# Social Movements Facing Authoritarian-Style Neoliberal Governments: Comparative Positioning Towards Violence in Indonesia and France

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## ABSTRACT

Faced with global and systemic crises, neoliberal oriented governments are taking on more authoritarian forms of governance. By using the power of the media, justice, the police and a set of government technologies, this authoritarian style manifests itself in alternating phases of low-key brutality and crises of ostentatious repression designed to frighten and demoralize opposition social movements. Confronted with these modes of government, the social movements adopt different tactics of mobilization, ranging from direct confrontation to forms of compromise and civil disobedience. With the climate crisis as well as the globalization of social struggles, these movements adopt new political strategies, which question the dichotomy between violence and non-violence. Using a historical and anthropological approach, this paper studies two cases in contemporary Indonesia and France, two countries whose governments claim proximity with liberal civil society's aspiration and a renewal of political action while enacting at the same time strong repression of opposition forces. The comparison shows the persistence and even strengthening of class and oligarchy networks in the implementation of authoritarian-style neoliberal policies. In front of these contradictions the groups under study, Anarcho-Syndicalism and Bizi!, show several intersections in their claims and modes of action. Their strategies are inflected by the national socio-political and cultural backgrounds, but they struggle for the defense of universal rights for the humans' basic needs, through localized agendas and actions.

Keywords: *class warfare; France; Indonesia; neoliberal authoritarianism; oligarchy; social movements; violence*

## INTRODUCTION

Faced with global systemic crises, neoliberal-oriented governments increasingly endorse authoritarian forms of governance.[1] The two cases studied here, Indonesia and France, are generally defined as, respectively, flawed democratic and democratic regimes. However, beyond typologies, we defend that the actual political stances of their current democratically elected governments develop a remarkable set of authoritarian technics, methods and ideas.

We follow Dabène et al. (2008) in considering that the line of division between democracy and authoritarianism "blurs when [democracy] breaks free from the constraints of the constitutional state and [authoritarianism] is dominated by pluralism [...] All in all, the only discriminating criterion remains the basis of the fundamental freedoms which guarantee the expression of opinions, protests, demands and individual and collective identities" (Camau, 2005, p. 81). In this sense the two regimes in our scope remain democratic but their governments borrow an authoritarian style and activate concrete authoritarian mechanisms which result in the accumulation of non-pluralist spaces.

This style is applied in order to fulfil an agenda of "good governance", inspired by neoliberal ideology but which either adopts or avoids the use of liberal precepts according to contextual logics and the utilitarian rationality of the people in power. This pragmatic dimension is one of the reasons why in Southeast Asia, though the ideas upon which the developmental state and neoliberalism are respectively built appear on opposite ends of the policy spectrum, both models have deeply influenced policy-planning. On the political side, in France, the issue of democratization —as promoted internationally in conjunction with the idea of "good governance […] legitimizes the authoritarian and security normalization of protest scenes", because it "incorporates the idea of the self-limitation, even the self-injury, of the protesters, so as not to jeopardize the new macroeconomic balances and macro policies" (Dabène et al., 2008, p. 15).

Ideologically, the political use of neoliberalism shows that it has not only stemmed from large companies and financial centers, with their logic of privatization. It is not reducible to an economic doctrine, or to a reduction of politics to the economic logic of commodification. Instead, the strength of its great story concerns life itself, as it is emphasized by both some of its most prominent theoreticians and their vision on social Darwinism and by influential current head of states (Stiegler, 2020). But this vision, based on the idea of the necessary individual and collective innovation and adaptation to the market trends, not only betrays Darwin, who never said there was a goal to evolution, but also democracy, because if the meaning of history is already fixed, the population does not have to decide or even to debate around it. The idea is that the demos, resistant to change, must be adapted to globalization and innovation by a supporting speech produced by the technico-scientific experts[2].

Neoliberalism is a power whose preferred mode of manifestation is above all pacifist. It is rather a question, as Walter Lippmann, one of the American inspirers of neoliberalism says, of manufacturing consent in an industrial way and of obtaining the support of the populations, by the mass media, health and education policies that aim to transform the human species. This empowerment of populations from childhood is not aimed at more social justice, but at giving citizens the skills that are expected of them.

The arguments of freedom and entrepreneurship are core levers of legitimacy and consent. But, to establish or maintain the conditions of a "free economy" (Chamayou, 2018), the various regimes defend a "strong state" within which the liberalization of society supposes a verticalization of power. Authoritarian neoliberalism reconfigures the state into a less democratic entity through constitutional and legal changes that seek to insulate it from social and political conflict. These states seem to conform to the distinction made by Michel Foucault (1976) between powers that "march to sovereignty" and liberal governments, which on the contrary try to avoid coercion, the deployment of force and the costly demonstration of power. In this context, does neoliberalism, when it does make use of violence, admit its defeat, or does it change into another form of power, just as effective in controlling populations?

The apparent strengthening of the state simultaneously entails its fragility, for it is becoming an increasingly direct target for a range of popular struggles, demands, and discontent reacting to pressures emanating from this strengthening (Bruff, 2014). Since the end of the 1990s, with the reconfiguration of twentieth century capitalism, growing mistrust of political institutions and the decline of Western hegemony, protests against the neoliberal globalization have proliferated. With the climate emergency, but also with the globalization of social struggles, new forms of political strategy have developed, which have renewed the violence / non-violence dichotomy (Dorlin, 2019).

Hence, it is important to highlight the definition of violence since there is no unified definition. Violence can be defined as an act that intentionally threatens or inflicts physical harm upon others (Jackman, 2002, p. 389). Michel Wieviorka, a sociologist, proposes another definition of violence. In his article "Violence and the Subject", he rolls out a theory of violence based on the notion of the subject (Wieviorka, 2003, pp. 42-43). He states that there are three major analytical approaches. *First*, violence as a response or the behavioral reaction to repression. *Second*, violence as a mobilized resource, where violence is instrumental. *Third*, violence in terms of predisposition, a particular type of personality shaped through culture in education and family. Moreover, Wieviorka adds that violence should be linked to the concepts of subjectivation and de-subjectivation; it is thus briefly defined as "the mark of a subject who is upset, forbidden, impossible or unhappy" (Wieviorka, 2003, p. 48).

To approach a renewal of the strategic relationship of movements in the field of violence, we propose a comparative study between two cases, in Indonesia and in France. To understand their position towards violence as a militant tactic, the examination of the groups points to the importance of the particularities of socio-political and historical contexts, as well as the role played by the groups' projects. However, this paper hypothesizes that

the comparison between the two contexts reveals common characteristics regarding the forms of current governance and the emerging activist concerns and tactics.

## THE AUTHORITARIAN TURN OF NEOLIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

Indonesia and France are two different cases for study of the analysis of political regimes, national governments and social movements. Their contexts differ in terms of the states' institutional capacities, economical trajectories, the role of the ethnic and religious components, and the colonial experience. However, there is a junction point between the governments of both countries: their ideological arrangements between neoliberal doctrine and statism. This crossroads is prominent in the most recent directions taken by the respective presidents, particularly in their rhetoric about the need for more deregulation and, at the same time, the need for more collective unity, through the vertical leadership offered by hyper-presidentialism.

Indonesian President, Joko Widodo (called Jokowi, 2014-2019; 2019-2024), and French President Emmanuel Macron (2017-2022), emerged as political leaders from contrasting backgrounds. Jokowi is the first Indonesian President who does not have an elite political nor military background. He came from a middle-class family and went to a public school for less wealthy citizens. Before joining Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) in 2004, he was a furniture salesman. In comparison, Macron studied at institutions for the political elite and then climbed the ranks of finance and banking, before entering the political arena in 2012. Both candidates were elected as proclaimed representatives of the "liberal civil society". Jokowi was supported by PDI-P while Macron presented himself as going beyond the classic cleavage between right and left, founding the political movement La République en marche, which campaigned with the support of wealthy donors.

Despite their "out of the system" discourse, they soon appeared to be fierce defenders of class privileges; more precisely, of the wealthiest class. Despite his initial defense of social policies, the Indonesian head of state has gradually abandoned his primary aspirations in favor of "compromising compromises" (Estrelita & Facal, 2020). During the cabinet reshuffle that followed his second term in 2019, he formed a coalition with members of the former oligarchies in order to consolidate his position after receiving increasing pressure from the Islamist conservative movements (Facal, 2020). Distinctly,

French president was co-opted by prominent tycoons and political brokers in favor of neoliberal policies (such as Jacques Attali and his "positive economy" concept) from the very start of his career. To favor these interests, both struggle for different kinds of deregulation: economical (through the financialization of the economy[3]), social (through a de-democratization process[4]), and human (through the promotion of digital technologies and artificial intelligence), encapsulated in the concept of the "start-up nation". With this concept, the national leaders encourage individuals and firms to accumulate as much wealth as possible in the shortest possible time – with no mention of the mechanisms of predation that are inherent to these logics.

After his re-election in 2019, Jokowi appointed prominent businessmen to key Ministry positions, through a mega-ministry and a parliamentary coalition including Nadiem Makarim, the founder of the Indonesian decacorn *Gojek*[5]. During his first term of presidency, Jokowi's government introduced its first substantial set of reforms in economic policy, notably to accelerate infrastructure development. Moreover, in order to support national finances, his administration legislated a tax amnesty bill allowing wealthy Indonesians to declare their unreported assets before the government's new reinforced rules came into effect. The program was successful, with over Rp. 4,865 trillion (approximately US$366 billion) of previously unreported assets declared to the tax office (Setiaji, 2017). In comparison, Macron executed a range of legal orders that benefited the wealthiest: the suppression of the wealth tax, a flat tax on capital income, the suppression of the exit tax, the sustainability of tax credits for companies. All of these fiscal gifts contributed to making inequalities more visible, echoing the global trends of inequalities that characterize the neoliberal era (Milanovic, 2016).

The politics engaged by the two governments also reinforced a popular sentiment of injustice. Though during his presidential campaign in 2014 Jokowi promised to resolve human rights violations, the latter part of his first term showed a downturn in the quality of Indonesian democracy, associated with the continued mainstreaming and legitimation of a conservative and anti-pluralistic form of political Islam, the partisan manipulation of key institutions of state, and the increasingly open repression and disempowerment of political opposition (Power 2018). Moreover, religious, gender and ethnic minorities continue to face harassment, and freedom of expression has diminished. Authorities arrest and persecute people under the blasphemy or defamation laws, which result in prison terms. According to the Indonesian Human

Rights Monitor "Imparsial", 31 violations of religious freedoms were committed in the country during the year of 2019 (Rachman, 2019). Despite Jokowi's political success, several of his policies also sacrifice the rights of certain sectors of the population. The Indonesian Forum for Environment recorded 555 land acquisition cases in the country, such as land clearing in Kulon Progo that displaced local farmers who had improved the dry land through farm development (Indriani, 2019). It comes as no surprise that a range of issues has motivated social movements. The Nahdliyin Front for the Sovereignty of Natural Resources (FNKSDA), for example, supported communities who lived in Kulon Progo during the land conflict. This issue also involved Alexis, one of the Indonesian anarchist groups (Putra, 2020, p. 6) who includes this struggle in its fight for labor and social justice against global capitalism (Maharani, 2019).

As for France, the country has been subject to a variety of social mobilizations, the most prominent and long-term of which is the Yellow vests (Gilets jaunes). This protest movement began in October of 2018 and is still ongoing despite having significantly diminished in size. It encouraged a massive protest movement against pension reform and supported the struggle of the medical corps against policies that destroy the health system. The government's answer to these social mobilizations was highly repressive, resulting in 961 reports of police violence, 4 deaths, 344 head injuries, 29 people knocked unconscious, 5 hands torn off (not exhaustive data recorded by David Dufresne & Mediapart, accessed on 2 September 2020), and the reward of the most violent security agents and officials.

In Indonesia, waves of protest leading to riots took place in 2019 after Jokowi's re-election as Indonesia's President. Amnesty International reported physical violence by the police against students participating in demonstrations in May 2019. The report of the National Human Rights Commission (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia or Komnas HAM) indicated that ten people were killed by the authorities with firearms, although their use was prohibited during demonstrations in public spaces. In addition to these deaths, 32 people were reported missing, and dozens of others were injured by the excessive use of tear gas (Persada, 2019). Moreover, in August 2019, the Indonesian authorities and the army repressed social movements in Western New Guinea, which includes the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua created in 2003, leading to at least a dozen victims (Estrelita & Facal, 2020).

This form of "fear-politics" (Wodak, 2019), issuing from the top of the political hierarchy, went hand in hand with the normalization of police repression and the control of justice, legitimated by the need to counter potentially subversive forces. In Indonesia, Pancasila, the state philosophy, was often used to justify and legalize the repression of political foes. Since 1978, the New Order government has emphasized the politicization of Pancasila, through the Suharto regime's unique interpretation of Pancasila. According to historian Asvi Warman Adam, this is the so-called stage of engineering used in order to claim state power (Adam, 2016). The Jokowi government has also tried to strengthen the values of Pancasila by proposing a new bill, "Pancasila Ideology Guidelines".

Episodic social crisis and, more recently, the Covid pandemic have reinforced the legitimacy of the repressive machinery, in the logics of the "shock doctrine" (Klein, 2017). In France, the "sacred union"[6] of the French people for the sake of the Republic was the main argument that was used to legitimate security devices and to criminalize political opposition. This strategy, based on the disqualification of political opposition, was supported by an intense use of media, both to promote the government orientations and to counter opposition argumentation. This new kind of authoritarianism, that is being widely globalized, is based on the covert control of citizens (Zuboff, 2019, p. 23), particularly through digital technologies, facial identification, cyber-infiltrations, preventive detention, and massive registration as a panopticon for surveillance and citizen control.

Indonesia declared 175.2 million internet users in 2020. Compared to the previous year, there has been an increase of 17% or 25 million internet users in the country. Based on the total population of Indonesia, which amounts to 272.1 million, this means that 64% of the population now has access to the worldwide web (Tri Haryanto, 2020). Since social media has become a "new public space" for sharing and discussion, and is also being used as a means of encouraging and organizing militant activity (Tierney, 2013, p. 85), the government has issued the Electronic Information and Transaction Law, raising critics that it is being used to silence voices who express criticism (Santika, 2020). In France, a similar emphasis on the control of media (Pinçon-Charlot & Pinçon, 2019, pp. 76-82) and the restriction of expression rights[7] is an important part of the repressive strategy aimed at the demoralization of the social movements.

This strategy is combined with the general efforts of the government to both divide the opposition forces and to partially absorb them. For example, to appease the left wing, it has created parliamentary groups mobilized around the arguments of the opposition, such as ecology or

democratic political participation; and to please the right wing, it has invested in areas such as security. Popular contestation was channeled through the organization of a "Great national debate" set up by the President. All of these different uses of the media, social, and political scenes pushed the social movements to develop new strategies to occupy the agora of public discussion, in the assemblies, online and in the street.

## A STRATEGICAL TURN IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Faced with different forms of authoritarianism, social movements across the world and throughout history have adopted diverse methods of mobilization, ranging from direct confrontation to forms of compromise, and including civil disobedience (Della Porta & Diani, 2015). The global political and economic situation, marked by violent neoliberalism and the increase of inequalities, as well as the ecological emergency, provoke a renewed questioning of modes of action. To these factors must be added the virulence of police repression politically encouraged and its impunity, which are increasingly documented (Fassin, 2016), and the repeated failure in recent years of traditional mobilizations, led by the unions or the main left-wing parties. To analyze the new stances vis-à-vis violence or non-violence as political tactics, we will briefly present two case studies in Indonesia and France[8].

### The Anarcho-Syndicalist Workers' Brotherhood: The Revitalization of Popular and Social Thinking

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Workers' Brotherhood (Persaudaraan Pekerja Anarko Sindikalis or PPAS) is an organization of Anarcho-Syndicalist workers founded in Indonesia in 2016 from a previous network of small groups campaigning for the social rights of workers. The network dates from the beginning of the Dutch colonization, not long after the emergence of leftist movements under the influence of the Social Democratic and Socialist parties in the Netherlands, a time when anarchist ideas were still fairly unknown in Indonesia (Art, 2020). Starting from an understanding of Anarcho-Syndicalism, which struggles for total power over all aspects of production, the PPAS takes the shape of decentralizing power.

For example, at the end of the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) in Indonesia, mill workers, who were allegedly anarcho-syndicalists, many of whom were associated with the Indonesian Labor Front (Barisan Buruh Indonesia or BBI) and the Indonesian Labor Party (Partai Buruh Indonesia or PBI), seized several mills on the island of Java, mainly in the region south of Surabaya, Solo, and Yogyakarta, where they took over operations (Brown, 1994, p. 85). Selo Soemardjan, in his article "Bureaucratic Organization in a Time of Revolution" (1957, p. 196), provides a detailed description of the takeover of the mills in Yogyakarta by such workers in reaction to employment cuts.

In 1990s, some fractions of the anarcho-syndicalist movement were close to the independent punk community, promoting not only a way of life and a counterculture (known as "Do It Yourself or DIY") but also forms of political activism (Syahrianto, 2020). The movement nourished a general humanistic project and focused on the workers' protection and antifascism. This movement also responds to microlocal-national conflicts that are essentially political. It carries demands from a variety of groups and tries to unite the urban middle class, which is already struggling to survive, with a modest popular class. Differing from the previous Anarcho-Syndicalist movement, the PPAS considers that non-workers, who are also impacted by all aspects of the job market, such as prospective workers or students, as well as the unemployed, are also part of the modern Anarcho-Syndicalist movement. It refuses national ideas but supports international solidarity. However, initiatives are poorly coordinated and depend on local groups, relying on direct action (strikes, demonstrations, including undeclared ones, boycotts, and sabotage), in the wake of post-anarchist militant groups, whose emergence is combined with the rise of alter-globalism (Baverel, 2016, p. 85).

There is one point that drew our intention in relation to the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement in Indonesia. Some anarcho-syndicalists argue that their fight corresponds to holy war or jihad (Syahrianto, 2020). This argument collaborates with the theory proposed by David Graeber (2004) that states that anarchists are never really interested in discussing the strategy or philosophical questions that historically have occupied Marxists. According to Graeber, anarchism tends to be practical rather than theoretical. It would be interesting to do further study of this statement since Anarcho-Syndicalism was traditionally considered as a leftist movement, making it a potential threat to religious parties. Their dread peaked during the legislative elections in 1955 when the Indonesian Communist Party obtained a considerable score. It scared the other political parties and military leaders who feared that the leftists, in particular the communists, would take the lead of the country (Willis, 1977, p. 72).

However, the allegation of anarcho-syndicalism amongst industry workers is questionable. There is little in the public declarations and actions of labor groups that would sustain the view that they were anarcho-syndicalists, at least in the classical sense. Indeed, their participation in the formation of a political party would seem to go directly against such an interpretation. In 1946, Alimin, a communist who supports the union concept, stated that syndicalism did not exist among workers. It seems that the term was used by the government at the time as convenient in describing the workers' movement that seized factories in order to portray this movement as a deviant act (Brown, 1994, p. 85).

Nevertheless, the PPAS appears as the last Indonesian social and leftist political movement, after the Communist party ceased to exist in the mid-60s following the massacre of about 500,000 people accused of being communists, including political opponents, intellectuals and artists (Robinson, 2018, p. 121; Estrelita, 2009, pp. 65, 76). After the authoritarian swing taken by President Soekarno and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), followed by power being seized by General Suharto in 1965, and despite the democratization reforms initiated since the fall of this regime in 1998, involvement in any form of activism with a socialist ideology is subject to suspicion and is closely monitored by the intelligence services and their local civilian support (Honna, 1999, p. 121). In this context, the large-scale citizen mobilizations, which have been multiplying since May 2019 to protest against the government's money politics, corruption, and growing authoritarianism, are being repressed by the state authorities on the grounds of activism linked to Anarcho-syndicalism. It is presented as a nebula of conspiracy, influenced by similar movements in the international community (Damier & Limanov, 2017).

Furthermore, the authorities try to develop phobia and stigma by accusing anarcho-syndicalism of being a deviant group that threatens public order (Maharani, 2019) as they did earlier towards those who made critics against the government. In 2019, the Police authorities stated that a group of Anarcho-syndicalist was behind the riots during May Day in several cities, such as Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Makassar. Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Police announced that a group of Anarcho-syndicalists had organized an attack against public facilities across the island of Java (Velarosdela, 2020). The Police also declared that they had already arrested a few members of the movement, including its "leader", describing him as a drug user. The notion of leader is in itself contradictory as the PPAS rejects all forms of hierarchy. As a result of this disqualification, several cities now declare their rejection of the movement (Solehudin, 2019). Some even place banners inside the city to alert people to the threat it represents (Nugroho, 2016).

## Bizi! Civil disobedience in the Basque country

The Anarcho-syndicalist case contrasts with the logics and concrete actions of the French association called Bizi! ("To live", in the Basque language). Deeply rooted in the Basque country in the southwest of France, this association composed of 590 members has obtained unexpected results for mobilization in recent years by developing the most widely spread local currency in Europe, the Eusko (Avignon, 2012), by contributing to the promotion of the largest European local language program and by significantly inflecting the public policies of dozens of Basque towns.

Bizi was founded in 2009 after its founders experienced the collective mobilization during the Copenhagen summit on climatic change (Planes, 2010). The association is dedicated to work for the "Social and ecological metamorphosis of the Basque country and the world". It presents itself as a non-violent association that uses resistance, but that also makes propositions and takes initiatives. One of its founders and main figures, Txetx Etcheverry, has a long experience of militancy, rooted in regional self-determination movements, such as *Abertzale*. He reoriented his militant career by abandoning violent militancy (Massemin, 2016) and participating in the disarming process of the separatist organization (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, "Basque country and freedom") in May 2018, while shifting his actions towards local, social and ecological emancipation.

Shortly before the 2015 Paris climate conference, he co-founded the non-violent action association COP21, focused on civil disobedience for the defense of climate policies. His experience seems decisive in the orientation adopted by Bizi. While the association affirms its attachment to the Basque local culture and society, it also expresses the necessity to think beyond the essentialist vision of the Basque culture and the ethnicization operated by the French and Spanish State institutions in their profusion of discourses about autochthony (Pierre, 2006).

As well as belonging to an open international multi-organizational field, the movement attempts to translate the desire for alternative politics that is expressed by a fragmented majority of the world population, often silently and in disguised forms. This translation is

designed to render Bizi's projects socially and politically meaningful to a wider audience, by producing new common sense. For Bizi, poverty, inequalities and climate changes are interrelated (Barroux, 2019). Therefore, local welfare understood as societies more desirable in terms of equality, autonomy, labor relations, and political participation, relies on global balances and solidarities; and reciprocally, global sustainable development is determined by local initiatives and commitments. Thus, for the association's members, alternative organizational principles and moral values need to be rooted in society as a whole, in economic activities, in social relations, and also in political decision-making processes: the key to political transformation is a radical cultural shift in everyday practices. The members emphasize horizontal political relations, designed to a popular and direct participation in politics, giving access to a wide variety of subjectivities (Bizi !, 2019).

In the last decades the French political context has been marked by the desertion of the classical political representative forms, such as parties and syndicates. It corresponds to larger social political trends in Europe, leading a number of economists and political scientists to affirm the end of the social Europe (Graziano & Hartlapp, 2015), or the end of the political Europe (Moro, 2019). For Bizi, these "post-political" times (Boni & Ciavolella, 2014, p. 5) require new forms of political participation, that go beyond the classical forms of the vote, the adhesion to parties and syndicates, and should focus on a "radical-pragmatic" method.

This approach is based on a process of decision-action. The decisions are taken during concise meetings, through deliberation in assemblies and diverse forms of dialogue and consultation. They rely on a bottom-up strategy, based on small-scale political initiatives, as well as local and horizontal means of representation: all forms of democracy that the scientific debates label as deliberative, participative, discursive, or from the bottom. The deliberation principles determine participative forms of action: in the evaluation process, the budgets, the public debates, the surveys done in the population, the urban working workshops. Combined with this collective and inclusive method, Bizi encourages direct modes of action, such as demonstrations, petitions, symbolic performances, leaflet-distribution and boycotts (Lecoeuvre, 2019). The association affirms their role as a scout, alerting the population and raising awareness about social and ecological problems and making sure these issues get included in the political agendas. It is designed as a laboratory of ideas to change citizens' daily life through smooth subversion, by showing that another

kind of consumerism is possible, at the edge of merchant logic, through fair trade, local exchange systems, ethical financial products, and alternative media. These initiatives correspond to a new repertoire of action developed by the alternative movements, which competes in the same field as neoliberal globalization: economics (Agrikoliansky et al., 2005).

At the political level, the relationship with the public authorities is the result of a combination between conflict and social transaction. This strategy is based on a double action of opposition and proposition that, by unveiling the problems to the public, urges the local political representatives to react and take responsibility. This strategy functions because it is developed progressively, through short term actions and on different levels. The activists develop a set of informal tactics designed to get around the political institutions, to preserve their autonomy in the decision-making processes.

Bizi develops a flexible network based on the coexistence of formal committees and small affinity groups, with decisions taken through consensus or by majority and with spokespersons and delegates instead of leaders. The networking is made through face to face and virtual (internet) meetings at the local, national and, more rarely, supranational levels. The implication of non-members is also considered positively, as it can contribute to gaining knowledge and influencing action. Bizi's social mobilization relies on a political project of "living together" connecting different groups within the population, instead of the general competition proposed by the neoliberal model.

The project incites the association to go beyond a position of critical exteriority towards the political and administrative instances in charge of the public folders, and to participate in the formulation of public action, often through negotiation and calculated compromises. Consequently, the association has to deal with two kinds of risks: marginalization by the decisional instances or, on the contrary, domestication by these institutions and disqualification by the association's audiences. The current multiplication of the procedures and disposals designed to encourage the participation of the population in the formulation of public action increases the tension between these two positions. It leads Bizi to imagine innovative ways of participating and investing in institutional games.

A decentralized structure and the outspread of power correspond to the necessity to adapt to an individual scheme, prevalent in contemporary "global societies". But reticular structures also bring the risk of fragmentation (Della Porta, 2004), a risk that is managed by high reciprocal trust and solidarity promoted within

the association. Thus, a particular form of emancipation emerges, where the individuals' or small-scale groups' specialize on specific themes and actions articulated to the collective project and methods. It is built on plural and open arenas where the communication is horizontal and oriented towards the respect of everyone's opinion and methods. Therefore, while the association is marked by a strong heterogeneity of militant profiles (since they aim at the respect of social diversity and they refuse ideological and partisan frames), the organization is able to manage this diversity through small scale groups linked by dense relations within a network, through their flexibility, their functioning in forums, including parallel scenes.

Bizi promotes a strong local rooting in the Basque country, but it also encourages social diversity. In this spirit, it has developed many actions to help migrants, its hometown, Bayonne, becoming the main point of entrance in Southwest France for migrants from Africa. It also aims at contributing to the national alternative scene, by promoting its pilot project *Alternatiba* through a national-scale itinerary with bicycles, spreading its developmental kit by proposing it to municipalities and through online open access. At the transnational level, it encourages a form of "alterotopy" (Boni & Ciavolella, 2014, p. 5), spaces created apart from corporate and global structures, while participating in international demonstrations, transnational counter-summits, world and European social forums. It echoes the majority of the alternative organizations' orientations, whose actions reflect national logics more than the existence of a "transnational civil society". As suggested by Sidney Tarrow (2005, pp. 35-56), alter militants are *"rooted cosmopolitans"*, strongly inserted in national

social networks and cultural frames, and who mobilize local resources to project themselves at the international militant scene. (See table 1).

The diachronic changing positions of the movements towards the use of violence, and heterogeneity within the movements between branches and activists about the means of agonistic action show that the binary opposition between violence / non-violence is reductive. In the two cases studied, as well as in other movements such as in Chile, Lebanon, Hong Kong (where the alliance between "violent" activists - designated as the "braves" - and "pacifists", partly explains the force of the movement), what emerges is not only the alliance or opposition between violent and non-violent factions but above all the internal and external negotiations implemented to define the limits of acceptable and legitimate violence.

## TURNING BACK TO CLASS WARFARE

The two movements under study develop particular strategies, based on specific goals and enacted through an array of tactics. These strategies also depend on the cultural and socio-political contexts in which they are framed.

Anarcho-syndicalism is weighted down by the authoritarian heritage of the New Order era, which saw the eradication of the Indonesian Left. It is under pressure by the legators of this regime, who succeeded in inflecting Jokowi's stance towards the leftist and pro-social movements. This attitude is reflected by his statement that the Temporary People's Consultative Assembly Decree No. 25/1966 on the banning of communism, Marxism, and Leninism in Indonesia is still binding and has no

**Table 1.** Synthesis table of the two study groups

| Social Group | Anarcho-Syndicalism | Bizi! |
|---|---|---|
| **Structure** | Loose Movement | Public Association |
| **Objectives** | Building a participatory democracy | Local community empowerment |
| **Collective decision-making process** | Self-organization on an equal basis | Associative and cooperative functioning |
| **Resistance tactics** | Dialectic of violence/non-violence and direct action | Action by propagation and network articulation of the projects |
| **Strategies** | Replacing the political institutions of the state with autonomous federated groups | Encouraging decision-makers to adopt citizen proposals |
| **Scale articulation** | Refuse national ideas but support international solidarity | Struggle at the local level and alliance with equivalent international militant groups for a more participative democracy |
| **Reaction of public authorities and/or the public sector** | Violent repression and media stigmatization | Lobbying and pseudo-scientific expertise to create a saturated media and political space |

need to be questioned (Prihatin, 2020). Indonesian politics is veering to the right and, the state apparatus does not function as the primary entity that regulates social order and supports the nonviolent public morality in modern society. Moreover, the eradication of Leftist political traditions in Indonesia facilitates the reemergence of Islamic expressions of socio-political discontent (Hadiz, 2020), which steered Indonesians at the grassroots level to be more and more permissive toward ultra-conservative activities and organizations.

Despite the counterbalancing of ideologies to the left of the political spectrum by the long ban of communism, various movements have been born as a direct expression of people's discontent in protest against an increasingly elitist and oligarchic system of representative democracy. These movements, which are sometimes violent, emerge as a reaction towards the political system, putting it under pressure and potentially leading to a critical juncture (Bertrand, 2008). The culture of a collective will to join one another in togetherness (*paguyuban*) in Indonesian society facilitates such movements and also benefits the anarchist groups. This culture is reflected in its organization, structure, hierarchy, and internal communication. Such movements are eminently territorial and reproduce in some ways several local cultural patterns, limiting the capacity of the groups to maximize their interactions and coordination with each other and sometimes isolating them from society on the national level. However, at the local scale in which the different cells operate, effective collaborations are achieved. For example, the PPAS obtained support from Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation Australia (ASF Australia) in 2016 to voice workers' rights. The PPAS, together with workers in Surabaya, organized a protest for low-wage workers.

In France, Bizi inherits a regional socio-political genesis. Its leading figure has chosen to distance himself from regionalist armed militancy and to engage in civil disobedience tactics. This stance enables the association to adopt formal and publicized modes of action, both affirming its internal cohesion and maintaining strong inter-group cooperation over time. The weight of the local and regional authorities ("collectivités territoriales" in French) in implementing public policies led the militants to engage in dialogue with these interlocutors and to adopt a bottom-up strategy, encouraging self-reform, the downscaling of struggles and the involvement in concrete local political conflicts.

However, confronted with an increasing overlapping of the governmental strategies within a complex hegemony of neoliberalism (Williams, 2020),

both movements require adjustments to achieve their ambitions. Indeed, if neo-liberalization constitutes 'a successful project for the restoration of ruling class power', this class has renewed its action and discursive repertoires. We have described how the modes of government at work unfold at multiple levels: through a discourse of adhesion; by the combined absorption and disabling of opposition movements; by consolidating a covert class model, conveyed via an omnipresent media device and transcribed - translated and inscribed - in a set of legal mechanisms, standards, and regulations. Through this array of governmental technologies, the definition of the limits of violence are maintained permanently vague. Faced with this strategic entrenchment of ambiguous and multifold modes of government, the opposition's tactics are channeled, disqualified, and exhausted. Therefore, choosing between violence or non-violence can constitute a useful tactic, but it remains limited in effect if it is not part of a broader strategy.

For Mark Purcell (2009, p. 160), the way by which the counter-hegemonic movements can achieve their goals is not the elimination of power, not in bracketing or corralling, but in its mobilization. Following Laclau and Mouffe (1985), he argues that in order to achieve a profound transformation of existing power relations, the movements' struggles must be based on what the authors term "chains of equivalence", that is to say, the coordination of allied groups who see themselves as equivalently disadvantaged by existing power relations and share an equivalent agonistic agenda for change. The groups in the chain are irreducible to the others and do not dissolve into a large and uniform collective. Nevertheless, together, they achieve much more than they could have done alone.

Without using this vocabulary, PPAS and Bizi develop these tactics. For instance, during the workforce struggling to end the "uberization" in 2017, *Komunitas Uber Mainstream* (KUMAN), a community of Uber drivers in Indonesia, collaborated with PPAS, supported by the International Workers Association (IWA) (Putra, 2017). The majority of the union followed the anarcho-syndicalist principles in favor of their struggle (Lestari, 2016). Bizi also defends a convergence in struggles (for example with Act Up, which fights against AIDS and whose rigor influenced Bizi's methods), with interconnected social movements spreading globally with no recognized center, reciprocally informing one another and using procedures of self-organization.

If they do not achieve to change the dominant global paradigm —neoliberal hegemony— the movements certainly succeed in identifying and questioning existing

government structures and values. They show that there is an incompatibility between a world owned by someone and a world inhabited by everyone. They contest the neoliberal orthodoxy of property rights and rights to accumulation, defend the maximization of use-value rather than exchange value, and make propositions in that sense through systemic propositions and programs. They significantly empower local citizens with/for whom they struggle by organizing shared times and spaces for collective disputes and deliberation. Their attempt to reconstruct agoras of discussion enables the formulation of clearly legible conflicts between different parties and to build a common discourse. They then contribute to social transformation through collective intelligence, active participation of audiences, and the co-construction of knowledge. Their capacity to make dialogue possible between social layers that are otherwise impervious to each other defeats the clichés of the dominant discourse on the "popular classes," who are said to have no interest in politics, to be only focused on their private interests concerning housing, employment, and purchasing power.

Finally, confronting the renewal of class privileges through the concentration of resources and networks controlled by a continuously reduced elite, these movements struggle for the reinforcement of class consciousness, beyond its violent or non-violent means.

## CONCLUSION

In Indonesia and France, the recent years have seen the acceleration of the alternation of phases of governance, between repressive episodes and periods of "soft" government. We have tried to show that the increasing complexity and ambiguity of the discourse and action strategies in oligarchic class governments have pushed the militant opposition movements to adopt a mirror strategy of complexification, based on pragmatical multiple positions towards violence both internally and externally. The force of these assemblages is probably that they achieve unity without erasing the elements' specificities. Hence, they enhance their potential for translation between their components and they preserve their cohesive capacity of adjustment, in a highly unstable time.

Following the majority of the contemporary social movements, reacting to the apparent failure of revolutionary politics, Anarcho-Syndicalism and Bizi aim to root their alternative organizational principles and moral values in society at large, in economic activities, in social relations, and also in political decision-making processes: the objective is an overall cultural change,

requiring the patient construction of a multiplicity of local struggles. The belief that once institutional power is conquered—through elections or revolutions— society will be transformed by implementing alternative policies is largely replaced by the idea that only if there is a radical cultural shift in everyday practices can political transformation be achieved (Boni & Ciavolella, 2014, p. 4).

After the particularly acute moments of social protest that have rocked Indonesia since 2016 and France since 2018, the Covid-19 crisis has produced, for the powers in place, a windfall effect, allowing them to regain control and re-legitimate themselves. However, the classical method of neoliberalism: "obedience must come from the exhaustion of society", shows its limits, as expressed by the multiplication of riots and clashes in the world (Bertho, 2020). The pandemic exposes the shortcomings of governments —and of the globalized ideological system which they claim to be part of— in the management of a global crisis and its national effects. For the movements briefly presented here, these shortcomings are not the result of particular circumstances but, on the contrary, they are the consequence of a global logic that articulates the laws of a "social Darwinism", formulated by a few, as common principles of everyday life. These individuals, identifiable, nameable, form a class. Therefore, one of the challenges for these movements will be to make this class struggle comprehensible and to point out how it contributes to the definition of legitimate violence.

## ENDNOTES

1) We would like to thank Jennifer Bonn for the linguistic revisions.

2) Let mention the recent declaration of Antoine Petit, president of the French National Center of Scientific Research (CNRS), who saw fit to call for a "Darwinian" law to fund research. "An ambitious, unequal law - yes, unequal, a virtuous and Darwinian law, which encourages the most successful scientists, teams, laboratories, establishments on an international scale, a law which mobilizes energies" (*Les Echos*, 26/11/2019. https://www.lesechos.fr/idees-debats/sciences-prospective/la-recherche-une-arme-pour-les-combats-du-futur-1150759).

3) Naomi Klein prefers to speak of "corporatism" to designate this new form of capitalism. She considers that the policies described as "neo-liberal" are not that liberal, since they require significant state intervention in order to ensure "free and undistorted competition" against the

tendency of companies to form oligopolies and respect for the private property of large companies despite their unpopularity (*The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Random House of Canada, 2007).

4) Charles Tilly (2003, pp. 37-43) describes de-democratization process as linked to the rise of security mechanisms, the loss of legitimacy and representativeness of parliamentary institutions, and the displacement of real power centers beyond the reach of the control and initiative of citizens.

5) In ASEAN, the active adoption of policies that concurrently attempt to deregulate national economies and liberalize trade, investment and labor flows has facilitated the capacity of multinational corporations to assertively expand their operations in the region. In Indonesia, several key sectors are controlled by corporations headed by a limited number of oligarchies.

6) *L'Union sacrée* was a political truce in which the left-wing agreed, during World War I, not to oppose the government or call any strikes.

7) For example, through proposed law called *Loi Avia sur les contenus haineux en ligne*, that was finally rejected by the constitutional council because it was considered to interfere with the exercise of freedom of expression and communication.

8) This examination is based on the analysis of existing documentation, making it possible to bring out the salient features of the discourse of the movements, and on exploratory grounds, making the heterogeneity of internal positions intelligible. However, it remains limited to a general contextualization and will be usefully enriched with more in-depth fields, the crossing of interviews and participant observations, for example to bring to light the social history of the movements and the militants' careers.

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