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a political sociology of
transnational europe

Edited by
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chapter four | fighting together: assessing continuity and change in social movement organisations through the study of constituencies' heterogeneity¹

Olivier Fillieule and Philippe Blanchard

There is today a rather large consensus among social movement scholars upon the idea that most protest movements and organisations are set in motion by social changes that render the established political order more vulnerable or receptive to challenge. Indeed, these 'political opportunities' are not likely to be grasped by potential challengers in the absence of sufficient organisation (so called 'mobilising structures') and shared emergent meanings and definitions (so-called 'framing processes') (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). However, the literature is less convincing in explaining the development of social movements. The promoters of the political process model themselves admit that if 'movements may largely be born of environmental opportunities, [...] their fate is heavily shaped by their own actions'. (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 15) 'Organisational dynamics' remain to be specified and operationalised (Fillieule 1997, 2006; Goodwin and Jasper 2003)

In this chapter, we focus on the dynamics that may help us understand continuities and changes within protest groups. We define change here along three dimensions: Change in internal modes of organisation (e.g. leadership, recruitment policy), strategic and tactical choices (e.g. repertoires of action, alliances) and formation and transformation of collective identities, i.e. the way individuals internalise a vision of the world, of the place of the group in this world and one's place in this group, the way they incorporate or resist organisational modelling (e.g. Lichterman 1995; Whittier 1995). All these contribute to fix members' shared identities (Stryker, Owens, and White 2000; Polletta and Jasper 2001). Explanations of change and continuity in social movements generally fall into two broad categories.

1. The writing of this chapter has been facilitated by the invitations of the first author for a semester at the Department of Sociology at New York University and of the second author at the Department of Sociology at Penn State University, thanks to a Swiss National Science Foundation Post-doc grant. The authors thank the participants of the 'Protest and Politics' workshop at the City University of New York where a preliminary version of this chapter was presented and especially James Jasper for his valuable comments.

Macro structural approaches emphasise that movements change in response to shifts in available resources or external conditions. One can distinguish here two complementary traditions of research. Organisational approaches stress the characteristics of organisational structure, ideology, and culture that may help Social Movements Organisations (SMOs) to mobilise resources, (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Morris 1984) and maintain members' commitment in hostile and changing environments or through abeyance phases (Taylor 1989). Political process approaches seek to explain the effects of political opportunity structures on mobilisation cycles and repertoires (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994; Tilly 2008).

Micro structural approaches attempt to conceptualise the contribution of internal personnel processes to the transformation of social movements, adding to the factors emphasised by political process and organisational theories, the movements' internal dynamics of recruitment, lines of cleavages and collective identity. To date, these approaches have been less developed.² However, since the beginning of the 1990s, many writers in the cultural tradition shifted their attention to non-organisational factors of internal cleavages, such as ideologies, identities and consciousness, among others (Fantasia 1988; Gamson 1997; Jasper 1997; Steinberg 1999; Cohen 2000; Waite 2001; Armstrong 2002; Polletta 2002).³ Two important traditions of research can be distinguished.

Firstly, feminist theory has played a central role in defining the intersecting nature of individual structural attributes and their complex effects on the internal dynamics of social movements. By placing at the heart of the analysis of activist groups, gender relationships and their articulation with other dominance relationships, this research convincingly demonstrates that protest movements experience the same principles of classification as the societies from which they come, even if they are seeking to transform them. In that sense they have constituted a Trojan horse against an epistemology of the individual subject fed by rational choice theories and based on the model of 'white middle-class men in Western capitalist systems' (Marx Ferree 1992: 36). As a result, feminist researchers have worked at length on the relationships between multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations. They have demonstrated that symbolic power and material inequalities are rooted in relationships that are shaped by structural characteristics that can be defined in terms of class, race, gender, age and sexuality (e.g. Mohanty 1988; Crenshaw 1989; Stockdill 2003; McCall 2005; Fillieule and Roux 2008).

Secondly, generational approaches have explored the fractures generated in a protest group by the succession of generations and generation units (Mannheim [1928] 1952). The basic idea is that if the persistence of committed long-time

2. Indeed, until the end of the 1980s, the irreducible heterogeneity of protest movements was only considered in organisational terms through distinguishing, vertically, between leaders and the mass of mobilised individuals (e.g. Piven and Cloward 1977) and, horizontally, between 'conscience constituents' and the mass of members/beneficiaries (e.g. McCarthy and Zald 1977).

3. See Ghaziani 2008, Chapter One, for a recent review of this literature.

participants secures continuity in social movements, recruitment and personnel turnover help produce change and are often the source of internal conflicts (Gusfield 1957; Freeman 1975; Evans 1979; Gitlin 1987; Rupp and Taylor 1987; Ginsburg 1989; Whittier 1995, 1997; Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005). Such an approach is of particular interest since it aims to link the political processes that shape recruitment and cycles of protest, to an analysis of interaction in micro-mobilisation contexts and the construction of collective identity. However, most of the time, generational approaches identify heterogeneity only through common period of entry into a SMO (i.e. micro-cohorts in the sense of Whittier 1997).

In this chapter, we follow the path opened by micro structural approaches that have attempted to conceptualise the contribution of internal personnel processes to the transformation of social movements. We argue that one must carefully examine, at the micro-sociological level, the fractures generated by diverse structural characteristics in order to understand continuities and changes within protest groups.⁴ It is not only the historical and social movement context when individuals begin activism that defines lasting common political understandings, but also the duration and intensity of commitment, as well as a complex mix of structural attributes and their ordering along time.

In what follows, we offer a more complex way of identifying movements' internal lines of cleavages (what we call here heterogeneity) and their dynamics, in order to understand conflict and change within SMOs. We propose a method that offers the means, perhaps for the first time with quantitative data, to build a model in which the actual profiles of activists we isolate can fully account for how inter-individual distances and proximities are combined in reality to produce complex and overlapping groups defined by multiple intersecting affinities.

We draw on a case study of Aides, the oldest and largest French SMO mobilised against the AIDS epidemic, that was founded at the end of 1984 by Michel Foucault's partner, Daniel Defert.⁵ We start by outlining a dynamic model of individual activism in which the heterogeneity of protest groups depends on the *multisituated* and *processual* structural attributes of its members. We then develop a new methodology to empirically describe internal heterogeneity by applying sequence analysis (SA) to our data. We build a typology of profiles characterised by distinctive structural attributes. We show how the coexistence and succession of these profiles allow us to better understand the dynamic of continuity and change within the organisation.

4. Very classically, by structural characteristics, we mean the individual properties that, in a given social structure, generate divisions and classification of people and, as a consequence, hierarchisation. A structural characteristic is defined then always in relation to a structural location of the individual, to a given structure of power relations, and is always translated into differentiated forms of acquisition of dispositions, objective positions and role expectations. Generally speaking, all the characteristics that determine differences in material and symbolic resources are structural. Thus, the fact of being a man or a woman constitutes a structural characteristic in an androcentric world, while differences in curly or straight hair—in most of the social world—generate neither division nor hierarchy.

5. Aides was initially conceived on the self-help and caring model of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (Altman 1988; Ouellette *et al.* 1995).

A dynamic model of individual activism

Our approach is rooted in a dynamic conception of activism that has been coined 'the sociology of activist careers' (e.g. Fillieule 2001, 2010; Sawicki and Siméant 2010). Activism in this model is defined as a long-lasting social activity that involves joining, committing, and defecting, in phases. Such a model is particularly helpful as a theoretical account of activist commitments that diachronically resituates them in the whole picture of individual life histories, as well as contextualising the coexistence of various activist profiles in SMOs. The expression 'activist career' refers directly to the Chicago School's interactionist tradition⁶ and more precisely to the basic theoretical assumptions of 'symbolic interactionism'.⁷ The concept of career pays attention to the permanent dialectic between individual history and social institutions. It aims at rebuilding,

'a sequence of steps, of changes in the individual's behavior and perspectives, in order to understand the phenomenon. Each step requires explanation, and what may operate as a cause at one step in the sequence may be of negligible importance at another step. [...] In a sense, each explanation constitutes a necessary cause of the behavior. [...] The explanation of each step is thus part of the explanation of the resulting behavior' (Becker 1966: 23).

Applied to political commitment, the notion of career allows us to understand how, at each stage of a biography, attitudes and behaviours are determined by past attitudes and behaviours, and in turn condition future possibilities, thus resituating the periods of commitment in the entire life cycle.

However, contemporary studies of careers too readily forget the extent to which methodological knowledge has evolved tremendously. Fifty years ago statistical studies were anathema to interactionists; this should no longer be the case. In reality, multivariate statistical analysis can be done using observations tracked over time that take into account changing conditions. Our conceptual framework will be operationalised by means of sequence analysis (SA), an approach rooted in Abbott and his colleagues' works in the sociology of professions (Abbott 1995) which has then been applied to a larger range of topics and also further developed (Dijkstra and Taris 1995; Elzinga 2003; Aisenbrey and Fasang 2007; Lesnard 2008; Gabadinho *et al.* 2009; Gauthier *et al.* 2009). To the efficient treatment of

6. See Gerth and Wright Mills 1954; Strauss 1959; Becker 1966.

7. Coined by Herbert Bulmer in 1937, 'symbolic interactionism' is closely linked to the social behaviourism of George Herbert Mead. Its subsequent usage belongs less to a school of thought than to a wide array of research sharing two standpoints: a common conception of the individuals and their relation to society, deeply rooted in the philosophical tradition of pragmatism; and a way of doing research inherited from the Chicago School of sociology. More precisely, symbolic interactionism can be defined as a micro sociological and processual approach, which systematically links the individual and the study of situations to broader contextual factors and social order rules and norms.

diachronic data (Abbott 1995: 95), we add three more assets to SA: a flexible handling of missing values and ill-categorised states, which are common in all longitudinal questionnaire studies; robustness to censorship and varying lengths of sequences, which are also common phenomena due to age variations and to unfinished careers at survey time; and the possibility to adjust the time period according to available data and to the research question. Inside the SA toolbox, the present study will rely particularly on optimal matching analysis and sequence plotting so as to operationalise our model of individual activism as *multisituated* and *processual*.

Multisituated structural attributes

Differences in structural characteristics are observable in activists' different tasks and functions, and in other life spheres. Anselm Strauss's (1959: 41–43) notion of *plurality* emphasises the actors' memberships in a number of other social worlds and subworlds as part of contemporary social life. In each of these spaces, individuals are led to adopt specific roles in which they are more or less 'stuck.' These define various contexts of socialisation.

From this, the idea arises that activist organisations are also comprised of individuals belonging to a multiplicity of social worlds and subworlds. As a consequence, they struggle with a need to abide by different, sometimes contradictory norms, rules and logic. Therefore the analysis of activist commitment must proceed through the identification of the 'individual's succession[s] of phases, changes in behavior and perspectives' (Becker 1966: 64). These critical moments change the expected reward in each sphere, which covaries with other areas. It is vital that we find the means to identify, in each life sphere, these 'critical moments' as points in time, to measure the length of the 'phases,' and finally to articulate the various spheres of life, since they interact. From this perspective, while the consideration of such indicators as 'biographical availability' (McAdam 1988) for overlapping roles, it remains too rough an indicator.

Current uses of optimal matching analysis (OMA) rarely try to grasp more than one life domain. Multiple-sequence analysis, also called multichannel analysis, remains a nearly virgin territory.⁸ Our perspective implies four individual careers that compose each individual *biography*. The career in the organisation under study (being in or out, degree of involvement, status) is our central career. The career in one's sociosexual identity (sexual orientation and degree of disclosure to relatives and acceptance by them) is crucial because of the link between AIDS activism and the homosexual cause (56 per cent of the sample's members claim to be homosexuals). The career in AIDS (HIV status and degree of disclosure of it) is also important because the HIV positive status of many activists has direct consequences on their involvement, its meaning, and the activities in Aides (Broqua and

8. We will partly follow Pollock's methodological propositions (Pollock 2007, implemented in TraMineR, Gabadinho *et al.* 2010) and Gauthier *et al.* 2009 (implemented in Salt).

Box 4.1: Multiple sequence analysis, step by step

Sequence analysis (SA) was imported in the 1980s from bio-computing to the social sciences as a pragmatic way of representing, comparing and clustering sequences. Sequences are defined as strings of states or events. In our case, sequences are individual trajectories inside Aides, in the socio-sexual career and in the relationship with AIDS. The core tool of SA is the optimal matching algorithm (OM), which compares two sequences, state by state, and calculates an index of dissimilarity or distance.

OM first defines an alphabet of states for each of the three careers. Each alphabet contains between seven and twelve states (including missing values). In the example below, our fictitious alphabet is composed of states A, B, C and D. Then, a cost is attributed to each elementary operation of transformation of states. Here, the deletion (del) or the insertion (ins) of a state costs 1, its substitution (sub) for another state costs 2, and the match (mat) of two identical states costs 0. Real studies usually keep insertions and deletions at the same constant value of 1. The decision on substitution costs between A and B may take three main options: set as a constant, like insertions and deletions; varying according either to the scarceness of empirical moves from A to B (the more common a transition, the cheaper its cost); or, depending on objective knowledge about the social cost of moving between A and B.

Using these cost settings, the OM algorithm finds the best aligning path, that is, the sequence of elementary operations that outputs the smallest total cost between S1 and S2. In this case, the cheapest path manages to 'align' the BBBC subsequence, made of four successive matches that have the advantage of costing zero. At the beginning of S1, two As have to be deleted, and in the end, a D is substituted for a C, then two Ds are inserted in S2. The total cost is 6. Any path that would miss the BBBC subsequence would need more substitutions, deletions and insertions, and therefore would cost more than 6.

Two sequences S1 and S2

S1	A	A	B	B	B	C	C
S2	B	B	B	C	D	D	D

Comparison of S1 and S2: total cost = 6

S1	A	A	B	B	B	C	C	X	X
S2	x	x	B	B	B	C	D	D	D
Operation	del	del	mat	mat	mat	mat	sub	ins	ins
Costs	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

Multiple SA uses three sets of costs. The three careers, referring to different realities and their alphabets are different as are their costs. The process of optimisation is similar as for single SA, with three pairs being examined at the same time: S1-S2, S1'-S2' and S1''-S2''. At each step of the comparison, three elementary operations are used, one for each career. The optimal path to transform S1-S1'-S1'' into S2-S2'-S2'' is the one that minimises the whole cost.

This process is lead for all pairs of sequences inside the sample, that is N(N-1)/2 times. The outcome is an NxN matrix of distances between individuals. This matrix is symmetric around a diagonal made of zeros, which represents the distance of each case with itself. Then it is treated by means of a clustering algorithm. In our case, an ascending cluster algorithm aggregates individuals according to their respective profiles of distances with all the others. The more similar the profiles of distances of two cases, the more chances they have of ending up in the same cluster. We chose a ten-cluster typology (Table 4.1). Each cluster gathers activists whose threefold biographies resemble one another the most.

Fillieule 2001; Stockdill 2003; Gould 2010). Professional career is our fourth individual career. However, due to the lack of sufficiently precise longitudinal data, professional status will not be added to the combined analysis of the three former careers. We will use it as a supplementary variable in the final analysis.

Contrary to traditional regression models with *a priori* causal hypotheses, OMA does not split careers between independent and dependent factors. As a more descriptive approach to statistics, OMA searches for similar patterns in different biographies. This is done by comparing all possible pairs of biographies, year by year, on the whole period under study (see Box 4.1). The more similar two biographies are, the lower their *distance*. Using a hierarchical clustering procedure, biographies that are most similar are gathered in clusters.⁹ Depending on the respondent's profile, one or two of the three domains might provide a more relevant explanation of the moment of his/her commitment, his/her change of status or his/her exit. But, at the final aggregated level, if appropriately

9. To sum up the SA method in a more technical fashion: inter individual distances equal the least expensive sum of costs among all possible successions of elementary operations – insertions, deletions, substitutions – in the three careers. Substitution costs are field-based objective costs (with pragmatic minor adjustments to help maximise clusters coherence), for three reasons: we already had a good knowledge of the data, having previously studied at length the organisation; studies of other complex datasets produced good results by relying on objective costs (e.g. Pollock 2007); comparing results from competing methods (uniform costs, transition rates and computer-based costs), this one reveals itself as more efficient and better adapted to our data. Insertion and deletion costs are set at a half of the mean of all substitution costs and substitution costs from all three matrices at each step. The pair comparison of all biographies outputs a N*N positive distance matrix that is processed through ascending, hierarchical cluster analysis, with Ward aggregation criteria applied to square Euclidean distances.

weighted, all three careers significantly contribute to the final result. On all three dimensions, the clusters of biographies are both distinguished clearly and have reasonable internal coherence, each relying on specific typical *multisituated sequences* (Gauthier 2007; Pollock 2007; Blanchard 2010).

Structural attributes in a process

Identifying the diachronic formation and reformation of structural attributes presents the greatest difficulties. Individual structural characteristics evolve over time.¹⁰ We recognise however that biographical time, in combination with historical time, determines an objective structure of social opportunities for each structural characteristic at each stage. We must therefore go beyond static analyses of structural attributes and restore the temporal order of individual experiences. Two main issues arise.

First, most structural characteristics are not bestowed upon individuals but rather are sequentially acquired, the order of which partially determines their meaning. For example, how do we interpret people volunteering in the field of AIDS declaring themselves HIV-positive, if we do not consider the date at which this occurs? It is clear that, whether this occurs before, during, or after the period of involvement, radically affects the explanatory value of this fact. Most questionnaires fail to take temporal order into account, falsely inferring a causal relationship from correlations.

Secondly, structural positions may be better viewed from a relational perspective. The value of a structural position is derived from its commonality, how it compares to the experiences of others, its synchronism (coexistence) and antecedence. The link between structural attributes and structural locations (i.e. the social settings in which individuals are circulating) significantly reduces the explanatory power of analyses that correlate activist commitment with social characteristics identified in questionnaires or structured interviews. Indeed, any social characteristic (gender, age, income level, professional status and so on) lacks explanatory capacity if we do not resituate it in the 'configuration' (in the sense articulated by Norbert Elias) in which it develops and contributes to the creation of certain dis-

10. Which means that we do not consider that adolescence or young adulthood are the sole formative periods in individuals' lives. Socialisation is here conceived as a continuous process (Strauss 1959; Berger and Luckmann 1966: chapter three), which means that commitments in protest organisations can be transformative at any age and that individual structural properties are always susceptible to change. We fully agree with Schneider (1988) and Whittier (1997) who argue that when it comes to women and their political socialisation in women's movements, age does not appear any more as the basis for defining the climax of transformative experiences because participation in the women's movement was, at any age, a strong vehicle for building a new way of seeing the world and one's own life. Gay and lesbian movements (Armstrong 2002; Ghaziani 2008) as well as AIDS volunteer groups (Broqua and Fillieule 2002; Stockdill 2003; Chambré 2006; Gould 2009), also play such a role and offer to committed people, irrespective of their position in the life-cycle, opportunities for 'institutionalised changes' and 'biographical ruptures' aimed at both acceptance of one's own stigma and one's visibility in the social world.

positions. In other words, the social characteristics of individuals are ambivalent. Their values (and explanatory power) change in conjunction with the system of interactions in which they are found.

The diachronic complexity of our biographies is an obvious challenge to OMA. Up to now, sociologists and demographers have usually analysed irreversible states or events, like leaving the educational system, marrying or having one's first child. Some of our careers do include irreversible events (becoming HIV positive, disclosing one's homosexuality to relatives) but others are reversible and/or recurrent, like reducing or increasing the time one devotes to the organisation. Similarly, the three-career perspective increases combinatorial complexity: a specific biographical turning point central to a given cluster has to combine similar changes in all three careers at similar moments. Nonetheless, each of the final clusters gather activists that resemble each other regarding the different aspects of time involved: the nature of experiences the activists have lived, the length of these experiences, the order in which they went through them, and the combination of these three elements across the three careers. As a result, some more complex common subsequence's emerge in clusters, like turning points and recurrent experiences.

Another shortcoming of current uses of SA is that time is strictly conceived of as the succession of standard steps in one's life. Persons of different ages are compared in a non-historical, loosely contextualised perspective. By contrast, each activist's biographical time, formally identical to the time of other activists, is embedded in organisational and historical times. Moreover, these two enveloping times result in generational structures. Fortunately, SA addresses each of these time layers: biographical and organisational times are directly processed by OMA algorithms; biological time is induced by the cost of the minority, initial period, and by insertion-deletion costs; and, significant historical events, in and/or outside of Aides, materialise on sequence plots.

Data

We rely on a secondary analysis of data collected in the framework of a research project initiated in 1998 by Olivier Fillieule and Christophe Broqua (Fillieule and Broqua 2000, 2005; Broqua and Fillieule 2001). Whereas the initial research design compared the two biggest voluntary groups mobilised against AIDS (Aides and Act Up) using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods (life history interviews and ethnographic observation), the present analysis is based exclusively on a retrospective longitudinal self-administered mail survey of members of Aides. Thanks to access to the member directory granted by the organisation, a questionnaire was sent to all 1,969 members of Aides Ile-de-France (central region around Paris) in 1998.¹¹

11. Aides started as a small Paris-based association. Chapters were later created in the provinces. In order to study a consistent group of volunteers throughout the period, we limited our investigation to the volunteers of the Paris region.

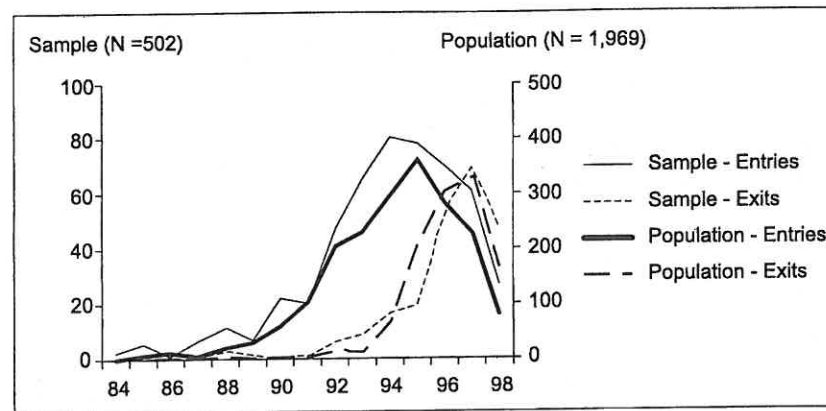


Figure 4.1: Representativity of flows of members from questionnaire sample
Comparison of survey sample and population from members' directory

The response rate was decent (25 per cent, $N = 502$). Not only did we contact current volunteers (886 questionnaires, 289 returned, 33 per cent), we also surveyed former volunteers (1,083 questionnaires, 213 returned, 20 per cent). Their inclusion gives us a view that includes terminated, fully informed commitments, as well as unfinished, censored trajectories.

We had the opportunity to test the reliability of our sample by means of other data from Aides' archives: sex, birth year, date of entry and of exit.¹² Figure 4.1 shows the high agreement of flows of members in and out of Aides between sample and survey. All representativity tests on these four variables give satisfying results: monivariate distributions are highly tied between survey sample and population¹³ and the hierarchy of bivariate correlations are similar enough in the sample and in the population.¹⁴ Archive data are not rich enough to prove that our sample is fully representative regarding other variables like sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), HIV status or positions in Aides. As a matter of fact, our questionnaire was designed

12. The quality of the data on members from Aides' directory is high. Missing values are only 5 per cent (birth year), 3 per cent (year of entry and exit) and 0 per cent (sex).

13. Monivariate distributions of sex S, age A, entry date E and leaving date L show Pearson correlation coefficients between the sample and population of respectively 1.00, 0.88, 0.98 and 0.94. As a consequence, none of the categories of these four variables is omitted in our survey sample.

14. The similarity of structures of correlations between the sample and the population strengthens the monivariate correlation tests (see previous note). In our case: correlations S*E and S*L are not significant in both sample and population; S*A, E*L and A*E are significant and strong in both. Only A*L is non significant in sample and significant and strong in population. Therefore, as a whole, with only one exception out of six tests, the internal structure of ties between characteristics available in both the sample and population are very close.

precisely to supply this information from respondents. Our knowledge of the organisation leads us to suspect survey response biases, particularly among more educated activists and activists in executive professions. Nonetheless, our sample can be considered reliable as to our focus on the heterogeneity of constituencies.

Our typological approach (see below) is not conditional on strong representativity as much as are linear models approaches. Surveying more members might change the typical longitudinal profiles we sketch out by providing new profiles. It would more likely impact the size of the clusters of members that we associate with these profiles, in two ways: by adding new cases which resemble the ones already surveyed; and by adding cases slightly different that would move the boundaries of clusters, but not their core. We assume that our 502 respondents drove us close enough to sampling saturation.

Biographical profiles and organisational dynamics

Optimal matching and cluster analysis produce an exhaustive, ten-group typology.¹⁵ Each group shows high levels of internal coherence and external difference with the other groups. We use individual sequence plots¹⁶ to describe the specific combination of experiences activists go through, not only since the creation of Aides in 1984, but from the end of the 1950s, with each biography starting at the age of fifteen. We also rely on cross-tabulations of clusters by social characteristics, with Table 4.1 summarising the most discriminating features of each cluster. Automated extraction of typical subsequences for each cluster helps characterise and name them. Finally, we illustrate graphically the ten clusters by prototypical activists (Figure 4.2), the six most representative of them being detailed in the text. The picture that emerges provides an original view of the divides between members, of the potential conflicts that result, and of the consequences of these conflicts on continuity and change.

15. The number of clusters is a statistically relevant cut in the hierarchical clustering tree, as the gaps between nine and ten and between ten and eleven are big enough. Also, clusters are small enough to provide a detailed insight into the diversity of profiles, without producing any marginal cluster. Choosing more (or fewer) classes by splitting (respectively, merging) some clusters, would also make sense, but would not provide much more useful information to the question of organisational change. The high variance of variables not used in the analysis (sex, education, socioeconomic status...) by cluster confirms that the biographical types we extracted by means of SA match distinct social structures.

16. For illustrations of cluster description, see Figures in the Appendix.

Table 4.1: Main features of clusters output by optimal matching and cluster analysis.

Cl. n	Longitudinal profile of career in Aides	Multiple-career dynamics and subsequences	Other specific features**
1*	18 Pioneers I. Early and protracted (1984–1992) engagement, but with few managing positions. As of 1999 (when being surveyed), all have left, for personal reasons.	Mostly homosexual men with HIV+ status disclosed to relatives***.	
2	26 Pioneers II. Entries spread across 1984–1998. High level of commitment.	All homosexuals, of which half HIV+. HIV status not fully revealed. But lots of missing values in the sociosexual career (uncertainty about coming out) and AIDS-related career.	Mix of male and female activists. 54% >45yo (mean: 19%).
3	40 Followers I. Early (1987+), long term involvements, either professional (permanent positions, like administrative workers), or intense volunteering.	Only heterosexuals involved professionally, volunteers and management positions go to both heterosexuals and homosexuals. Some were HIV+ before getting involved, but many refuse to reveal their HIV status.	Only class that mixes all sociosexual statuses (50% het. women, 28% hom. men, 15% het. men, 2% hom. women) and ages (40% > 45 yo, m: 19).
4	45 Second generation – heterosexuals I. Volunteers all entered from 1989 and left after 2 to 8 years in Aides, mostly keeping contacts inside the organisation.	Long-term stable heterosexual and HIV- activists.	82% women (m: 40). 29% married (m: 11) and 13% divorced (m: 7). 55% >55 yo when engaging (m: 38) High affective proximity to AIDS.

Cl. n	Longitudinal profile of career in Aides	Multiple-career dynamics and subsequences	Other specific features**
5	84 Second generation – professionals I. Volunteers have often been managers in Aides and then returned to volunteering.	Homosexuals with largely uncertain coming out, either really uncertain themselves or refusing to admit in the questionnaire.	Highest proportion of missing values: least robust of all 10 classes.
6	53 Followers II. Strong commitment and rapidly evolving statuses in Aides, with management (45%), and/or full-time paid (21%) positions.	Some are HIV+ activists, all of whom were + before committing in Aides, sometimes long ago.	High status in Aides: MV due to disinterest or refusal of questionnaire. 25% HIV+. 72% <35 yo (m: 46).
7	18 Followers III. Late (1992+), active involvement, mostly as managers, still in Aides as of 1999.	Engagement following the progressive, sometimes slow, revelation of their orientation and HIV- status. Members successively hold volunteer, full-time and managing positions. They sometimes leave but maintain contact. All homosexual men simultaneously leading coming out process, revealing their HIV+ status and engaging in Aides.	Intermediate age (25–35 yo). High proximity to AIDS.
8	98 Second generation – professionals II. Homogeneous 1993–1997 engagements cohort. Half of members directly held permanent-managers positions and left shortly after.	Long term stable heterosexual and HIV- activists.	Mix of male and female. 26% married (m: 11). 32% >55 yo (m: 19).

Cl.	n	Longitudinal profile of career in Aides	Multiple-career dynamics and subsequences	Other specific features**
9	42	Second generation – heterosexuals II. Late (1994+) volunteering with low-level engagement.	Long stable heterosexual and HIV- period before engagement in Aides.	Young heterosexual women. Low effective and affective proximity to AIDS.
10	78	Future core activists. Late (1994+) untruncated (still in Aides in 1999) volunteering with low-level engagement.	Engagement often embedded in slow and unachieved homosexual coming out, with stable HIV- status.	83% < 35 yo (m: 46). 80% hold only a volunteer position.

*Clusters are ordered according to their median year of entry in Aides (see Figure 4.2).

** Specific features have to be significantly higher or lower than the mean (m) of the sample of 502 activists.

*** Evolving features (SES, age, education, proximity to Aides), when mentioned, are measured at the moment of involvement in Aides.

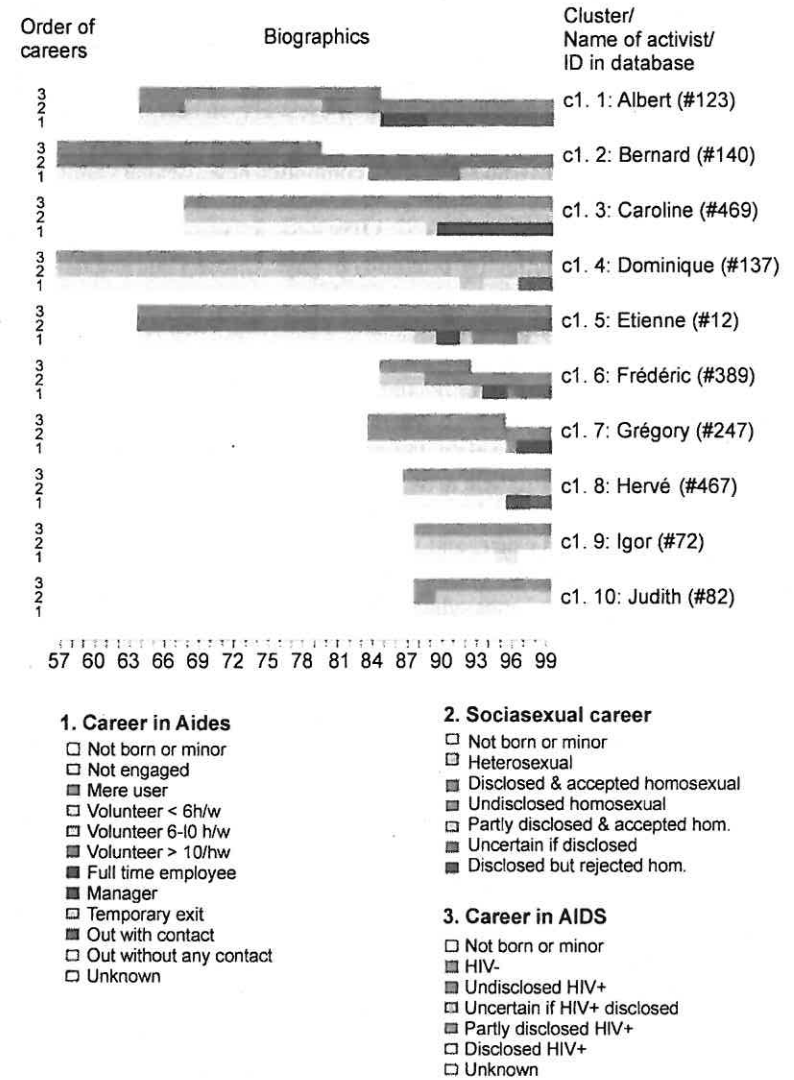


Figure 4.2: Prototypical activists by cluster

Each prototypical activist is a real member of a cluster chosen for its similarity with the general description of the cluster, according to the nature, length and order of states in the biographies. Names are fabricated.

A first result is that our clusters go beyond the usual sociographic divides. By comparing activists according to their concrete, successive steps in three combined careers, sequence analysis unearths some shared biographical features that overcome strong sociosexual cleavages.

Although a coherent sociosexual group, homosexual men bear a high effective proximity to illness and mix AIDS activism with identity issues. They mingle within cluster one and three, with some early committed heterosexual women, and within cluster two, five, six and ten, with some homosexual women (see Table 4.1). In cluster one, high affective proximity to AIDS among heterosexuals works as a structural equivalent to the effective proximity of gays. Clusters one and three also include some lesser disclosed gays who use Aides as a way to act with other gays on gay issues, without professing this stigmatised activism. Their less distinctively male and homosexual profiles allow some closeness with heterosexual, female activists. Cluster two, six and ten, by contrast, include another category of gays who combine this struggle with an offensive claim of their homosexual identity. These profiles will logically mingle with female homosexuals.

Regarding heterosexual female activists, previous research usually states that they massively became involved in the 1990s, when AIDS activism became a more common, normalised cause, and that they did so in a logic of care. Indeed, this specific profile dominates clusters eight and nine, with later, less intense commitments, carried by persons whose education and SES would neatly differ from the average in Aides. But clusters three and four also include some earlier heterosexual female commitments, based on a feeling of affective closeness to AIDS, and sometimes to the homosexual cause itself at the same time. Some women would also join Aides for professional reasons, more than for volunteering purposes, and get a steady work contract in the organisation (clusters three and eight), mingling with men and homosexuals holding managing positions.

A second result is the *generation units* (Mannheim [1928] 1952: 291) that emerge from OMA within the generation of AIDS activists, and more particularly within Aides. Usually, these units would simply be created from a cohortal perspective, that is, from the year activists enter the organisation. (Whittier 1997: 762) In our case, the distribution of clusters, strictly elaborated according to similarities in individual biographical dynamics, happens to follow a clear succession in time (Figure 4.4 in Appendix). Moreover, the clusters are concentrated in time. Although successive clusters, most of the time intersect with their neighbours (by 1999, none of the groups, including the two whose entry years stop the earliest – clusters one and four, had completely left the organisation), we demonstrate here that people with various biographical profiles engaged at different periods of the development of Aides.

The distribution of entry years of clusters helps assess the impact of each of them on the dramatic changes that impinged on Aides, especially on its internal modes of organisation, its strategic and tactical choices and the formation and transformation of its collective identity. We interpret the organisational role of the clusters in a triple context: the epidemic's evolution, the pace of state intervention

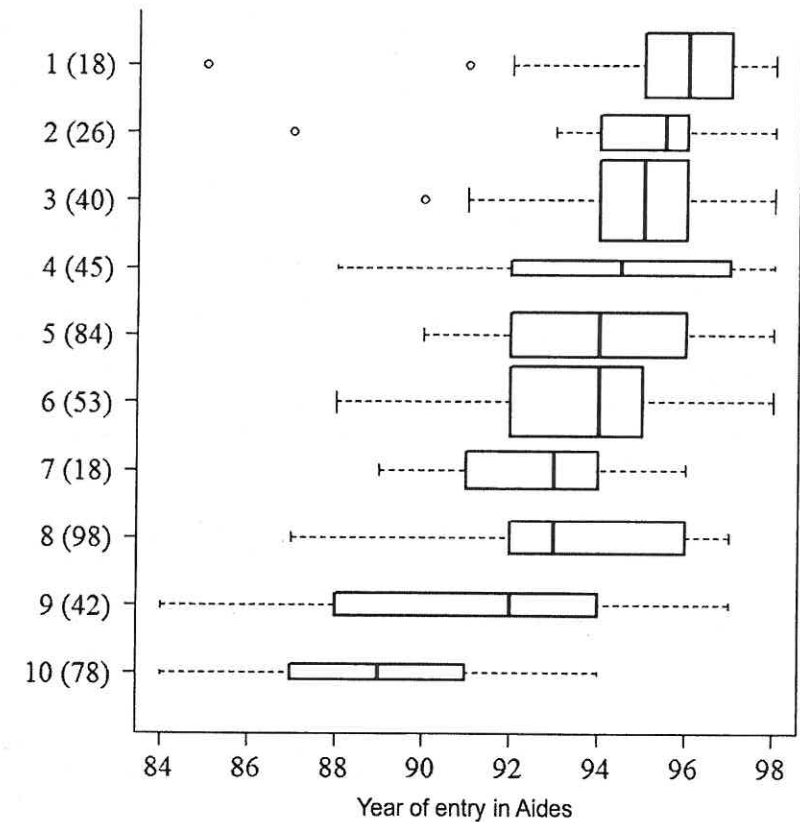


Figure 4.3: A generational perspective on biographical profiles

Boxplot of distribution of year of arrival in Aides by cluster, with size of cluster between parentheses. The median is represented by a bold dash, 50 per cent of members are inside the box, 25 per cent on the left and right of the box, circles represent outliers (>1.5 sd).

and the creation of a multi-organisational field.¹⁷

Clusters one and two group the pioneers of AIDS activism, those who created the association in 1984 and who developed recruitment and training procedures in 1985–1986, when the epidemic appeared in full light, the virus being better known and identified by tests. Their period of volunteering is long and intense and goes with diverse other political involvements. As a result, even the ones who left

17. See Rosenbrock *et al.* (2000); Pinell *et al.* (2002); and Epstein (1996) and Gould (2009) on the USA.

maintained contacts within. Since at the beginning of the fight, recruitment worked on cooptation and mutual acquaintances (Pinell *et al.* 2002), clusters one and two share a very strong social and ideological identity: they are mainly composed of gay males, in their thirties, belonging to the upper middle class. One should also note that half the members are PLWA, and were HIV positive before joining the association.

Yet, these two clusters differ in several ways. Cluster one groups the 'founding fathers' of the movement who joined before 1993, while people in cluster two joined a little later. The high exit rate in cluster one, sometimes after just one or two years, reveals two kinds of disengaging processes: either a dense, costly involvement led them to burn out or they gave up because of the direct effects of the disease itself. Members of cluster two are far more reticent than those in cluster one to answer questions about their sociosexual preferences and their serological status.¹⁸ These differences, combined with the analysis of some open-ended questions in the survey about the reasons for joining and for exiting, as well as about the main objectives the association should pursue, indicate that clusters one and two materialise a cleavage that will be at the heart of internal conflicts in the following years, between a self-help logic, which implies a strong gay and PLWA identity and a generalist model that negates the homosexual and PLWA identity of the constituency.

A prototypical activist for cluster one is Albert. He progressively revealed his sexual orientation to his relatives at the age of twenty and made it fully public by age thirty-one. His involvement in Aides began at age thirty-six, in 1985. His primary motive was 'to appeal against an anti-AIDS policy that was ill-driven' (open question). At the time, he had a University degree and has since held a managing position at work for twelve years. The same year that he began working at Aides, he learned he was HIV+. This turning point was crucial: he simultaneously became a manager in Aides and revealed his illness to all of his relatives. The stigma of being involved in Aides was doubled by his own seropositivity. Albert fully devoted himself to the organisation and contributed to its development (open question). He completely disengaged after five years, when he joined another organisation. Albert nonetheless kept contacts within Aides.

Bernard is a prototypical activist in cluster two. He got involved right at the birth of Aides in 1984, 'because [his] lover had died from AIDS'. He gave more than ten hours per week to the organisation. He downgraded to less than six hours from 1994 on, but did not leave. As Albert, he was older than many other members (forty-three) at the time he got involved. He had a higher education diploma and worked as a manager. Unfortunately, Bernard did not answer any questions about HIV, so we have no information about his career in AIDS. This selective refusal, and the fact that he did not provide any dates for his coming out (although he admitted it was fully completed in 1999), can be explained by the generalist,

18. Sequence analysis proves all the more efficient by grouping these partially incomplete respondents instead of dropping them and missing a crucial point of our historical puzzle.

universalist activism he professes. He does not feel the need to tell about himself when reporting about his activism. He left Aides because it was 'not active publicly and would not deliver enough public communication'.

The divide between self-help/communitarian and generalist/universalist engagements can be detected in clusters five, six and seven. Members of cluster five show a great reluctance to reveal their sexual orientation and their serological status, reflecting the generalist ideology. People in cluster six and seven, on the contrary, defend a strong homosexual identity and are also in favor of a self-help model of the fight against AIDS.

Clusters five, six and seven form the association's backbone. The enduring cumulative commitment of individuals in these clusters during the whole period under study, supports the continuity of the movement. Moreover, they occupy the leading positions, in some ways safeguarding the association's ideological line and collective identity despite the demographic turnover and organisational upheavals. Like in clusters one and two, they declare a strong proximity to the disease, being themselves HIV positive and/or knowing persons who are.

People in clusters six and seven undertake leading organisational careers, entangled with a slow, sometimes uncertain, disclosure of both their homosexuality and their HIV-positive status. Some might use their involvement as a resource to complete their coming out.¹⁹ The arrival of these three clusters in Aides corresponds to several contexts: the rebirth of an activist homosexual movement in France at the end of the 1980s, with new cohorts of activists, more committed to the fight against homophobia and to the defense of their civil rights, pushed by the birth of Act Up Paris in 1989, on the model of Act Up-New York (Broqua 2005; Pinell *et al.* 2002); the appearance of HAART and the decline in the mortality rate and the creation of specialised State agencies. Backed by the progressive depletion of clusters one and two, people in clusters six and seven carry along spectacular strategic and tactical changes in Aides: an increasingly visible participation of Aides in 'parallel causes' (foreigners, prisons, insurance, etc.) and first and foremost in the question of gay and lesbian civil rights (gay marriage) and the tactical rapprochement of Aides and Act Up, with the result of a certain radicalisation in the modes of action employed (joint demonstrations, radicalisation of claims).

Individuals in cluster ten shares the same structural attributes, except for the fact that, having joined Aides only recently, they do not occupy leading positions. However, one can assume that it is through this cluster that continuity of the SMO will be secured.

19. The high proportion of activists still in Aides in 1999 in cluster seven (89 per cent, mean: 56 per cent) again shows the robustness of SA. By gathering right-censored (unfinished) trajectories in the same cluster SA limits the spread of distortion of interpretation to the whole sample. Cluster seven (like clusters five, eight and ten) has to be read as less robust on this aspect at survey time. Conclusions about the final part of commitment in Aides and about the exit are still tentative. At the same time, dropping these respondents would literally mean censoring our sample and missing some relevant kinds of activist careers.

Daniel (cluster five) was fifty-four when he got involved in 1988. He has 'volunteered his whole life long', he likes 'helping, serving a cause'. A friend he knew for 30 years died in 1986. He had begun disclosing his homosexuality only 3 years earlier and had not completed the process in 1989. He started with three years of limited involvement in Aides. Then he took a year off and retired professionally. His educational profile is lower education, intermediate SES. He came back in 1992 with a more intense involvement, as a manager for two years, and three more as a volunteer. Daniel's trajectory illustrates the ties between sociosexual identity, biographical availability and activism.

Eric (cluster six) was thirty-two when he got involved in 1995. His case clearly demonstrates the link between the three careers. At twenty-five, all his relatives knew about his homosexuality, but most of them rejected him for that. Two years later, he tested HIV+, and soon revealed this to his relatives. He gives no less than four reasons for joining, which might explain his intense commitment: his boyfriend died three years before, he was ill himself and wanted to help before it was too late, Aides had an office close to his place and, he regretted not having used condoms to protect himself before. But, as Eric was a full time paid employee in Aides, we should not neglect, in this case, financial aspects.

Clusters three, four, eight and nine group activists who, although more numerous than in clusters one, two, five, six and seven, contribute less to organisational change. They compose a second, quite distinct wave of members, more diverse and with shorter involvements in Aides.

People in clusters three and four joined the association during the first half of the 1990s, when AIDS lost its specificity and was institutionalised. The discovery of HAART in 1996–1997 increased life expectancy of People Living With AIDS (PLWA), who refocused their attention on more day-to-day concerns. At the same time, HAART gradually shifted the image of AIDS from that of a fatal illness to that of a chronic disease, resulting in a certain social and political demobilisation and a normalisation of the cause. Clusters three and eight illustrate the professionalisation of Aides: part of their members took up paid positions for professional and/or political reasons more than in the name of a communitarian or self-help orientation. They soon clashed with the volunteers about the division of labor (and power). Other inner conflicts, between PLWA and HIV negative volunteers and between heterosexuals and homosexuals, also explain why cluster four nearly disappeared by 1998.

Clusters four and nine show the diversification of demographic profiles. Emerging after 1990, these individuals are almost exclusively composed of HIV-negative heterosexual women. Heterosexual women generally participate in a spirit of solidarity, motivated by their professional involvement in the (traditionally female) field of health and social services. They also belong to an older generation than clusters one and two. Besides, if people in cluster four still declare a strong proximity to the disease, it is experienced more through loose networks of acquaintances and professional contacts than through intimate relationships with partners or relatives. As a result, the levels of commitment are low (seldom more than six hours per week devoted to voluntary work) and drop outs quick, after two or three years (Maslanka 1996; Claxton, Catalan, and Burgess 1998; Miller 2000).

Dominique (cluster four) became involved in 1992 at the age of fifty-two, in a wish to 'give (her) anger against the affair of infected blood (non sterilised blood transfused to ill persons in hospitals in the early 1980s) a positive output'. As a volunteer she took part for two years with intermediate intensity (six to ten h./w.) then three years at a lower level (<six h./w.). Then she left, but kept contacts. She was a self-employed worker at the time of her entry and retired the same year she left Aides. This coincidence between political and professional turning points illustrates a propensity, higher in this cluster than in others, to get involved in activism according to one's family and work availability or opportunities. In her case, she was in charge of emotionally and materially supporting PLWA. She resigned with a feeling of 'shame of surviving in good health' and at the same time, chose to invest herself in a 'less desperate cause'.

Flore (cluster nine) entered Aides at age twenty-two. She had undertaken long studies at that time. She claims she wanted to be useful and express her solidarity with the victims of the epidemic. She left at twenty-six, because of lack of time, without keeping any contacts inside the organisation. Her biographical availability diminished because of several competing involvements.

Conclusions

Our analysis of clusters based on SA and OMA brings out a fairly clear picture of internal dynamics in terms of continuity and change, in conjunction with the changing context of the fight against the epidemic over time. More precisely, by focussing on the internal heterogeneity of the movement's constituencies, it contributes to the debate on the role of internal processes in the transformation of social movements at three levels. By taking into account the multisituated and process characters of structural attributes, we propose a theoretical specification of what is heterogeneity within movements. By applying SA and OMA to a questionnaire sent to former and current volunteers, we offer a new way of empirically identifying such heterogeneity and analysing its effects. And finally by exemplifying the importance of generation units to change as well as to continuity in Aides, we contribute to the vivid debate about the conditions for change and stability among SMOs.

Looking at the internal heterogeneity of the constituency of Aides usefully complements what the literature has already established about the evolution of AIDS movements (Pinell *et al.* 2002; Broqua 2005; Fillieule and Broqua 2005; Gould 2009). The increasing number of HIV-negative and heterosexual women strongly contributed to the emergence of a series of internal identity cleavages between 'treatment activists' and 'social activists' (Crimp 1992) and between HIV-negative and HIV-positive volunteers. This was due to the relative 'despecification' of the cause, which was related to the growing concern for issues like unequal access to health care for marginalised populations (immigrants, prisoners, etc) and the struggle for gay rights. In this changed internal context, different ideas about how to fight AIDS turned into acrimonious conflicts about what the group should be fighting for and about tactical and strategic choices.

Generation units enable us to grasp the factors associated with strategic and tactical changes. Belonging to specific clusters largely conditions the overall manner in which volunteers conceive of the fight against AIDS, as well as which activities are urgent or which positions are useful for their association. As a result, the growth of certain generation units has the effect of favouring changes in political orientation. Thus, for example, the rapprochement of Aides and Act Up, as well as a progressive involvement in questions of gay rights and marriage are, no doubt, related to the rise in power of cluster three within the association, in the context of a certain rebirth of the homosexual movement and, more generally, of social mobilisation around all forms of exclusion. (Fillieule and Duyvendak 1999)

However, despite the powerful centrifugal forces that could have provoked the decline and disappearance of the group, like in so many other cases (see Gould 2009 on Act Up chapters in the US), Aides did continue to develop and it still remains the biggest voluntary group fighting AIDS in France. Our analysis suggests three main explanations for that success.

First, despite the generalisation and extension of the cause from the early 1990s and the arrival of many newcomers, whose properties and collective identities were very specific, the founding group managed to maintain its grip on the association and to transmit its values and identity to new cohorts of volunteers who shared a certain structural proximity with them and were ready to take responsibilities in the association (clusters five, six, seven and ten). The maintenance of such continuity or, to put it another way, the avoidance of a generational gap, is remarkable if one considers the growing recruitments during the period and how dramatically the field of the struggle against AIDS has changed in fifteen years.²⁰

Second, the expanding use of paid staff has had an effect on the maintenance of a collective identity and ideological coherence in a context of increasing numbers of new members and a correlative higher turnover. Indeed, the consolidation and professionalisation of the management of Aides in the mid 1990s generated multiple tensions around two main issues: the massive hiring of new employees, coming partly from the volunteer population, raised questions about the division of labour between professionals and volunteers and an increasingly bitter tension between volunteers and users emerged, generating feelings of non recognition, frustration, resentment and anger. However, and despite these tensions, the paid staff maintained the ideals and goals of the movement during times of expanding political opportunity and increasing volunteer activism. This is mainly due to the fact that, in the particular field of the fight against AIDS in which staffers sometimes make activism a career especially when job opportunities shrink dramatically due to the illness, paid activists do not necessarily differ from volunteers in their commitment to the cause (see also Oliver 1993) and can even be more radical and committed than the volunteers (see also Jenkins 1977). This remark is theoretically

important since the literature usually insists on the positive role of paid staff only in contexts of shrinking political opportunities and decreasing activism (Rupp and Taylor 1997, and Staggenborg 1988 for an exception). Actually, our case study shows that paid staff may facilitate activism and help maintain cohesiveness during both movement doldrum and development.

This leads us to stress the importance of a series of organisational mechanisms and rules that can help the older generation maintain incumbents in positions of power, reducing the capacity of the organisation for change (Gusfield 1957; Morris 1984; Staggenborg 1988, Oliver 1993; Whittier 1997). Indeed, as early as 1986–1987, Aides established very formal and demanding rules of recruitment and training for new volunteers and different kinds of barriers for access to responsibilities within the association. These mechanisms have constituted strong means of influence on volunteers' integration and ideological formation. As a matter of fact, what Gerth and Wright Mills (1954) call the 'selection of persons' stresses how groups encourage or discourage individual commitment by means of a collection of tools for selection that comprise so many barriers to entrance into the group, or filters orienting the newcomers towards the exit or towards particular roles and tasks, rather than others. However, such mechanisms proved to be insufficient in the case of Aides, in a context of high turn-over and dramatically increasing heterogeneity. Here lies one of the reasons for the progressive broadening and diversification of activities and their more or less autonomous and segmented functioning as a way to meet internal conflicts through relative separation (see Gusfield 1957 for a similar remark in another context). If volunteers favouring a self-help logic focus on recreational activities and respond to the hotline, health professionals and heterosexual women can focus mainly on direct care to the sick, at home or in hospital. Finally, the creation of targeted prevention activities also allows volunteers to click along affinity lines (e.g. prevention in groups with male prostitutes or prevention on gay cruising areas).

To conclude, one should note that in studying the role of internal processes in the transformation of social movements, we have suggested that the coexistence and succession of generation units must not only be thought of in terms of internal conflict and dysfunction or, if one prefers, generational rupture. The question may also be looked at from the opposite perspective. To what degree does the heterogeneity resulting from the diversity of generation units contribute to foster organisational continuity? The maintenance and constant adaptation of a formal organisation, as well as that of a collective identity, occurs in reality through continuous rearrangements, most effective if spread over time. Here we can only agree with Ghaziani's idea (2008) that internal conflicts may, under certain conditions, contribute to the formation and maintenance of collective identities.

20. Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to measure the effects of the introduction of HAART, which considerably modified the public image of the epidemic and certainly resulted in social and political demobilisation.

Appendix

Figure 4.4: Example of separate graphs of the three careers (cluster 9, n = 45) Individual career in Aides (1), sociosexual career (2) and career in AIDS (3), from 1957 to 1999. The order differs between the 3 careers.

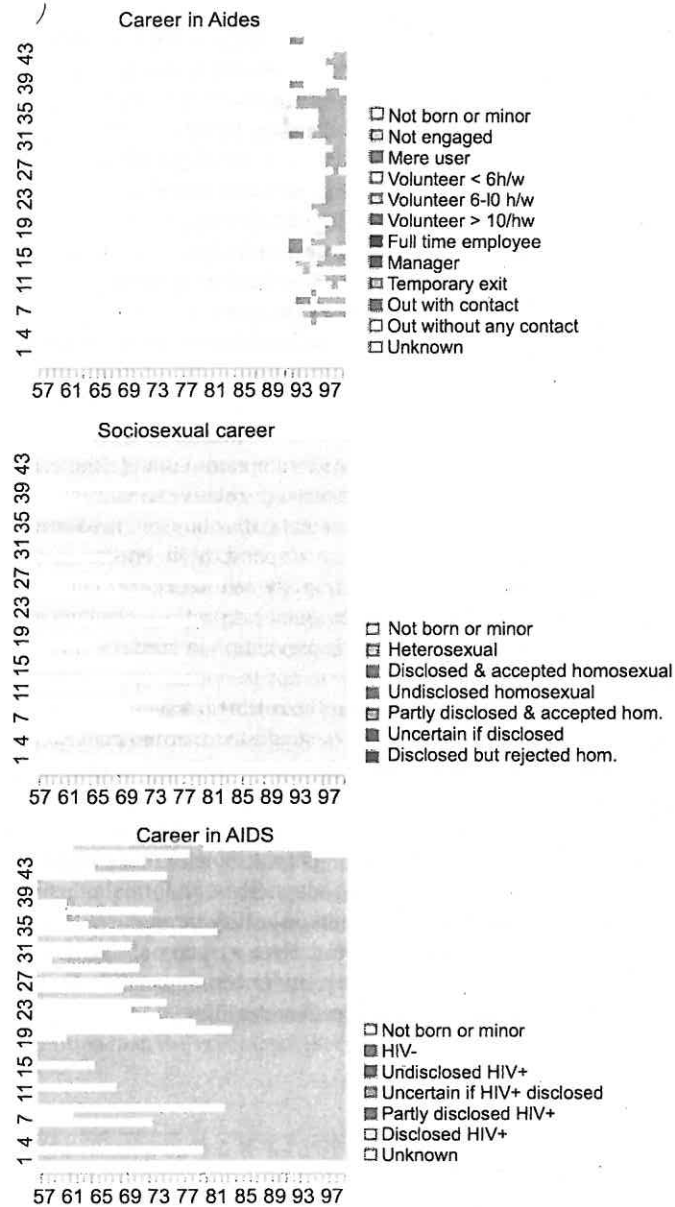
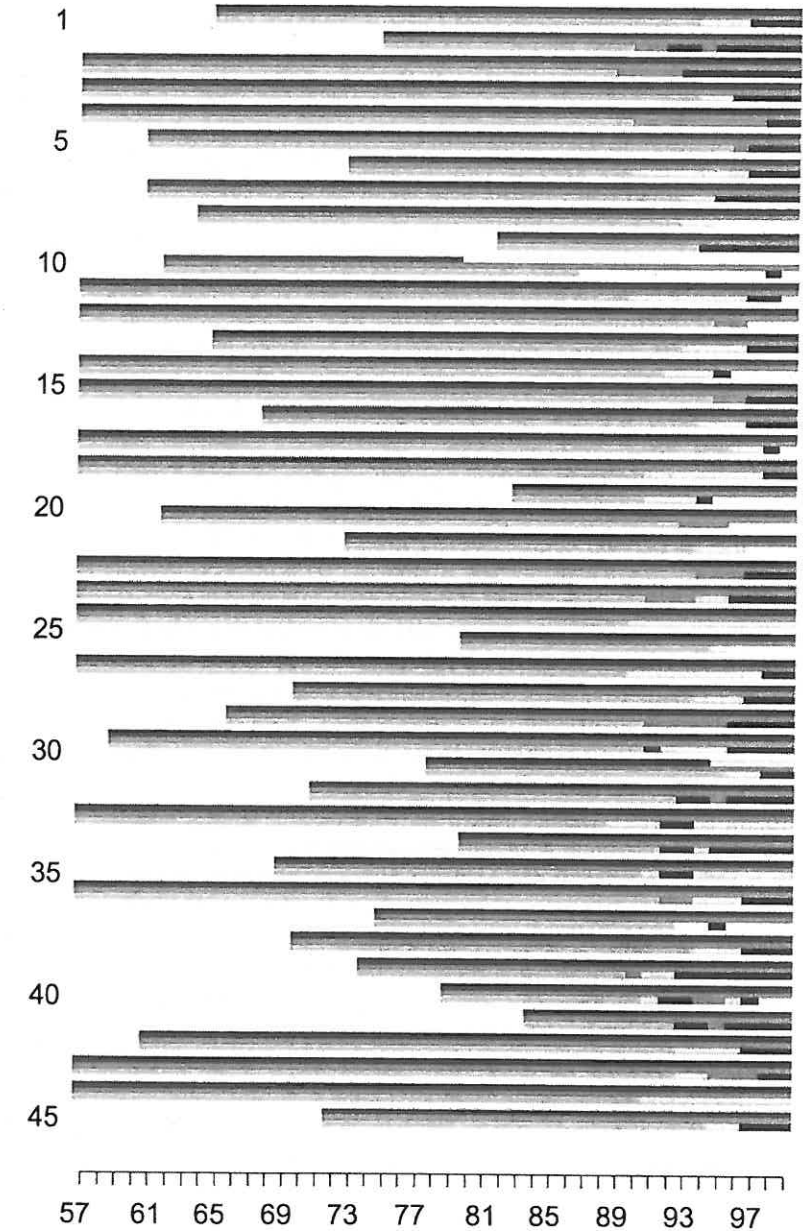


Figure 4.5: Example of biographies (cluster 9, n = 45) Combined individual careers in Aides, sociosexual career and career in AIDS (cf. legends on Figure 4.4)



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