In Between Old & New, Local & Transnational: Social Movements, Hybrid Media and the Challenges of Making Memories Move

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Abstract

Social movement organisations (SMOs) remain under-examined in the burgeoning accounts of collective memory's transnational movements. There is also an analytical neglect of the difficulties of making memories move and the constraints characterising emergent political fields enabled by the entanglement of remembering and digital media. Bisht addresses this neglected dimension through an examination of SMOs working for the victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster. The chapter focuses specifically on how SMO websites were mobilised for the development of a transnationally framed memory narrative of the disaster and the territorialisation of this online narrative in two specific 'local' contexts: Bhopal and London. Building upon Chadwick's (2013) framework of the 'hybrid media system', the chapter demonstrates the value of 'hybridity' as an analytical lens to examine the specific contexts and complexities of SMO memory-work: combining online and offline strategies, communicating within the movement and to wider publics, and balancing local and transnational aims.

Keywords: Social Movements, Transnational Memory, Hybrid Media, Bhopal Gas Disaster, Digital Media, Cultural Memory

Introduction

This chapter, in line with the aims of the section, will examine the dynamics of the circulation of digitally mediated memories by social movements. The discussion will address both the affordances of digital platforms and the neglected dimension of constraints characterizing this arena of memory-work by focusing on the case of social movement organisations (SMOs) in Bhopal campaigning for victims of the Union Carbide Gas Disaster of 1984. SMOs in Bhopal have been seeking to develop a transnationally framed remembrance for the disaster, foregrounding the continuing soil and groundwater contamination, and making transnational linkages with toxic disasters from other times and places (see Bisht, 2013, 2018).The disaster involved transnational corporations and the inability of Indian state insitituions to hold these corporate actors accountable 'compelled' SMOs to act transnationally (Zavestoski, 2009). Drawing on ethnographic data collected in Bhopal (2010-

2014) and online and offline archival research, the chapter will examine the complex challenges encountered by SMOs in mobilising a new environmentalism informed and transnationally framed form of remembrance online, and in territorialising it in two offline local contexts: Bhopal and London.

There are several different organisations that represent the survivors of the disaster. This chapter concentrates on the *International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal* (ICJB), a coalition constituted primarily by four gas survivor organisations *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh* (Bhopal Gas Affected Women Stationery Workers' Union), *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangharsh Morcha* (Bhopal Gas Affected Women and Men's Struggle Front), *Bhopal Gas Peedit Nirashrit Pension Bhogi Sangharsh Morcha* (Bhopal Gas Affected Destitute Pensioners' Struggle Front), *Children Against Dow-Carbide* and the solidarity group, *Bhopal Group for Information and Action* (End Note 1). ICJB is further connected to affiliates across India and other parts of the world, in particular student groups in universities across the United States. It has also been supported by Greenpeace and Amnesty International in some of its key actions (Zavestoski, 2009; MacSheoin 2012, 2015). A key international affiliate relevant to discussions in this chapter is the *Bhopal Medical Appeal* (BMA). BMA is a charity registered in the UK generating funds to support medical work in Bhopal for the communities affected by the disaster. Aside from its fundraising activities, BMA supports transnational campaigns undertaken by the ICJB, in particular coordinating actions in the UK. The websites being analysed for this chapter, Bhopal.net and Bhopal.org, are the websites of ICJB and BMA respectively. The analysis of the websites employs a multimodal framework (Pauwels, 2012) with a particular emphasis on the examination of written representations, 'embedded points of view', intended audiences and purposes (p.252). At the same time, the discussion aims to keep in view the 'interactivity' of websites as digital texts, their two-dimensional functioning, as 'sites (of actions producing effects) and as signs (forms with meanings)' (Edami, 2013, p.7). Both websites seek to communicate to movement supporters as well as engage wider publics and mainstream media; they do so however within different national contexts and with differing emphasis. Bhopal.net, the ICJB website, has a clear focus on engaging Indian media, prominently carrying materials intended for journalists in Hindi (dominant language in northern India) and English, and in frames relevant to the Indian national context (End Note 2). Bhopal.org, the BMA website, on the other has a clear UK orientation and primarily addresses its communication to supporters and wider publics based in the UK. The analysis will examine factors modulating these communicative orientations online and their interactions with offline strategies. Archival analysis of the websites was undertaken with the help of the 'Internet Archive Wayback Machine' (https://web.archive.org/) resource that allows access to older versions of webpages.

The chapter is organised in the following manner. I will first briefly map out a theoretical conceptualisation of memory-work as undertaken by social movement organisations and situate it further in relation to digital media practices. I will then identify key aspects of the interrelationship between social movements, transnational memory-work and digital media practices which have been neglected in existing literature: ensuring a shift away from a narrow focus on the technical affordances of digital technologies, emphasising the *work* undertaken by SMOs to generate and circulate politically productive memories, and investigating the dynamics of the imbrication of online and offline practices in such work. I

will then outline two theoretical frameworks to be employed in the chapter in the pursuit of these aims: Anna Reading's proposals about a 'globital memory field' (2011) and Andrew Chadwick's formulations on 'hybrid mobilisation' undertaken within a 'hybrid media system' (2013).

Employing these frameworks, I will then undertake the analysis of the Bhopal case study to demonstrate how digital communication technologies and platforms, in particular, campaign websites, were a crucial component in the ability of ICJB and BMA to develop a transnationally framed remembrance of the Bhopal disaster challenging the temporal, geographic and political alienation of Bhopal effected by Indian state institutions, the corporations involved and mainstream news media. Reading's (2011) framework would be used first to examine the development of an online memory narrative of Bhopal as an ongoing environmental disaster with global implications. The discussion will trace shared discursive features in the memory narratives presented on ICJB and BMA websites, emphasising their 'polylogical valency' and a productive mix of 'fixity' and 'fluidity' in the narrative over time (p.250). The discussion will then employ Chadwick's (2013) work to examine how this online memory-work combined with offline strategies as part of hybrid political mobilisations in two specific political and communicative contexts: Bhopal & London.

The first part of the argument will focus on ICJB's work in the locality of Bhopal to highlight a challenging set of hybrid interactions between online and offline memory-work. The analysis will examine the difficulty of stabilizing identification with the new transnationally framed memory narrative of the disaster and expanded group identity amongst local membership. ICJB's local members in Bhopal, the victims of the disaster, come from communities marked by poverty and deprivation; the discussion will connect the organisations' communicative and mnemonic challenges to its memberships' consequent incapacities in terms of online media access and literacy. I will highlight how, in this context, conversational remembering and commemorative performances emerge as key elements of translation between online and offline memory-work. In the second part, I will examine campaign activities undertaken by BMA in London at the time of the 2012 London Olympics to illustrate how activists were able to more productively exploit the new systemic hybridity of the communications cycle in pursuit of their objectives. BMA, based in Brighton, works with a community of UK based supporters; the absence of incapacities linked to access and literacy on the part of its membership facilitates a different and more harmonius set of relations between online-offline activities and in-group and public communication. The discussion will conclude with a reflection on learnings to be derived from the case-study in relation to the broader interrelationship between social movements, memory-work and digital media. This will include a consideration of the affordances and limitations of digitally enabled remembrance and its hybrid mobilisations, emphasising the requirement for media related capacities on part of movement membership, and the challenges presented by the need for engaging with mainstream media and wider publics as well as movement members located in different transnational localities.

Communicative Power in Hybrid Media Systems: Social Movements, Memory-Work, Digital Media

This chapter is working with a social constructionist and processual understanding of cultural memory. My analysis employs the concept of 'memory work', the value of which has been firmly established in earlier examinations of social movements and memory (see Spillman, 2003; Jansen, 2007; Conway, 2008, 2010). The concept places focus upon social movement actors as memory agents and conceptualises "'social remembering as the ideological projects and practices of actors in settings' (Olick, 2003, p.6) that is an ongoing, dynamic and continuing effort'' (Conway, 2008, p.188). SMOs engage in memory-work within the field of public memory marked by multiple and contentious narratives about the past (Jansen 2007; Zamponi 2013, 2018). There are two dimensions of memory-work undertaken by SMOs. The outward oriented memory-work seeks to effect changes in public and popular memory in line with the movement's aims; the inward oriented memory-work seeks to ensure that movement participants continue to have a shared sense of the history of the movement essential for the maintenance of collective identity and unity over time (Gongaware, 2009; Zamponi 2013, 2018; Daphi, 2017). This chapter investigates the tensions between these two dimensions of memory-work, in particular, challenges presented by the need to engage with wider transnational publics while maintaining strong attachments within the movement at the local level.

In relation to the transnational dimensions, I examine the development of a memory narrative employing an explicitly transnational frame as well as the transnational circulations, performance and mobilisations of such a narrative. This dual focus keeps in view understandings of memory both as 'repertoires' of practice and 'repositories' of narratives, texts etc. generated in/by the practice (Zamponi, 2018, p.295). There is a growing recognition within social movement studies that narrative memory-work or the crafting of 'collective narratives about a shared past' is 'particularly central to building collective identity' (Daphi 2017:27). Daphi (2017) suggests that a focus on narratives allows for a recognition of how 'cognitive, relational and emotional dimensions are intertwined in forming and maintaining collective identity' (p.108). The chapter examines this element of transnationally framed narrative memory-work and identity-building undertaken by ICJB and BMA online and offline in two nationally differentiated local contexts: Bhopal & London. The analysis traces transnational linkages between memory-work in the two locations but at the same time reveals the manner in which national and local communicative contexts circumscribe this work and the possibilities of political action. In these ways, in employing transnationality as a lens, this chapter maintains a focus on the multi-scalarity of memory processes (DeCesari & Rigney, 2014), questions the assumed fluidity of memory, and examines the frictions generated in inter-scalar connection making (Pickering, Keightley & Bisht, 2019) and the travel of memory between different locations.

The assumption of fluidity in the travel of memory has characterized literature on media and memory. In particular, literature theorising change in the nature of collective memory in a mediatised globalised second modernity has a tendency to construct a narrative of transnational connectivity deriving largely from a focus on the technical affordances of digital media (see Hoskins, 2011). In other writing, this technologically enabled and

mediatised connectivity has also been linked to the emergence of a shared transnational cosmopolitan remembrance generating political solidarities across national borders (Levy & Sznaider, 2002, 2005, 2010). More recently, there has been a sharper recognition of the need to temper this grand narrative of technologically enabled mediatised forms of cultural memory creating cultural and political connections across national borders. Empirical studies have demonstrated that the availability and travel of narratives, texts and representations across national boundaries does not necessarily generate transnational identifications or solidarities (see Kyriakidou, 2015). The study of social movements explicitly engaging in transnational mobilisation involving memory-work presents a very useful opportunity to examine the specific challenges that memory agents encounter when they actively seek to generate and sustain transnational linkages in and through their memory-work.

Similar calls for a shift away from a primary focus on the technological affordances of digital media have been made by scholars examining the use of information communication technology (ICT) and digital media by social movements. Reviewing the field, Flesher Fominaya (2016) argues for a sharper focus on the social context in which digital media are used. This chapter responds to these calls by addressing three specific analytical shortcomings in the social movement and ICTs literature identified by her. First, studying online participation exclusively and or/separately from offline participation thereby not being able to examine how social movements operate in media systems combining online and offline elements and the interaction of their online and offline communication strategies. Second, a tendency to focus on successful cases. Third, a tendency to focus only on external communication with publics or outsiders which 'neglects attention to the reciprocal effects of on and offline communication within social movement groups or communities' (Flesher Fominaya, 2016, p.96).

Reading's formulation of a 'globital memory field' (2011) and Chadwick's framework of the 'hybrid media system' (2013) allow for a tempering of some of the flawed tendencies identified by Flesher Fominaya (2016). Reading (2011), in framing the term 'globital' in relation to memory, brings attention to the 'synergetic combination of the social and political dynamic of globalisation with digitisation' (p.242). Following Bourdieu (1993), in conceiving global memory as a 'field', Reading keeps in view the struggle over cultural production, circulation and consumption undertaken by memory agents. This explicit conceptualisation of remembrance as a field of contestation is extremely relevant in the context of the Bhopal disaster where the memory-work of ICJB and BMA is actively and urgently responding to the forgetting engineered by transnational corporations and the Indian state. Reading (2011) identifies two axes around which memory-work taking place in the globital memory field might be analysed: the first relating to compositions of 'utterances and expressions' or the discursive formations of memory and the second, relating to how these compositions are consolidated, transformed and mobilized 'across and between the local and the global, the national and the international, the individual and the collective' (p.247). Analysis focussing on the discursive axis will be undertaken through an examination of the memorial narrative advanced by the two websites, Bhopal.org (BMA) and Bhopal.net (ICJB). Here, I will be tracing how the online memory narrative of an 'ongoing/second disaster' in Bhopal, shared between the two websites, radically expands both the temporal and spatial 'valency' of the disaster: the possibility of generating connections and bonds

with other memory narratives and assemblages (Reading 2011, p.249). Analysis around the second axis relating to mobilisations of this memory-narrative will be undertaken in the local contexts of Bhopal and London. These mobilisations involve movement of the memory narrative between online and offline spaces and within and outside the movement. Chadwick's (2013) formulation of hybrid mobilisations within a hybrid media system provides a robust framework for the examination of these complex communicative dynamics.

Chadwick's work brings into focus the new dynamics generated by the systemic imbrication of new and old media technologies and media logics but does so with an emphasis on questions of power, agency and context. Chadwick (2013) formulates power within the hybrid media system as being exercised by 'those who are successfully able to create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, enable or disable others' agency, across and between a range of older and newer media settings' (p.207). He further argues that hybridity has generated an 'emergent openness and fluidity' which can be seen as empowering activism characterised by 'newer media logics' while still acknowledging the 'broad and continuing power of political and media elites' as well as the 'asymmetrical interdependence' between older and newer media logics (pp.207-208). My examination of ICJB & BMA will use this framework to examine how they are combining old and new media logics in their memory-work to engage in 'hybrid mobilisation' (Chadwick, 2013, p.191). Focussing on a case study of the organisation 38 degrees, Chadwick suggests that a 'confluence of long-term planning and nimbleness of response to particular events' (p.192) characterises this new form of activism. He argues that the internet has allowed activists to catch up with the 24-hour news cycle and respond with speed to emerging new agendas and identifies a 'careful division of labour' in relation to choice of media: online media being used for coordination and engagement within the movement and broadcast and print media deployed for targeting policy elites, validating the movement and generating 'visible signs of efficacy for wider publics' (p.193). In my analysis, I will outline a similar set of online-offline dynamics and a mix of long-term planning and agile communicative work in response to emerging news agendas undertaken by ICJB and BMA. However, Chadwick's framework assumes certain capacities in relation to media access and literacy on part of movement membership. My analysis will reveal how differences in communicative capacities within movement membership in Bhopal and London required different forms of hybrid mobilisations and memory-work on the part of the SMOs. I will argue that the division of labour outlined by Chadwick may infact be inverted in contexts where local membership lacks capacities in literacy and media access. The framework of hybrid mobilisations therefore presents a useful framework for analysing interrelationships between memory, media and social movements but requires greater attention to the specificities of communicative and mnemonic movements between online and offline and in-group and public contexts.

Developing a New Transnational Remembrance: Contesting the Forgetting and Localisation of Bhopal

The 1984 gas leak in the Indian city of Bhopal, widely considered one of the world's worst industrial disasters, occurred when the poor maintenance of safety systems led to a leak of poisonous gases from a pesticide factory owned by the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), an American transnational corporation. Nearly 4,000 people died in the immediate aftermath and several thousands more suffered permanent injuries (Muralidhar, 2004). The disaster in its immediate aftermath generated intense global media attention, a consequence of the immensity of the event, the horror of the suffering it generated and the involvement of a large American transnational corporation (Sharma, 2014). The Indian state and its agencies and the American corporation wielded significant power to shape the media narrative. The corporation's objective was to deny culpability and put forward the narrative of human sabotage as the cause of the disaster; state institutions remained the key source of information for Indian media and sought to emphasise their ability to take control of the welfare of the victims. In 1989, after a protracted wrangling over the appropriate legal forum to arbitrate liability, UCC and the Indian state negotiated a full and final settlement for 470 million dollars absolving the corporation of all current and future liabilities (Das, 1998; Baxi, 2010). Both these actors sought to use this judicial closure to limit the significance of the disaster framing it as a geographically and temporally localised event which had been dealt with and settled (see Bisht, 2018, 2013). Mainstream news media coverage in India and globally did little to challenge this geographical and temporal alienation of Bhopal. In fact, they contributed to it by 'sporadic, reactive' and routinised coverage which 'lacked context' (Sharma, 2014, p. 152).

SMOs working in Bhopal worked tirelessly to contest this alienation. This included key interventions involving transnational networks and actors such as the convening of a session of the *Permanent People's Tribunal* on Industrial Hazards and Human Rights in Bhopal in 1992 and the consequent setting up of an *International Medical Commission on Bhopal* which visited the city in 1994 (see Hanna, 2007). This recognition also manifested itself in a shift in the remembrance of the disaster away from a primarily local (national) orientation towards a global–local dynamic beginning in the mid 1990s and achieving a mature form by 1999, the 15th anniversary of the disaster. This shift was concretely captured in the two campaign slogans used for the 15th anniversary: 'We all live in Bhopal' and 'No More Bhopals'. The suffering of the survivors was now placed not simply in relation to a national policy of neoliberalization and appeasing transnational corporations but rather as symptomatic of changes all across the world. More specifically, this framing was made within the 'environmental justice' and 'anti-toxics' framework identifying Bhopal as an ongoing disaster involving toxic contamination. Bhopal was connected to the memory of past chemical disasters including Minamata (1956), Three Mile Island (1979), Love Canal (1978), Seveso (1976), Chernobyl (1986), etc. Further, more specific connections were drawn with UCC's 'long history of causing death and injury' in their operations in United States and in India (Bhopal Group for Information and Action, 1994: 18). Starting with the process of Union Carbide being taken-over by Dow Chemical, these connections were extended to similar events from Dow Chemical's past, most prominently, its involvement in the production of Napalm and Agent Orange used in the Vietnam War (Jabbar, Namdeo &

Bi, 1999: 5). Since 1999, this cosmopolitan remembrance has been strengthened and forcefully deployed across a multiplicity of political forums in an attempt to push Dow Chemical into accepting liability for Bhopal.

Remembering the 'Second Disaster' Online: Restoring Transnational Valency

This shift in memorial contestation centrally implicates shifts in technologies of communication. The ability of SMOs, like ICJB and BMA, to engage in this cosmopolitan remembrance would have been impossible without shifts in communication technologies, most importantly the arrival of the internet and affordable mobile communication. The establishment of the Bhopal.net (ICJB)and Bhopal.org (BMA) websites in 1998 allowed for the first time quick and direct sharing of information by the activists in Bhopal with supporters in other locations across the world. This helped stabilize the solidarity networks, which had been hard to sustain in the past (see Zavestoski, 2009). It also gave SMOs the ability to maintain some degree of discursive control over the narrative of the disaster and the framing of campaign activities at the transnational level.

Both websites engage in an expansion of the memorial narrative of the disaster through prominently highlighting the existence of a 'second disaster' linked to a water contamination crisis affecting communities living around the site of the Union Carbide factory. This expansion implicates both temporal and spatial scales. Temporally, the narrative establishes a sequence of events extending well before the event of the 1984 gas leak and continuing afterwards into the present:

> 'For fifteen years *before the disaster* Union Carbide had routinely dumped highly toxic wastes inside and outside its factory site (….) *After the catastrophic gas leak*, the factory was locked up and left to rot, with all the chemicals and wastes still there. Union Carbide left the factory and its surrounds without cleaning them' (BMA, n.d.-a, para 5, emphasis mine).

> 'Bhopal *didn't start on the night* of the tragedy (….) Why Union Carbide set up shop in Bhopal, and how *from the very beginning* it made decisions to put profit over safety' (ICJB, n.d.-a, para 1-3, emphasis mine).

Spatially, the narrative makes clear how decisions that contributed to the water contamination were made by the corporation within a transnational chain of command: 'Union Carbide's *US managers* were aware of the danger of groundwater pollution from the factory in Bhopal' (BMA, n.d.-b, emphasis mine). Overall, this temporal and spatial scalar re-framing firmly re-instates the transnational corporations back into the circuits of accountability for the ongoing disaster.

In relation to the victims, the narrative places the focus on a second generation of victims, children suffering from physical and mental infirmities linked to the consumption of contaminated groundwater: 'Children of Dow's Chemicals' (BMA, n.d.-c), '…the water contamination is affecting the health of multiple generations' (ICJB, n.d.-b, para 7). The focus on the 'second disaster' and the new set of victims allows the SMOs to unsettle the

legal and bureaucratic containment effected by the corporations and the state. The 1989 legal settlement only pertained to the injuries resulting from the gas leak; the new narrative is developed around an entirely new set of injuries and victims. Using terms of analysis from Reading's (2011) framework of globital memory, the new memorial narrative advanced by the two websites, radically expands the 'valency' of the disaster (p.249). The event of the 1984 gas leak is connected to a much longer and continuing narrative of a second contamination related disaster, which is itself positioned within a broader transnational history of criminal behaviour in other places across the world by the corporations involved. The websites thereby create the possibilities for a transnational audience to identify with this memorial narrative, make personal connections, and act on them. The websites also provide the means for undertaking such action through strategic 'calls' asking supporters of the campaign to express their support employing a well-established repertoire of online and offline actions (signing online letters and petitions, donations, fundraising through participation in marathons etc., volunteering at clinics in Bhopal, staging solidarity events like hunger strikes and anti-Dow Chemical protests on university campuses).

Agile Localisations Within a 'Hybrid-Media System'

Around the stable core of the transnationally poly-valent online memory narrative of the second disaster, identified above, ICJB and BMA are able to engage in a fluid process of territorialisation: mobilising the new memory narrative of the second disaster in specific communicative contexts to engage mainstream media and wider publics. This work demonstrates nationally and locally defined affordances and limitations.

ICJB in Bhopal (India): Engaging Mainstream Media & Wider Publics

In line with Chadwick's (2013) argument about activists's employing hybrid strategies to gain power and voice, ICJB's work demonstrates a creative set of online and offline actions designed to ensure its new memory narrative and framing of the disaster finds space within mainstream media. It does so in three specific ways.

First, it uses the Bhopal.net website to explicitly address and cater to the requirements of local and national media. A regularly updated set of resources is supplied for use by Indian journalists under the 'For the Media' tab, prominently positioned on the homepage (ICJB, n.d.-c). There are four broad elements included in this section which demonstrate ICJB's insightful understanding of the logics governing mainstream news production. The first two sections provide access to the most recent press releases, statements and letters issued by ICJB and supply contacts for press inquiries. Press releases are made available in both Hindi & English and are framed as complete news stories which allows verbatim reproduction by journalists woking to short deadlines (often the case with small sized online news platforms). The timing, content and framing of press conferences and press releases is carefully aligned to the constantly shifting local and national news agendas (for example, framings in relation to local and national elections in India). The other two sections supply information about ICJB, its multiple and multiscalar demands (specifically directed, in turn, at Union Carbide, Dow Chemical, the US government, the Indian national government, and

the state government of Madhya Pradesh) and provide a history of the disaster (communicating its ongoing nature and telling the long story of events both before and after the 1984 gas leak) (ICJB, n.d.-c).. These sections ensure that the polyvalent online memory narrative of the ongoing disaster which restores accountability onto transnational corporate actors and makes connections to other events is not entirely compromised by episodic media coverage and that the possibilities of historically contextualised thematic coverage are enhanced.

Second, ICJB responds to opportunities presented by global media events where relevant connections to the memory of Bhopal as an ongoing environmental disaster could be potentially disseminated in both Indian and international news media. The BP Oil Spill (2010) and the Fukushima nuclear disaster (2011) were two such instances where the group organised protests and press conferences in Bhopal making connections which emphasised the culpability of large corporations in causing irreparable damage to the environment (ICJB, 2011-a). The intensity of news coverage and entanglement of national and transnational news frames around around these large scale events ensured that ICJB's connection making and its memorial narrative emphasising corporate accountability for Bhopal found affirmation in mainstream media coverage, a framing which was otherwise lacking (see Sharma, 2014).

Finally, it seeks to exploit the predictable pattern of commemorative anniversary journalism (Kitch, 2002), which annually focusses national and global newsmedia's attention on the disaster around 3rd December, the day of the gas leak. ICJB has developed a varied programme of commemorative performances to maximise the attention afforded by this narrow window of opportunity. There is a ritualised performance of anger and protest in Bhopal in the form of marches and speeches, centred around the visually spectacular event of the burning of an effigy representing the corporate and state actors responsible for the ongoing suffering. Each year, the effigy is designed differently to ensure that the representation incorporates political actors and events that have currency and relevance and would therefore attract the attention of mainstream media (see Bisht 2018). In addition to this, release of key scientific studies supporting ICJB's narrative of ongoing contamination and its impact on the health of new generations of victims was timed in line with key anniversaries to enhance the amount of media coverage and legitimacy for the environmental justice framing.

This set of agile hybrid mobilisations afforded ICJB a fair deal of success and power in its interactions with mainstream media and in reaching wider publics at the local and national level. Clear challenges were however presented in generating identification with the new memorial narrative within its local membership in Bhopal.

Mnemonic translations within the movement: Mobilising Conversational Remembering

ICJB's local membership is drawn from communities living around the Union Carbide factory site. This includes communities which were affected by the impact of the original gas leak as well as new communities that have been established since the time of the leak, now

constituting a new set of victims: the 'water-contaminated', impacted by consumption of contaminated water. Both these groups are made of extremely poor populations, engaged in poorly paid manual work, lacking both general and media specific literacies, and possessing very limited access to the internet. Within this context of communicative incapacities preventing engagement with online narratives and resoursces, ICJB has struggled to communicate the transnationally framed memorial narrative of the disaster and generate a shared group identity between its older membership (gas affected) and the new constituency of victims (the water affected). In this context, conversational narrative remembering in group settings remains vitally significant in ICJB's attempts to translate the transnational memory narrative and identity and maintain unity at the local level in Bhopal.

As outlined in the earlier discussion, transnational connective linkages made by ICJB are not simply discursive associations presented online but mobilised in carefully designed commemorative performances, protests and other actions directed at the mainstream media. The memory-work done in the weekly meetings seeks to evaluate and interpret these actions, making clear the linkages to the situation in Bhopal, and integrating these connections into the collective memory of the group. This memory-work is significant for many reasons. In the first instance, the local membership might very often lack the full information required to understand linkages being communicated by the ICJB in its protest actions. This might happen even if some of the local membership is participating in the protest actions. Interpreting the action, providing information and confirming the linkages allows all members to understand the full significance and relevance of their own actions. Claims about symbolic and material victories against the target of the protests cannot acquire force and validity for the local membership till these linkages are made clear. As Daphi (2017) emphasises, *evaluations*, which 'concern the specific reflections about an event...used by a narrator to connect different events...and include cognitive, emotional as well as moral interpretations' (p.29), are a vital element of narrative memory-work in the context of movement identity building. A good example was the Fukushima nuclear reactor crisis, which dominated the local, national and transnational news media in March and April 2011. ICJB carried out a small public protest in Bhopal on March 21, 2011, paying homage to the victims of the earthquake and the tsunami, expressing concern over the subsequent crisis linked to the safety of the nuclear reactor, and demanding an independent safety review of existing and proposed nuclear reactors in India. A small group of about thirty women, mainly from the water-affected colonies, participated in the protest action holding banners stating 'No More Bhopal, No More Fukushima' and observed two minutes' silence for the Japanese victims. The action had been organised at a short notice and was designed to get the mainstream media to make the connection between Fukushima and Bhopal. It was only in the weekly Wednesday meeting that occurred on the following day that news of the action and its significance was evaluated and communicated to local membership:

> The people of Bhopal have been demanding that a disaster like Bhopal should not occur anywhere else. Look, they did not listen to the people of Bhopal and it happened again in Japan. At least in Japan, the state might be able to limit the damage; they have better technology, better manpower. *If something like that happens in India, then politicians like Arjun Singh, will seek to first save their own lives. Will they not?* (murmurs of assent from audience) Therefore it is our demand that for better safety in nuclear facilities we need a new committee, which can make

recommendations for improvement. And, new nuclear power plants, four or five of them, which have been planned should not be built. So today, *we have been fighting on this issue continuously for the past 26 years, people do not know of this*. And, now that this disaster has happened in Japan, *the news of our struggle has reached the world and we have been proven right*: the people of Bhopal were saying the right thing; there needs to be a stop on such facilities! (ICJB Community Coordinator, Weekly Meeting, 22/03/2011, emphasis mine)

The quote above demonstrates complex evaluative work in the service of generating a chain of mnemonic connections and identifications. At the level of cognition, it helps the local membership make a connection between Fukushima and Bhopal as environmental catastrophes caused by state and corporate neglect. At an emotional level, it seeks to generate anger amongst the membership through invoking the memory of the shameful behaviour of Indian politicians like Arjun Singh, leader of the state of Madhya Pradesh at the time of the Bhopal disaster, who is reported to have fled the city on the night of the gas-leak. At a moral level, it invokes the memory of Bhopal movement's long struggle for justice and identifies Fukushima as an instance where the aims of the movement and its achievements get recognised at a global level. Finally, it mobilised the combined force of these mnemonic connections to secure the local memberships' identification with the movements' environmental aims and its campaign against nuclear energy expansion in India. This complex narrative memory-work demonstrates how the work of evaluating and linking events is not simply engaged in the task of generating a new memory narrative for the movement but also re-emphasizing older memories of the 1984 gas leak. The process of collective memory creation goes hand in hand with collective memory maintenance.

BMA: Hybrid Mobilisations around the 2012 London Olympics

The BMA led protests in the UK in 2012 in the context of the London Olympics present one of the biggest recent successes of the movement for justice in Bhopal in a national context other than India. It also provides an opportunity to examine a different dynamics of hybrid mobilisations of the new memory-narrative of the disaster in a context where movement supporters have the full capacity to engage with online media. In complete contrast to the situation with ICJB in Bhopal where the Bhopal.net website plays no part in the communication and engagement with local membership, the primary function of BMA's website, Bhopal.org, is to keep its supporters in the UK connected to events in Bhopal, in particular keeping them updated about the work of the two medical clinics that are supported by BMA's fundraising. Also in contrast to ICJB, BMA does not usually seek to campaign or engage with mainstream media on issues other than those linked to the medical needs of the Bhopal victims. The 2012 London Olympics however presented a specific opportunity where the organisation found itself in a position to mobilise its long-term online memory-work and connections forged with supporters in strategic offline contexts to engage mainstream media and wider publics in the UK in a powerful manner.

Dow Chemical signed up as a world-wide partner of The Olympic Movement in 2010 as part of a ten-year sponsorship deal: estimated at US $ 170 million (Long, 2010). The company's aim was to align itself to The Olympic Movement, demonstrate its 'commitment to global

sustainability, innovation, scientific excellence and addressing world challenges' and to use the linkage to generate 'tremendous new business opportunities' (Liveris, 2010 quoted in Long, 2010). The opportunity for generating actions in London emerged after a more specific Dow Chemical connection was established in relation to the 2012 London event: the company was chosen to sponsor a wrap around the main stadium. Supporters of BMA in the UK who usually did not communicate with the organisation specifically got in touch by email to inquire how BMA was going to respond to Dow Chemical's involvement (Toogood quoted in Botelho and Zavestoski 2014, p.177). Responding to this feedback from their long-term supporters, BMA began to strategically mobilise its local network of support and target key political actors at the local level in London who could give voice to the campaign and attract the attention of the mainstream UK media. The memory narrative of the second ongoing disaster which had been carefully crafted on the Bhopal.org website was a crucial element in firmly establishing the connection between Dow Chemicals and Bhopal for politicians and journalists approached by the BMA (Toogood quoted in Botelho and Zavestoski 2014, p.177). Two individual allies became particularly significant in relation to the local political and communicative context in London: Navin Shah, a member of the London Assembly, and Meredith Alexander, Commissioner for a Sustainable London 2012 (End Note 2). Navin Shah, who had been previously involved with the campaign for justice in Bhopal, moved a motion in the London Assembly encouraging the International Olympic Committee and LOCOG to reject Dow Chemical's sponsorship asking them to 'give more weight to environmental, social and ethical records of companies when awarding such contracts' (Rainey, 2012). Alexander on her part, registered her protest against Dow Chemical's sponsorship of the stadium wrap by resigning from her position as Commissioner for a Sustainable London 2012 live on BBC's *Newsnight* programme. Both these actions, the successful passing of the anti-Dow Chemical motion in the London Assembly and Alexander's high profile resignation announced on live television generated an immense volume of coverage in mainstream news media in the UK and internationally (BBC, 2012). Alexander also established a small volunteer based organisation called *Drop Dow Now* which focussed specifically on getting LOCOG to reject Dow Chemical's sponsorship. *Drop Dow No*w, set up its own website and social media platforms to remediate and strengthen local and transnational campaigns being led by ICJB and BMA (Drop Dow Now, n.d). A series of small solidarity actions coordinated by Drop Dow Now and BMA were organised locally in London and globally, to ensure that the issue remained within the focus of the mainstream news media. A key function of Drop Dow Now, Bhopal.org and Bhopal.net websites during this period was to curate and remediate the mainstream coverage of the issue; this cycle of remediation generated further energy and support for the campaign. In this context, the campaign websites became central nodes in a wider assemblage of online and offline actors and platforms. Dow Chemical's aims were disrupted: what was meant as an unprecedented public relations opportunity transformed into a communications crisis (Sudhaman & Holmes, 2012).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the dynamics of digitally mediated memory-work undertaken by SMOs campaigning for justice for the victims of the Bhopal disaster. This examination has been undertaken in relation to mnemonic mobilisations in two local contexts to argue that

online memory-work must be understood as part of hybrid mobilisations with hybridity encompassing the imbrication of online and offline media, local and transnational aims, as well as communications directed inwards within the movement and outwards towards wider publics (Chadwick 2013).

The dynamics observed in ICJB's work in the local context of Bhopal demonstrate a challenging relationship between online and offline memory-work. Some elements of the model of hybrid mobilisation outlined by Chadwick (2013) are in operation. The Bhopal.net website, in combination with a repertoire of offline actions, allows ICJB to find space within mainstream media and thereby reach wider local and national publics in India. However, the online memorial narrative and communicative work does not work as harmoniously in relation to the local membership of the movement. Its local membership is drawn from populations unable to access online communications both in terms of being too poor to afford internet devices and in lacking general literacy and media-literacy skills required to engage with digital communications. The domain of online memory-work and digital communication, more broadly, then is marked by clear imbalances and inequalities, issues which have been under-examined in current social movement scholarship (Costanza-Chock 2014). ICJB's local membership in Bhopal are required to engage in intense political actions under challenging circumstances; these actions are then remediated onto the online domain in a bid to influence mainstream media in India and transnationally. However, these communicative actions remain inaccessible and unusable by local populations due to the limitations identified above. ICJB has sought to address this shortcoming through group-based conversational remembering in weekly meetings; a process of narrative remembering involving transnational connection making and interpretation and evaluation of the organisation's activities is undertaken for the benefit of its local membership to ensure that they not feel a sense of disconnection.

The significance of media capacities on part of movement membership in ensuring fluid and effective hybrid mobilisations is further emphasised through an examination of BMA's activism in the local context of London at the time of the 2012 Olympics to challenge Dow Chemicals' sponsorship of the event. The aim of the mobilisation was to undermine the corporations' attempt to engage in greenwashing and present itself as a brand committed to sustainability in the context of a global media event. The analysis demonstrated how BMA used the secure core of the online memorial narrative implicating Dow Chemical in the 'second' and 'ongoing' disaster of contamination in Bhopal as a basis for agile offline territorialisations: locally situated actions in London directed at securing the attention of mainstream media. Long-term online memory-work on its website was crucial in generating network connections with ordinary members of the public as well as securing the commitment of other political actors who found the narrative framing presented by the online narrative resonant with their identity and aims. The commitments generated by the online memory-work were mobilised in off-line actions that were specifically designed to attract the attention of broadcast and print media. BMA was extremely successful in crafting this hybrid mobilisation and thereby seriously undermining Dow's communicative aims of putting forward a sustainability narrative in relation to its brand and to dissociate itself from liability for the Bhopal event. The mobilisation around the London Olympics may therefore be viewed as a successful example of hybrid mobilisation where online-offline and

inwards and outwards communications and memory-work worked harmoniously and productively.

At the same time however, it should be noted that the field of memory-work in relation to Bhopal remains extremely contested. The moment of the 2012 Olympics represents the exception rather than the norm in terms of the general lack of salience of environmentally framed anti-corporate movement narratives within mainstream media. Even at the time of the 2012 Olympics campaign, Dow Chemical had powerful political actors communicating and supporting its narrative of a lack of responsibility for Bhopal (see Bisht 2013). A recent case in point is ICJB and BMA's unsuccessful attempt to secure mainstream media attention for their campaign against a recent merger between Dow Chemicals and DuPont which threatens to further reduce the possibilities of the corporations accepting liability for the contamination related injuries in Bhopal.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates the complexity of digitally mediated memory-work undertaken by SMOs working in the Global South in terms of balancing local and transnational communicative aims. The case-study demonstrates that models of communicative action involving digital and social media being advanced in current scholarship need to be expanded and modified in relation to practices in non-Western contexts marked by starker inequalities in terms of access to online forms of communication and protest. The case-study also demonstrates the value of paying attention to specific contexts of communication when trying to unpack the nature of the 'hybridity' in play in emergent forms of activism. The case of Bhopal demonstrates how we need to be careful in not simply using the notion of hybridity as a catch-all phrase but rather as an analytical lens to scrutinise the factors structuring power within emergent mnemonic, communicative and political fields.

Notes

1. Other survivors group including the *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan* (Bhopal Gas Affected Women Workers' Campaign) have been a part of the ICJB but their participation has been limited and sporadic. The groups identified here have been a part of the coalition most consistently over the period of its existence and continue to operate as part of it at the time of writing. MacSheoin (2014) provides a comprehensive historical account of the dynamics of coalition building involving local organisations in Bhopal and transnational advocacy networks. The specific histories of local organisations working in Bhopal (including the constituents of the ICJB) can be accessed in *Bhopal Survivors Speak* (Bhopal Survivors Movement Study 2009).

2. It also carries some resoursces and communications relevant to its student supporters in the US. The key point of difference relevant to the discussion in the chapter however is the lack of materials directed at the local membership in Bhopal a consequence of their inability to access online materials.

3. The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 was created by the Greater London Authority to act as an independent committee to monitor the sustainability plans, objectives and progress of the organisations responsible for building and delivering the London 2012 Games (see Botelho & Zavestoski, 2014:180).

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