instance 'Velkommen ATTAC', http://www.lo.dk/smcms/Nyheder/Arkiv/Nyheder/2001/VelkommenC_ATTAC/Index.htm?ID=2766.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with Kenneth Haar.
- ⁷⁶ Goffman, op.cit., p. 112.
- ⁷⁷ The op-ed debate, which involves several celebrity sympathisers and prominent politicians, circles around the question of whether a position on EU is to be adopted or not, something the activists have left aside on the basis established in phase I of an agreement to disagree about this. The op-ed debate is simply ignored by those busy building the movement, and the people who are active in it never come to play any role in the subsequent events. *Information's* online debate is still very lively in March, but, as Christensen (2004, op.cit.) have demonstrated, the activity here is reduced to a staged debate between a few very energetic critics of the movement and a number of activists and sympathisers engaged in a somewhat uncoordinated defence of various policies and positions associated with ATTAC.
- ⁷⁸ See for instance 'Staldkneb fra PR-branchen', *Information*, March 1, 2001 and 'Til Christopher Arzrouni', by Marlene Steen Nielsen Flagg, www.information.dk, March 8, 2001.
- ⁷⁹ 'RE: Hvordan forholder ATTAC Sverige sig til topmødet?', from: Jørgen Madsen, www.groupcare.dk, March 20, 2001. Interview with Kenneth Haar.

-
- ⁸⁰ 'Halvårsmøde I Attac-Århus med vigtige vedtægtsdiskussioner', from: sekretariat@attac-aarhus.org, www.groupcare.dk, May 12, 2001.
- ⁸¹ 'BRED FORDOMSFRI ATTAC-FORMULERING', by Arne Thomsen, www.information.dk, March 18, 2001.
- ⁸² 'ATTAC MÅ FORMULERE SIG KLARERE', by Arne Thomsen, www.information.dk, March 28, 2001.
- ⁸³ Activist quoted in 'Fraktions-freaks', *Information*, May 21, 2001.
- ⁸⁴ In my interview with him, Kenneth Haar mentions the differences here between veteran activists like himself who spend a lot of time arguing for and building an organisation, and Anarchists and inexperienced previously unassociated who were very sceptical of organisation, seeing it as something that would take away some of what was distinct about ATTAC as an alternative.
- ⁸⁵ 'RE: OrganAttac og AnarkAttac', from: Anders Gottlieb, www.groupcare.dk, May 26, 2001.
- ⁸⁶ 'RE: OrganAttac og AnarkAttac', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, May 28, 2001.
- ⁸⁷ Other disagreements that surface in this period include the nature and name of ATTAC's enemy – is the movement to fight financial globalisation (the term used in the International Platform), capitalism (a term frequently used by leftist activists) or neo-liberalism (the term the Danish chapter eventually agrees upon). Each implies different understandings of the world, different avenues of action, and have different connotations in the surrounding society. I deal with aspects of this disagreement in another paper on the movement, but it has been left out here as it is of no great importance for the internal microinteraction.
- ⁸⁸ See minutes from meetings in Copenhagen contained in 'Referat fra Københavnerkoordineringsgruppemødet', from: Anders Lund, www.groupcare.dk, April 27, 2001.
- ⁸⁹ 'Re: Hvordan forholder ATTAC Sverige sig til topmødet?', by Jørgen Madsen, www.groupcare.dk, March 20, 2001, 'Ta til Gothenburg 15-16 juni', from: Jakob Nerup, www.groupcare.dk, April 23, 2001. Others disagree, see 'RE: civil ulydighed', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, May 10, 2001.
- ⁹⁰ 'Re: OrganAttac or AnarkAttac', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, May 28, 2001.
- ⁹¹ 'BRED FORDOMSFRI ATTAC-FORMULERING', by Arne Thomsen, www.information.dk, March 18, 2001.
- ⁹² Moderates Daniel Fairchild, Martin Dohn and Helgi Breiner are amongst the most active participants on-line, while minutes from meetings suggests that leftists Kenneth Haar, Lene Junker, and Rikke Holm, who are largely absent from the Groupcaredebate, are involved in almost all organisation in the three largest local chapters, and in most of the sub-group organisation too – see 'Referat fra Københavnerkoordineringsgruppemødet', from: Anders Lund, www.groupcare.dk, April 27, 2001, 'Landsseminar i Odense 19. maj', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, April 10, 2001, 'Halvårsmøde i Attac-århus med vigtige vedtægtsdiskussioner', from sekretariat@attac.aarhus.org, www.groupcare.dk, May 12, 2001.
- ⁹³ See Kolb op.cit.
- ⁹⁴ 'Attac tag jer sammen', by Lars, www.information.dk, June 17, 2001. See the press-coverage in 'Europa og USA: Bush go home', *Politiken*, June 15, 2001, 'Tumulten under kontrol', *Jyllands-Posten*, June 15, 2001, 'Stenkast knuste dialogen', *Information*, June 16, 2001.
- ⁹⁵ 'Pressemeddelelse: Afstandtagen fra vold', from: Helgi Breiner, www.groupcare.dk, June 16, 2001.
- ⁹⁶ 'ATTAC Danmark mod vold', press release, June 16, 2001.
- ⁹⁷ 'Stenkast knuste dialogen', *Information*, June 16, 2001, 'Stenhoveder, editorial, *Jyllands-Posten*, June 19, 2001 for coverage, for debate, see 'vedr. Pressemeddelelse ang. volden i Gothenburg', by Lars Jørgensen, June 18, 2001 and 'Pinligt – Attac Sverige og Finland!', from: Martin Dohn, www.groupcare.dk, June 15, 2001.
- ⁹⁸ 'Presseudtalelse afsendes', from: Jørgen Madsen, www.groupcare.dk, June 16, 2001.
- ⁹⁹ 'RE: Pinligt – Attac Sverige og Finland!', from Klaus Jensen, www.groupcare.dk, June 15, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁰ 'ATTAC: De få ødelagde det for de mange', press release, June 22, 2001.
- ¹⁰¹ 'Europa og USA: Bush go home', *Politiken*, June 15, 2001, 'Tumulten under kontrol', *Jyllands-Posten*, June 15, 2001, 'Stenkast knuste dialogen', *Information*, June 16, 2001.
- ¹⁰² 'Stenhoveder, editorial, *Jyllands-Posten*, June 19, 2001, see also op-eds like 'ATTAC er tavs', by Henrik Kahler, *Jyllands-Posten*, June 19, 2001, and 'Hvad siger ATTAC?', by Jens Rohde, *Jyllands-Posten*, June 19, 2001.
- ¹⁰³ 'Frustrationeri ATTAC efter uro', *Information*, June 18, 2001, 'ATTAC tager afstand fra vold i Gothenburg', *Politiken*, June 18, 2001, 'Vold: Danske ATTAC undsiger vold', *Jyllands-Posten*, June 18, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁴ 'Hvad der skete i Gothenburg', from: Christina Kaaber-Bühler, www.groupcare.dk, June 18, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁵ 'ATTAC har allerede ødelagt sig selv', by Normann Aa. Nielsen, www.information.dk, June 15, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁶ See Laclau and Mouffe, op.cit, for a theoretical elaboration of the concept of antagonism used here.
- ¹⁰⁷ 'RE: Presseudtalelse afsendes', from: Martin Dohn, www.groupcare.dk, June 16, 2001, my emphasis.
- ¹⁰⁸ 'RE: Pinligt – Attac-Sverige og Finland!', from: Klaus Jensen, www.groupcare.dk, June 18, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁹ 'RE: Plads til alle?!?', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, June 25, 2001. The notion of lobbyism have faded from the discussions at this time, but opponents of the view expressed here often implies that this is what ATTAC will be reduced to if it does not maintain an activist dimension.

-
- ¹¹⁰ 'Plads til alle?!?', from: Sebastian Gjerding, www.groupcare.dk, June 21, 2001.
- ¹¹¹ For the philologically inclined, a whole debate centred around the question of the lexical versus the social meaning of terms take place as a part of the fighting out of the conflict, as people disagree as to whether ATTAC shall use terms such as 'militant' and 'revolutionary' on the basis of their lexical meaning, or avoid them due to their connotation of violence and old-leftism – see www.groupcare.dk, June 20-22, 2001.
- ¹¹² 'Forslag til resolution', from: Jan Holm Hansen, www.groupcare.dk, June 18, 2001.
- ¹¹³ 'Sv: RE: Mit forslag til vedtægtsændringer II', from: Jakob Mark, www.groupcare.dk, September 28, 2001.
- ¹¹⁴ 'RE: RE: Mit forslag til vedtægtsændringer II', from: Jakob Lindblom, www.groupcare.dk, September 29, 2001.
- ¹¹⁵ 'Plads til alle?!?', from: Sebastian Gjerding, www.groupcare.dk, June 21, 2001.
- ¹¹⁶ 'Re: Plads til alle?!?', from: Daniel Faichild, www.groupcare.dk, June 21, 2001.
- ¹¹⁷ Both Leftists (Kenneth Haar), moderates (Helgi Briener), and unaffiliated (Lars Bohn) highlight these events in interviews.
- ¹¹⁸ 'Kampagne for flere medlemmer i ATTAC aarhus', from: Rikke Holm, www.groupcare.dk, August 27, 2001, reply 'SV: Kampagne for flere medlemmer i ATTAC – Århus', from: Lisen Nordstroem, August 27, 2001.
- ¹¹⁹ 'Orientering fra ATTAC- Århus', from: sekretariat@attac.aarhus.org, www.groupcare.dk, July 22, 2001.
- ¹²⁰ Majbrot Holm, a founding member of the group, describes these objectives in an op'ed in *Information*, 'Kursgruppen i ATTAC ønsker afklaring efter Gothenburg', August 1, 2001.
- ¹²¹ Quoted in *Information*, 'Oprorte vande i ATTAC', July 27, 2001.
- ¹²² See Hans Erik Madsen's article 'Hvilken vej for de nantikapitalistiske bevaegelse? Vi skal ikke lade os skraemme', *Socialistisk Arbejderavis*, August 2001. See also debate on Groupcare, for instance 'ATTAC diskussion i medierne – kursgruppe i Århus', from: Jakob Lindblom, www.groupcare.dk, July 27, 2001. and debate on <http://modkraft.dk/phorum/read.php?f=6&i=192&t=192&v=f>.
- ¹²³ This adds an important note to the common construal of the relation between face-to-face/off-line interaction and online/computer-mediated interaction as 'complementary' (see for instance B. Wellman et al (1996) 'Computer Networks as Social Networks', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22: 213-238) – it can also be *conflictual*, and in this case in a way where the solidity and trust-generating properties of off-line interaction turned out to be more forceful than the speed and reach of on-line interaction (see here A. Etzioni & O. Etzioni 1999, 'Face-to-face and computer-mediated communities, a comparative analysis', *The Information Society*, 15: 241-248).
- ¹²⁴ 'Information om det stiftende mode i ATTAC-Danmark', from: Kenneth Haar, www.groupcare.dk, September 11, 2001. 'Forslag til aktiviteter det kommende ar / arbejdsprogram', from: Kenneth Haar, www.groupcare.dk, September 25, 2001. 'Referat fra ATTAC-landskoordineringsmodet den 26. september', from: Kenneth Haar, www.groupcare.dk, October 1, 2001.
- ¹²⁵ 'Sv: Stop mudderkastning', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, July 26, 2001.
- ¹²⁶ 'Re: Sv: 2 repræsentanter til', from: Daniel Fairchild, www.groupcare.dk, June 2, 2001.
- ¹²⁷ 'Klaustrofobi', from: Helgi Breiner, www.groupcare.dk, July 30, 2001.
- ¹²⁸ 'SV: Stopmudderkastningen'. from: Martin Dohn, www.groupcare.dk, July 26, 2001. Helgi Breiner confirms this mood in interview.
- ¹²⁹ 'Forslag til vedtægter for ATTAC-Danmark', by Statusgruppens majority, uploadet August 30, 2001, http://www.groupcare.dk/da/document_action.asp?action=2&docid=100697.
- ¹³⁰ 'Statgruppens mindretalsforslag til vedtægter for ATTAC-Danmark', from: Henrik Bülow, von, www.groupcare.dk, September 17, 2001. Kenneth Haar pointed out in my interview with him that this proposal was actually favoured by several of the extreme leftists from International Socialists as well as by some moderates.
- ¹³¹ 'statutter – ændringsforslag', from: Bo Richart, www.groupcare.dk, September 11, 2001.
- ¹³² The increasing amount of information of course mainly due to the increasing institutionalisation of the movement, and not the point in itself – the point is how the amount of interaction looks if the messages simply containing information (minutes from meetings, drafts for leaflets etc) are subtracted from the overall figures. This will reduce the total count in Groupcare (see figure 1) by 17 in August, 42 in September, 24 in October, 22 in November, 2 in December, meaning the *interactive* peak is over the summer.
- ¹³³ Confirmed by Kenneth Haar in interview.
- ¹³⁴ Referat fra ATTAC Danmarks Landsmøde d.6-7.10.2001, p. 3.
- ¹³⁵ Vedtægter for ATTAC Danmark, as approved by the founding general assembly October 6-7, 2001.
- ¹³⁶ Press release 'En bevægelse er født – ATTAC-Danmark stiftet', October 7, 2001.
- ¹³⁷ Referat fra ATTAC Danmarks Landsmøde d.6-7.10.2001, p. 11-12.
- ¹³⁸ 'SV: Oprab og handling!', by Kenneth Haar, www.groupcare.dk, January 23, 2002.
- ¹³⁹ Referat fra ATTAC Danmarks Landsmøde d.6-7.10.2001, p.2, see Politisk Grundlag for den danske ATTAC-bevægelse, as approved by the founding general assembly October 6-7, 2001 for the result.
- ¹⁴⁰ Andrew Boyd, 'The Web Wires the Movement', *The Nation*, August 4, 2003.

¹⁴¹ Vedtægter for ATTAC Danmark, as approved by the founding general assembly October 6-7, 2001, §4.

¹⁴² Vedtægter for ATTAC Danmark, as approved by the founding general assembly October 6-7, 2001, §4.

¹⁴³ 'Attacs landsmøde: En bade lykkelig og tragisk begivenhed', from: Martin Dohn, www.groupcare.dk, October 9, 2001.

¹⁴⁴ See several interventions on www.groupcare.dk, October 10, 2001.

¹⁴⁵ 'RE: 'Attacs landsmøde: En bade lykkelig og tragisk begivenhed'', from: Jakob Lindblom, www.groupcare.dk, October 17, 2001.

¹⁴⁶ This does not mean that it was in vain. ATTAC was the first movement to manage to publicly present a counter-hegemonic challenge to the neoliberal narrative and version of globalisation. This left behind a democratic legacy that others have build upon, an expansion of the agenda of democratic politics that was never rolled back.

¹⁴⁷ I have tried to trace several of the people who left the movement via the Internet, and for most of those, there is no evidence to suggest that they simply migrated to other forms of activism like the anti-war movement – most simply returned to private life.

¹⁴⁸ See Gerlach op.cit, William A. Gamson, 1975, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, The Dorsey Press, USA; W. Lance Bennett, 2004 'Communicating Global Activism', in Wim van de Donk et al (eds.) *Cyberprotest*, Routledge: London and New York, pp. 123-146, p. 136.

¹⁴⁹ The notion that a shared project that is not fully elaborated like the ideologies some people imagine were the basis of party politics in Europe in the early twentieth century amounts to an immature project seems to underestimate the vagueness that characterise *any* broad coalition – think of the variety of quite different things that coalesce around the political positions of 'Democrats' and 'Republicans' in the United States.

¹⁵⁰ Melucci 1996 op.cit, pp. 344-347.

¹⁵¹ Laclau & Mouffe, op.cit, p. 127.

¹⁵² Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs*, Basic Books, USA; Richard Hunter 2002, *World Without Secrets*, Wiley, USA.

Appendix A – A note on sources

The paper is based on analysis of media coverage, op-ed debate, material from *Information*'s online debate, material from ATTAC's page on www.groupcare.dk, and internal documents and interviews covering mainly the face-to-face interaction in local committees.

Media coverage

Three newspapers were chosen for systematic scrutiny. *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* (JP), *Politiken* (Pol.), and *Information* (Inf.). *Jyllands-Posten* and *Politiken* have been chosen as representative of mainstream media coverage. *Information* as also an organ of the intellectual new and old left, and as the widely available, established media most closely affiliated with ATTAC. Together, they make up a broad spectrum of the media landscape. *Jyllands-Posten* is the most widely circulated morning broadsheet in Denmark. *Politiken* has the second-highest circulation. Where *Jyllands-Posten*'s editorial line is usually seen as centre-right, *Politiken*'s would be considered liberal or centre-left. Neither had a special relationship to or involvement in ATTAC. *Information* is a daily with a more limited circulation and a more specialised demographic of mainly students, people with college degrees (often working in the public sector), and academics. Its editorial line is broadly sympathetic to the new left, but the newspaper has always maintained its independent standing, and, contrary to most Danish newspapers, it does not have a history of being affiliated with a political party. As described above, it played a central role in the emergence of ATTAC.

From all three newspapers, all articles using the term "ATTAC" between June 1, 1998, and December 31, 2005 have been collected using the database *Infomedia*. This produced a total of 1055 units (*Jyllands-Posten*: 188, *Politiken*: 303, *Information*: 564). The sub-set of units published in 2001 runs to a total of 689 (*Jyllands-Posten*: 120, *Politiken*: 301, *Information*: 368).

The aim guiding the collection of newspaper material were to build a data set that would allow: 1) Broader trends both over time to be analysed not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively. 2) The making of some inferences as to the more general media coverage of the movement. 3) Simultaneous sensitivity to the fact that the movement emerged in a broad space and to a large degree defined itself in a more specialised region of the media landscape.

The data-set leaves out both broadcast media and local/regional media.

Op-ed debate

Using the same set of newspapers and the same database, a subset of the media output, those categorised by the publishing institutions themselves as being 'debate', have been registered in a separate data set for closer analysis. These make up 289 units also part of the set above (*Jyllands-Posten*: 35, *Politiken*: 92, *Information*: 162). As opposed to the one-way character of ordinary journalistic coverage, op-ed debate has an inter-active dimension.

Information's online debate

From January to December 2001, *Information* hosted an online debate about ATTAC on its homepage www.information.dk. The newspaper regularly hosts different debates related to prioritised areas of news-coverage, and have subsequently hosted debates over the strategic predicaments of political parties on the centre-left, but the debate hosted on ATTAC was the first time the newspaper aligned itself so closely with a political movement. The debate was opened by a contribution made by the journalist moderating it January 8. The last contribution was made on October 30. In total, 209 contributions were made. The debate is no longer available on-line, and due to mistakes made in the digital storing of it, only the first five to seven lines of each contribution made is available.¹⁵² For some, this is the whole contribution. For others, not so. Despite the flawed nature of the material, it is included in the analysis, as the debate is a central part of ATTAC's enactment.

Groupcare

In March 2001, a new on-line debating forum bearing the name 'Attac-Danmark' is set up with no central authority moderating it. It is hosted by the free, commercial host www.groupcare.dk (similar to Yahoo-groups). The forum is initiated by volunteers, and opened up with a first contribution on March 9 consisting of the minutes of a meeting. The last contribution to date is made March 14, 2004. In total, 849 contributions are made, 745 are made in 2001. Activity – and especially *inter*-activity – in this forum largely ceases after the organisational founding in October 2001. From March till the end of October 2001, 643 contributions are made. 102 contributions are made in the rest of 2001. 104 in the next three years.

Local Committees

This part of the analysis is partly based on internal documents – minutes from meetings et al – and partly on interviews. After ATTAC-Denmark was founded, a home page was set up – www.attac.dk. It contains publications from the organisation, general information, news about activities, minutes and more from meetings and activities, and a passive on-line debating forum. In addition to the material that was post-hoc made available here, some material is available at regional and local subgroups of the Groupcare. This somewhat scattered material has been supplemented by semi-structured phone interviews by the author with several central activists of different persuasions. Unfortunately, no rank-and-file activists or sympathisers have been willing to participate, and several moderates have declined participation as well.

Informants: Kenneth Haar (date), Leif Müller (date), Lars Bohn (date), Helgi Breiner (answers in writing, date).