

## **HORIZONTALIST YOUTH CAMPS AND THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION: A STORY OF BLOCKED DIFFUSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Between 2001 and 2005, the Intercontinental Youth Camp at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil became associated with a decentralized, horizontalist form of organizing. When the polycentric forum took place in 2006, this horizontalist identity and strategy did not diffuse successfully to the new site in Caracas, Venezuela. This article argues that for diffusion to be successful, the local hosts must be able to deliberate on the locally new idea, see themselves as similar to the earlier users, and have the opportunity to adapt the tactic to the local context. Analysing interviews with participants, and activist writing, I argue that the relational context of Caracas, Venezuela, along with recent events in that city, made such processes impossible. In particular, the deliberation essential for diffusion was blocked by the centralization and polarization of the political field, the formalization of the potential adopters, and the temporal proximity of a similar event, the World Festival of Youth and Students.*