

PHD RESEARCH

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Orchestrating Solidarity. Third World Agency, Transnational Networks & the Belgian Mobilization for Vietnam & Latin America, 1960s-1980s

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The period of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s witnessed the rise of a plethora of social movements that claimed common cause with political movements in the Third World and gave shape to solidarity between the First and Third World. The issue of the Vietnam War and the Chilean coup of 1973, for instance, mobilized hundreds of thousands of people into action in their societies. Traditionally, accounts have usually analysed this activism by looking into the minds of the Western activists and the societies in which they lived, without giving much, not to say any attention, to their interaction with Third World actors and their input. Using a large number of so far neglected sources, this study has however made explicit the role of Third World political movements in the development of the campaigns which emerged in support of them in Western European societies, and, more specifically, in Belgium. Analyzing four *causes célèbres* of Third World solidarity activism (Vietnam, Brazil, Chile and Nicaragua) and adopting a transnational perspective which draws on an original cross-fertilisation of the literature on transnational social movements, as well as research on Third World diplomacy, this doctoral dissertation argues that Third World political movements played an active part in the emergence, functioning and transnational identity of these solidarity movements. These Third World actors (diplomats and exiles) were not, as proposed by traditional accounts, passive recipients of support but, on the contrary, actively created

networks with overseas groups in Western Europe and established direct connections and relationships in their quest for international support, money and power. These relations are key for understanding the elective affinities of activists, the organizational and ideological configuration of solidarity movements, and transnational exchange across the North-South and East-West boundaries.