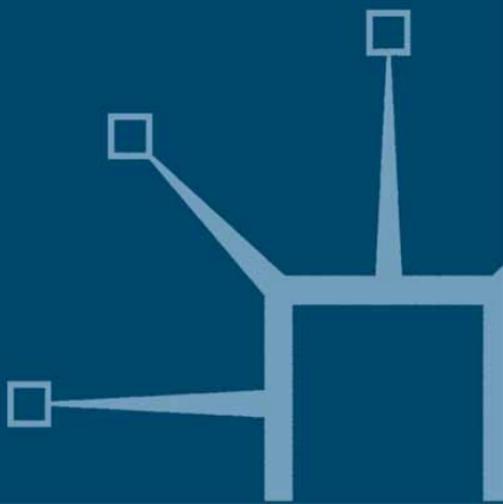


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Global Civil Society and Its Limits

Edited by
Gordon Laxer and Sandra Halperin



Global Civil Society and Its Limits

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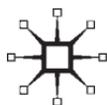
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List of Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABF	Workers' Educational Association – Sweden
ACN	Action Canada Network
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum
ART-US	Alliance for Responsible Trade – US
ASV	Absolute Surplus Value
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CFO	Comité Frontizero de Obreros – Mexico
CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail – France
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency – US
CJM	Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras
CNDH	National Human Rights Commission – Mexico
COC	Council of Canadians
COCOPA	Comision de Concordia y Pacificacion
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CUSFTA	Canada–US Free Trade Agreement
CUT	United Workers Confederation – Brazil
DE	Discourse Ethics
EU	European Union
EZLN	Zapatista Army of National Liberation
FAT	Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (Authentic Labour Front) – Mexico
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation – US
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCS	Global Civil Society
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSA	Hemispheric Social Alliance – Western Hemisphere
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
IFG	International Forum on Globalization

ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno – The Philippines
LO	Confederation of Labour – Sweden
LSE	London School of Economics
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NAALC	North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status of Women – Canada
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party – Canada
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLG	Neo-Liberal Globalism
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORIT	Organizacion Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores – Western Hemisphere
PCN	Pro-Canada Network
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática – Mexico
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional – Mexico
R&D	Research & Development
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RMALC	Mexican Action Network on Free Trade
RQIC	Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale
RSV	Relative Surplus Value
SAP	Sweden's Social Democratic Party
SEATINI	Southern & Eastern African Trade, Information & Negotiations Initiative – Zimbabwe
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network
TINA	'There-is-No-Alternative'
TNC	Transnational Corporation
TSM	Transnational Social Movement
TWN	Third World Network
UE	United Electrical Workers of America
UN	United Nations
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

This book is dedicated to all those who resist capitalism's relentless attempts to turn nature into resources, people into labour and public services into profit-making enterprises

1

Effective Resistance to Corporate Globalization

Sandra Halperin and Gordon Laxer

Introduction

Growing concerns about the lack of real democracy, increasing inequalities, re-colonization and ecological crises associated with what is called 'globalization' have focused attention on alternatives. Are forces of resistance to globalization emerging that are capable either of reversing it, or shaping it in less destructive ways?

A large body of literature has developed around these questions and, while there are differences regarding many issues, there is wide agreement that globalization implies the weakening of state sovereignty, state structures and national identities and commitments (e.g., Beck 2000: 86). It is asserted that states no longer have sufficient power to regulate economic affairs and that, regardless of whether a government is Right or Left, it supports the corporate agenda anyway. Based on these notions, many analysts and activists argue that resistance to global capital depends on strengthening 'global civil society' and global citizenship (Held 1992; Falk 1993; Henderson 1999). With the growth of transnational connections and associations among those opposing globalization, many are convinced that a global civil society is emerging or has already emerged, as the primary site of resistance to rule by multinational corporations and globalized finance capital.

Against this view, we argue that:

1. The extent of globalization and the constraints it imposes on state policy has been hugely exaggerated. States, especially in the North, continue to possess the ability to effectively regulate the economy and there are no structures above countries, in which mass political participation and genuine influence can be felt;

2. The assumptions that global free-market capitalism has undermined the ability of the state to act as a regulatory agent and that the state has lost so much sovereignty that democracy at that level matters less and less, are part of a broad ideological campaign we call 'globalism'. By deflecting political energies from national arenas, it works to facilitate the further globalization of capital;
3. The notion that multinational corporations and globalized finance capital can be opposed most effectively only in the global arena is witness to the power of the globalism ideology. By accepting this idea, many who oppose corporate globalization inadvertently help to promote it.

We are sceptical that globalization is as extensive and irreversible as claimed. However, we recognize that transnational capital has undermined nationally embedded capitalism and democratically elected national governments, especially in weaker countries. The question of how corporate globalization can be effectively resisted is critical, therefore. Our question is this: where should resistance be focused? We argue that effective resistance requires not primarily a global challenge from below but multi-scale oppositions that focus particularly on reinvigorated national challenges at the level of the state and the citizen-people. While transnational and inter-national solidarities and coordination are crucial to an effective struggle, the mobilizations, mass participation, the focus, and the framing of issues must be primarily national and local.

In this chapter we challenge the assertion that global capital can be strongly opposed by an emergent global civil society. We first make a crucial distinction between globalization and globalism. Second, we challenge the idea that a global civil society either exists or is emerging as a site of resistance to global capital. Third, we challenge the notion of global civil society on normative and strategic grounds. Fourth, we argue that efforts to reduce the power of global capital must focus – not exclusively, but first and foremost – on political engagement within countries where laws are made and implemented and mass mobilizations occur. Finally, we outline how the rest of this volume supports, takes issue with, and extends these arguments.

1. Globalism and the Washington Consensus

In reaction to radical nationalisms and pressures for extended democracy, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg conferences, the Club of

Rome, and the OECD developed and promoted a neoliberal ideology in the 1970s that later came to be called *globalization* (Cox 1987: 259, 282–3, 289). These ideas were disseminated by the international media, business strategists, and academics, and through policies and practices of international financial organizations and the richest states.¹ By 1990, hundreds of articles with the word ‘global’ or ‘globalization’ in the title were being published in prominent business and economics journals. Neoliberals argue that to have effective global regulation, states must hand over substantial decision-making authority to non-state actors who have better information, knowledge, and understanding than they. *Nationally*, multinational corporations proposed new forms of business self-regulation as an alternative to state legislation (Scheuerman 1999). *Internationally*, corporate capital sought to use organizations like the WTO to subordinate national legislative and judicial systems to new international protocols. The ideology of ‘globalism’ facilitates all these efforts.

The word ‘globalization’ has been used in so many ways that it has almost lost meaning. But as Ulrich Beck argues, ‘globalization – however the word is understood – implies the weakening of state sovereignty and state structures’ (Beck 2000: 86). By ‘globalism’ or the ‘Washington Consensus’ we mean an overarching ideology of governance that combines neo-liberalism with an insistence and faith that global integration is inevitable and good. Globalism wears a variety of guises that includes Structural Adjustment Programmes, ‘Shock Therapy’, the Wall Street-Treasury Complex, Liberal Productivism, and the New World Order. Whatever the term, the prescription includes dismantling national sovereignty over foreign ownership, investment and exchange; privatizing public enterprises and deregulating businesses; reducing public spending and corporate taxes, and balancing budgets. It is the American model and infuses international agreements such as the WTO, NAFTA, the failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), and the draft of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).²

Globalism looks different from the vantage point of Northern core countries than from Southern and intermediate ones. Critics from the North tend to interpret globalism as capitalism going global and its antidote as global civil society. In the majority world, in contrast, globalism is widely seen amongst critics as ‘re-colonization’.³ The solution to imperialism is ‘sovereignty’, not global civil society. These opposing views lie at the roots of differing alternatives to corporate globalization explored in this book.

At the core of globalism is the insistence that changes in the world economy are driven not by states and multinationals but by global

forces – by competition and a new international division of labour arising from capital's expansion and changing conditions for its valorization and accumulation (Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1980; Lipietz 1985; Amsden 1990). These changes, it is asserted, undermine borders and the state because they limit the political sovereignty necessary for economic regulation. States must defer to the profit expectations of international business. If states pursue growth and social investment policies that reduce profit incentives for international businesses, business will relocate elsewhere. This will threaten the prospects for growth, social welfare and cohesion in the long term. The fact that governments of different ideological stripes in Britain (Thatcher, Blair) and the US (Reagan, Clinton) follow the same broad policy lines suggests that international rather than domestic forces are at work.

Lawrence Summers (1996), formerly Clinton's Treasury Secretary and now President of Harvard University,⁴ sees 'Critics of the Bretton Woods Washington Consensus' as forming 'a wide and growing school of what might be called separatists ... Separatists argue that economic integration is not good for people, economically.' These, according to Summers, are America's main opponents. He counters them by asking 'if we can afford *not* to engage in the defense of our interests by promoting prosperity and integration around the world'. He contends, moreover, that 'Our ideology, capitalism, is in ascendance' everywhere. 'Globalist economic policy,' he asserts, 'is the forward defense of America's deepest security interest.'

While academic champions of liberal internationalism and cosmopolitanism, and proponents of Left, globalization-from-below perspectives disagree with the globalism paradigm, they often share its assumptions about the demise of nations, states and nationalisms. Ulrich Beck, like Summers, applauds the power of capitalism to dismantle borders: 'The cosmopolitan gaze opens wide', he writes, 'empowered by capitalism undermining national borders, excited by the global audience of transnational social movements and guided and encouraged by the evidence of world-wide communication' (Beck 2000: 79). Beck argues that national identities are being replaced by global civil society, that traditional politics centred around national political parties and state policies are giving way to transnational identities and movements and that we are entering a second age of modernity, exemplified by 'time-space' compression which is indifferent to national boundaries.

Coming from the left, Richard Falk sees capitalism as opposed to the kind of global civil society he desires – a grass-roots democracy with a

transnational sense of community, concerned about a sustainable world. In Falk's view, a fault line runs between the 'globalization from above' crowd and the 'globalization from below' of activist citizens. But, as is typical of global civil society advocates, Falk's vision is 'premised on a politics of aspiration and desire', as he put it:

Traditional citizenship operates spatially; global citizenship operates temporally, reaching out to a future to-be-created, and making a person a 'citizen-pilgrim', that is, someone on a journey to a 'country' to be established in the future in accordance with more idealistic and normatively rich conceptions of political community. (1993: 48)

2. 'Global civil society' as empirical description

Charles Tilly (1984) argued that social movements are not coherent groups of people, but sustained interactions between specific authorities and those challenging their authority. Because the interaction is what is crucial, changes in the locus of power alter the nature of how protest is organized, its forms and the collective identities of the protestors. As power was nationalized in mid-nineteenth-century states in the West, national social movements displaced local ones as the centres of contention. Florence Passy (1999: 152) hypothesizes that a similar shift is occurring today, this time from national to transnational levels. 'The emergence of new political opportunities on the international level brings about a radical change in the nature of protest, which tends to globalize, as well as in the structure of social movement organizations, which become transnational in scope.' How much power has shifted to supranational bodies and whether such shifts have produced as profound changes in the nature of contentious politics from below, as advocates of global civil society contend, is an empirical question.

Discussions of global civil society tend to be excessively abstract; typically, characterizing it as a dizzying array of complex overlapping, interlocking chains of networks or interactions that are located nowhere. Keane (2001: 41), for instance, describes global civil society as resembling

a bazaar, a covered kaleidoscope of differently sized rooms, twisting alleys, steps leading to obscure places, people and goods in motion. It is marked by increasing differentiation, thickening networks of

ever more structures and organizations with different but interdependent *modi operandi*, multiplying encounters among languages and cultures, expanding mobility, growing unpredictability, even (despite growing numbers of full-time moderators and mediators) a certain depersonalisation and abstractness of social relations.

To the extent that the concept is empirically derived, we find that many equate it with either the rapid growth of NGOs or the emergence of transnational social movements.⁵

Yet scholars question the evidence for either. A recent study concluded that the number of registered *international* non-governmental organizations (INGOs) grew far faster between 1874 and 1914 than between 1914 and 1990.⁶ Moreover, the increase in their numbers has not created a global network. Most INGOs are based in the North (Anheier *et al.* 2001: 4). Furthermore, much of the recent growth of NGOs was financed by US and European governments and the World Bank. Far from being sites of opposition to globalism, James Petras (1997) argues, they supported it, advertently or inadvertently. As for transnational social movements, studies have shown that most are either transnational advocacy networks or else nationally rooted movements whose activities are loosely coordinated transnationally.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998a: 219) distinguish between *transnational social movements* (TSMs) and *transnational advocacy networks* (TANs). To exist, a TSM would require regular cross-national interactions, transnational mass mobilizations, shared understandings of the issues, a common public forum of political discourse, and a transnational collective identity based on a commonality of communication, experience and history. Thus, a TSM would have to be built on concrete networks; its key resource would be its capacity for mass mobilizing. *Transnational advocacy networks* (TANS), on the other hand, are not transnational social movements but communicative structures for political exchange; they represent ideas rather than constituencies, and thus are more ephemeral and mobile (1998a: 236, 237, 220; 1998b: 12, 33). They are comprised of a 'set of relevant organizations working internationally with shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information' (1998b: 46). They involve a small number of morally motivated activists, and do not usually engage in mass mobilizations. Their goal is to influence outcomes and change the terms of the debate through information exchange.⁷ Many movements that appear to be transnational are really *nationally rooted and directed movements* that are loosely coordinated transnationally.

The most widely used meanings of nationalism are ethnic and cultural ones;⁸ but in many parts of the world these meanings do not coincide with the contentious interactions of diverse citizens with their own states. In anti-globalism campaigns, the dominant kinds of nationalisms displayed are outward-looking, positive or civic, where attachments and identification are with citizens of diverse backgrounds in one's own political community.⁹ The victory of citizen contentions against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) (see Chapter 9), a critical case for the global civil society thesis, came largely from nationally based, and even nationalist inspired, movements.

In the twentieth century, government leaders and International Relations theorists popularized the equation of 'international' with 'inter-statal'. This was a departure from the meaning of 'nations' as crucial identity and mobilization structures of citizens. It assumed that nations coincided with existing states and that societies were bounded by legal state borders. But societies have never been wholly contained within states. Many states contain several 'nations'. The processes that shape economic and political development, social movements, ideology, culture and war, transect national boundaries. They can be fully understood only within the context of an interdependent social totality that encompasses international, national and local relations.

Because the term 'international' was altered to mean bi- or multi-national forces and institutions, many contemporary theorists use the term 'transnational' to refer to citizens' beyond-the-nation ties.¹⁰ But substituting 'transnational' for 'international' changes the meaning of beyond-the-nation ties in problematic ways. When we apply the prefixes 'trans' and 'inter' to nation, we get different meanings. Transnational has the connotation of being 'across' or 'beyond' the national, but also 'surpassing' or 'transcending' it. This is different from the meaning of inter-(national) as 'between', 'forming alliances with', 'mutual or reciprocal action or relations'.¹¹

In their later writings, Marx and Engels understood internationalism as the inter-nation class solidarities of workers, based upon distinctly national organizations. They insisted that workers delegations from oppressed nations be recognized on an equal footing with those of conquering nations (Benner 1995: 200–2). This internationalism-from-below was, ideally at least, supposed to be built into the First and Second Socialist Internationals.

Keeping these distinctions in mind, the following is our view of national movements. *National movements* involve struggles that contend largely against national power structures, have all or most of

their supporters in one country or nation, and display distinctive cultures of contention. National movement organizations may coordinate their campaigns with other nation-based organizations; but if beyond-the-nation activities are not the main focus of their work, if the framing of issues remains different, if mass mobilizations and organizations remain separate and targets distinct, then the movement is national, rather than transnational. Similarly, movements to re-embed democratic control at national levels, while they may be directed at states which have become to some degree transnationalized, are national movements if their memberships and identities are nationally rooted.¹²

Many movements, of course, are hybrids that combine national and transnational issues, targets, mobilization and organization: when one element is transnational, others may be strictly national (Rucht 1999). National movements may grow into transnational ones; new movements may spring up as hybrids.¹³ For clarity's sake, however, we should keep the concepts distinct. Beyond-the-nation coordination does not, in itself, make a campaign transnational; only regular, frequent, long-time interaction across nations will make it so. Consensus formation across national movements also takes a long time and can be said to be transnational once formulations are put in 'universal' language (Passy 1999: 161). If, on the other hand, the framing of issues remains different, mass mobilizations and organization stay separate, and targets distinct, we are dealing with national, not transnational, movements. The coordination of national movements in these conditions is best thought of as 'internationalism from below' rather than transnationalism.

The anti-apartheid movement, Greenpeace, and Amnesty International are seen as exemplars of transnational social movements. Yet when Christian Lahusen compared the three, he concluded that 'Social movement action above the level of the nation-state is still organised and coordinated to a greater degree between national entities than across them and is therefore rather international than transnational in character' (1999: 190).

If transnational contentious politics is emerging, one would expect the European Union to lead the way. But, while Imig and Tarrow (1999: 131, 124) found that a growing number of protests were European in character, they constituted an 'extremely small share of the total amount' – 4.1 per cent between 1983 and 1995. They conclude that: 'To date ... the preponderance of contentious events in Europe appears to continue to reside where they have been for the last

two hundred years – in the nation state even when the impetus for making claims lies in Brussels or further afield.’

In sum, the term ‘global civil society’ does not describe an empirical reality. Thus, on empirical grounds, it is not clear why we should seek democratic participation globally when democratic structures, that have the potential to transform corporate oriented states into citizen oriented states, already exist in most countries. Is it feasible or desirable to create democratic, participative structures across national boundaries? The next section takes up this question.

3. ‘Global civil society’ as normative prescription and strategic necessity

Like globalization, global civil society is mainly a normative and ‘strategic concept’, not an accomplished reality. But is it a good one? Many proponents define ‘global civil society’ as intrinsically progressive and democratic.¹⁴

It has been argued that as the economic order now ‘stretches beyond the control of a single state (even of dominant states)’ and of democratic institutions located at the national level, ‘democracy has to become a transnational affair’ (Held 1992: 32–4). Thus, for many, the goal of forging transnational and global ties is to create a more egalitarian and democratic world by developing a global citizenry – an ‘imagined community of mankind’ (Robertson 1990; Shaw 2000). The term ‘civil society’ is used to develop an understanding of how to enhance citizens’ rights and deepen democracy. However, as Lawrence Hamilton shows (Chapter 4), the most influential conceptions of ‘civil society’ make unwarranted and misleading assumptions about causality, freedom, coercion, rights, and solidarity. John Locke’s conception of civil society as a sphere independent of the state was used to justify private property rights (Arthur 1970: 5); and once these were won in the West, the concept fell into disuse. The term was revived in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s in democratic struggles to create a sphere independent of totalitarian states. After communism collapsed, however, it was wielded by advocates of capitalism rather than democracy (Stubbs 1996).

Altering the concept of domestic civil society to become global civil society creates more confusion. If the idea of civil society is about independence from state control, what state or power structure is global civil society supposed to be independent from? There is no global state. Whether global civil society is used to refer either to NGOs,

transnational social movements, or both, its equation with democracy is problematic.

First, it is not clear how NGOs are forces for democratization. They are unelected and accountable only to their funders (Petras and Veltmeyer 2001). Moreover, the organizational base of most international NGOs is heavily concentrated in north-western Europe, especially in Scandinavia, the Benelux countries, Austria, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Sixty per cent of INGO secretariats are based in the European Union and one-third of their membership is in Western Europe. In addition, over half of all parallel summits have been organized in Europe. As for transnational solidarity networks, participants in these, as Josée Johnston (Chapter 5) shows, are divided by radically different life-worlds, sharp economic disparities, and cultural differences. Those with greater power and material advantages have identities and lifestyles that are inextricably intertwined with a system producing cheap consumer items reliant on low wages and environmental degradation. At the same time, they tend to lack reflexivity concerning this and so may, in fact, engage in 'small acts of kindness' as a substitution for more radical redistribution and, thus, unwittingly contribute to perpetuating inequitable power relations. Despite the homogenizing force of global capital (Barber 1995; Ritzer 2000), most people, especially in the majority world, are rooted in place. They have no access to telephones or the Internet and are connected to distant others only through unidirectional corporate media. They are linked through commodity chains within hierarchies of class, gender and race.

Proponents of global civil society are committed to values that go beyond ethnic, religious and national boundaries. But the notion that we are heading, or should head, towards a one-world community cuts across Right/Left boundaries and has deep roots in Western thinking. As Eric Hobsbawm points out:

Virtually all thinkers deriving from the eighteenth century enlightenment took the view that the evolution of human society proceeded from the smaller to the larger scale: from locality to region to state; from kin group to tribe to people – and eventually to a global society, globally organized, with a global culture, a *Weltliteratur*, perhaps even a single global language. (1988: 5)

Today, many intellectuals from all ideological persuasions have joined in viewing nations and states as an intermediate stage in the transition from the local to the global. Carrying on from many of their

nineteenth-century predecessors, they have predicted the end or diminution of nations and national consciousness for well over a century.¹⁵ In its most recent incarnation, the view argues that power is flowing away from nations and states towards the local and the global (Jessop 1994; Brodie 2000). But this view is problematic, not only empirically, as the previous section argued, but also normatively.

By insisting on Western cultural institutions, the pursuit of universal/global rights often threatens national and local spaces and helps place non-capitalist societies on the capitalist grid. Assimilating populations into a nation 'one and indivisible' was central to building capitalist 'nation-states'. Similarly, globalism's goal of eliminating national economic and cultural differences is meant to facilitate the expansion of investment opportunities, markets, utilizable cheap labour, and consumption. We'll return to this point later.

'Global civil society' as a means to resist global capital

Those proponents who argue that global civil society is the key to resisting global capital assume that (1) the globalization of capital and neo-liberalism have brought about the demise of the state's authority. This means that (2) civil action at the national level is no longer effective and, thus, that (3) a global civil society is needed to effectively resist the global rule of capital. These assumptions are based on three fundamental misunderstandings: (1) that globalization is new, that (2) the state has lost control over capital as a result, and that (3) the state cannot be democratized from below.

Many argue that while capital has been 'globalizing' for five centuries, recent technological changes have accelerated it so much that we are in a wholly new 'global age' (e.g. Warkentin and Mingst 2000). Against this, we argue, first, that capitalism 'globalized' from the start.¹⁶ Second, the state has always been 'a fundamental constitutive element in globalizing capital' (Panitch 1996: 109). Third, the struggle for real democracy of citizens over elites is most likely to succeed at the national level in combination with the local (Albo 1994; Bienefeld 1994; Barber 1995; Petras 1997).

In the face of worldwide recessions (1973–5, 1979–82), international oil crises (1973–4, 1979–80), and the rise of the petrodollar market in the 1970s, domestic financial interests in the North entered the political arena in force to press governments to deregulate national financial markets and disempower labour, so that finance capital could be exported to wherever the best conditions for profits existed. This produced the recent internationalization of capital flows we associate

with 'globalization'. However, the bulk of foreign ownership is limited in its reach and mobility and not greater relatively than in the past. It is overwhelmingly concentrated in advanced capitalist countries. The World Bank reports that foreign capital is now 22 per cent of developing countries' GDPs, down from its peak of 32 per cent in 1914 (2002: 42–3).

It has been argued that the emergence of corporate webs of decentralized business units have globalized competition and that these, rather than companies of national origin, increasingly define the terms of national competitiveness. However, in a survey of the world's one hundred largest core companies (measured by total sales), Winfried Ruigrok and Rob van Tulder concluded that none were truly 'global' and that nearly all have a corporate homeland (1995: 168). Similarly, Hirst and Thompson argue that: 'in the aggregate, international companies are still predominantly MNCs and not TNCs' (1996: 95). To the argument that new technologies have propelled the globalization of finance and the firm, David Harvey (1991) notes that, from the 1860s, submarine cables connected inter-continental markets making possible real-time trading and price-making across continents.

The fact that capital and corporations are not restricted to the territory of a single state does not mean that capital is not linked to states. As Leo Panitch explains:

Capitalist globalization...takes place in, through, and under the aegis of states; it is encoded by them and in important respects even authored by them; and it involves a shift in power relations within states that often means the centralization and concentration of state powers as the necessary condition of and accompaniment of global market discipline. (1996: 87)

Ellen Meiksins Wood notes that: 'Behind every transnational corporation is a national base that depends on its local state to sustain its viability and on other states to give it access to other markets and other labor forces' (1998b: 12). States and interstate regimes have always been, and remain today, central to the process of globalizing capital. That is why, throughout the long history of the globalization of capital, the state has been, and remains today, the main locus of political power and, thus, the strategic site of conflicts and compromises with multinational corporations.

It is frequently asserted that large economic actors, international competition, and new technologies are disintegrating borders and

undermining the effectiveness of traditional government instruments. This assertion falsely assumes that states are not driving these changes but only responding to them (see, e.g., Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1980; Lipietz 1985; Amsden 1990). But, clearly, through globalism regimes, states *are* driving globalization by deregulating industry and markets, abandoning exchange controls, privatizing state assets and curtailing welfare functions (see, e.g., Underhill 1991, 1997; Cerny 1993; Helleiner 1994). States, at least the core countries of the North, can, if they choose, regulate capital without harming their prospects for economic growth (Thomas 2000).

There are instances in which power has been, or appears to have been, transferred to supranational bodies such as NAFTA and the European Union, and to international financial institutions including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Such bodies have assumed important powers, some of them constitution-like (Gill 1995b: 412) that crucially affect citizens' lives. And these supranational bodies have become symbols of power. Thus, it is not surprising to see contentious politics directed against them. However, in these institutions, most decisions are still made by states,¹⁷ particularly those with a lot of power.¹⁸ States have decisive power before investment or trade agreements are signed and less afterwards. But countries can and have pulled out of international agreements.

If the state remains the central locus of power and potential control, global rule by corporations and capital must be resisted, first and primarily, at the level of countries. Efforts to 'globalize the resistance', by deflecting popular energies away from national arenas may, in fact, be counterproductive. Global thinking and acting, to the extent that it is based on the belief that there are universal/global (i.e. Western) solutions to concrete local problems, encourages the destruction of national and local thought and action, and thus facilitates the homogenization necessary for achieving the aims of globalism (Esteva and Prakash 1997). Western institutions – like civil society – were developed to facilitate the growth and consolidation of capitalism and imperialism.¹⁹

To build true citizens' democracies, people must go beyond their roles as individual consumers and identifications with homogeneous ethnic or racial groups. As Benjamin Barber (1995: 8) asks, 'Without citizens, how can there be democracy?' But where is citizenship located? There is no meaningful global citizenship in which ordinary citizens can participate and feel they can make a difference. How could there be at the level of six billion people? To the extent that it exists,

citizenship is located within countries and at sub-national levels. Each has its own traditions, as Barber argues: 'Democracies are built slowly, culture by culture, each with its own strengths, and needs, over centuries' (p. 278). The central task facing those who want to build bottom-up democracy therefore is to transform the state in each country from serving the interests of corporate capital to serving the interests of citizens.

As we have seen, the globalism agenda involves concerted action to get states to deregulate, privatize, and cut back welfare provisions. Many people are engaged in resistance and have not conceded the battle. For them, the assumption that globalism has already won or must win, contributes to the pervasive and powerful discourse through which proponents of globalism seek to fulfil its prescriptions.

4. Successful resistance to globalism

There has been little concrete analysis of actual agents engaged in struggles to re-embed the economy under democratic societal control. What social groups and movements fought and won these struggles? Are the groups and movements that are effectively resisting corporate globalization representative of an emerging global civil society?

Despite the recent flowering of all sorts of cross-border exchanges around progressive social goals, transnational social action has had limited success. Successful anti-globalism stories such as defeating the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the tenacity of the Zapatista struggle represented victories, not for global civil society, as is often claimed, but for national and local political mobilizations which were loosely coordinated transnationally by a small number of activists in transnational advocacy networks. Thus, a consideration of where, when, how and why resistance against globalism has been politically effective focuses our attention on the importance of nationally rooted movements and of the need, therefore, for reinvigorated democratic national politics.

It is not surprising that Keck and Sikkink discovered that, faced with repressive regimes in Latin America, activists went abroad to find allies. Repression facilitated the transnationalization of advocacy networks, because it was to the latter's advantage to externalize domestic rights struggles.²⁰ By quickly gaining outside allies, the Zapatistas may have prevented a full-scale invasion by the Mexican army. Thus finding external supporters to mount politically effective action against domestic and global forces may prove very useful. Pressures of public opinion, consumer or tourist boycotts and diplomacy can be brought

to bear on governments, especially those in weaker countries. Vital information and alternatives can be shared amongst activists, such as those at the annual World Social Forum in Porto Alegre Brazil. Revolutions and models in one part of the world have long inspired similar actions elsewhere. It's what George Katsiaficas (2002) calls the 'eros effect'. Within weeks, the 1848 revolution in Paris had inspired revolutions in many European countries. Now, anti-globalization protests in one part of the world instantaneously inspire, and can coordinate with, those in other parts (pp. 32–3).

We are *not* questioning the value of international solidarity, of participation in and political organization by global networks, or of movements concerned with global rather than national issues. What we are concerned with is being clear about where political action works best in opposing globalism. Trying to reduce the power of corporations and capital in the global arena will produce limited results unless joined by strong efforts at national and local levels. As Ann Florini argues, 'If a significant organized domestic constituency is lacking, external actors usually can accomplish little' (2000: 218). Cross-border solidarities depend on the ability of nationally and locally mobilized forces to forge links with similarly mobilized forces abroad.

It is important to understand why and how national arenas are and can continue to be effective sites for anti-globalism resistance. First, at the level of the state, social movements can help bring about reforms of a fundamental nature (i.e., redistribution) only if they coincide with the political and regulatory spaces of countries. Global social movements cannot be the main vehicles for the achievement of human rights, the rule of law, peace, reclaiming the commons, and social justice. Victories won by transnational movements are tougher to consolidate than those resulting from nationally based groups because they are more difficult to implement.²¹

The second reason for the importance of national arenas lies with citizens. Elites are few in number and so have always organized transnationally to remain dominant over citizens in their own countries. When they are threatened from below, they almost always close ranks with transnational ruling elites. Those who argue that global movements are needed to oppose global forces, assume that national initiatives are too small to do so effectively. However, history reveals just the opposite: that it is thinking and acting globally that is ineffective. It does not define a realm of productive action and pushes us beyond the limits of human capacity. As Esteva and Prakash (1997) argue, the scale of 'global forces' cannot be matched; it can only be reduced, and only through

local political engagement.²² Global forces achieve concrete existence only at specific national and local sites and can usually be effectively opposed only there. While citizens movements have benefited from transnational ties, they have won concessions from ruling elites only when they mobilized domestically against national elites.

The value of international solidarity can be overestimated. The notion that multinational corporations and globalized finance capital can be effectively fought only by 'global civil society' may uproot politically powerful movements and undermine effective resistance by deflecting attention from struggles for democratic control of the state. In sum, the goals of anti-globalism movements cannot be achieved largely through global or transnational solidarity efforts, but mainly through political engagement within countries at national and local levels, where laws are made and implemented and mass mobilizations occur. Thus, the idea that a 'global civil society' exists or can emerge as a site of social cohesion, identity, and political efficacy has inherent weaknesses.

5. The rest of the book

The rest of the book investigates and challenges the empirical and normative claims of proponents of global civil society and presents evidence to support our contention that national politics remains the most effective vehicle for anti-globalism resistance.

The book is a collection of readings by authors who are, in some way, sceptical of global civil society claims. But there are a range of views here: the authors are not equally sceptical, nor in exactly the same ways. Most authors do not categorically deny all aspects of an existing or emerging global/transnational civil society or of its partial development in the future; but they are sceptical of the vastly overblown claims about it and concerned about the ubiquity and potential consequences of these claims.

Part I presents critical, historical and theoretical perspectives on 'global civil society' as a site of resistance to globalization. Jeffrey Ayres shows that despite the recent growth of international protests against globalism, the lack of a transnational collective identity and the resilience of the international state system limit the success of international social movements (Chapter 2). Sandra Halperin argues that national organization and mobilization has, in the past, been more effective than internationalism in securing controls over and concessions from multinational corporations; and the conditions that made national opposition to rule by international capital effective in the past

still exist today (Chapter 3). Lawrence Hamilton shows that the idea of 'global civil society', developed by a variety of theorists recently, is based on simplistic and misleading conceptions of civil society and of freedom, conceptions which are not only unrealistic but which can be used to underpin objectives and outcomes that are anathema to the progressive politics which many proponents of global civil society support (Chapter 4).

Empirically, the main assertions about global civil society are that (1) there now exists a global civil society, (2) there are signs of an incipient evolution in that direction, or (3) geo-political changes likely to occur in the future will lead to the emergence of global civil society. The third assertion is the most speculative and, therefore, the most difficult to assess. Thus, here our focus is on the question of whether global civil society now exists or whether there are signs that it is emerging.

The authors cover a wide range of issues and considerable geographical space. The case studies address corporate rights and women's and human rights organizations, trade unions, trade policy activists, and environmental, and immigrant rights groups and links. However, a single volume cannot cover the entire range of issues for which global or transnational civil society is invoked.²³ Thus, we focus, in particular, on what appears to be the putative empirical basis for the global civil society thesis: (1) processes of global integration and, more specifically, between North and South and between East and West – the most salient and developed example of the former being the process of Mexico–US integration (examined and refuted by Fox in Chapter 7), and of the latter, transnational assistance networks working in Russia (examined and refuted by Sundstrom in Chapter 8); and (2) the nature and achievements of anti-globalism movements, which appear to be most numerous and active in the Americas. These are important and relatively new activities, and the claims made with respect to them and to global civil society receive here some of the scrutiny that has so far been neglected.

The emergence of a global civil society is often equated with the expansion and interpenetration of international, transnational, and local non-governmental organizations, as well as with processes of integration between North and South, and between East and West. But the research on transnational advocacy networks presented in Part II presents a powerful empirical challenge to these notions. Josée Johnston shows that anti-globalization advocacy networks are characterized by sharp economic disparities and cultural heterogeneity (Chapter 5).

Marie-Josée Massicotte brings into focus the extent to which civil society on a national or global scale is a conflictive space, where progressive, conservative, and repressive forces interact and compete (Chapter 6). Jonathan Fox finds that while US–Mexican coalitions on human rights, labour and environmental networks have influenced the public discourse, it is difficult to find evidence of more tangible impacts (Chapter 7). With the collapse of communism and the entry of international NGOs into Russia, many observers concluded that East–West integration was under way and would facilitate the development of a global civil society. But Lisa Sundstrom finds that Western assistance networks established to develop local NGOs in Russia clash with domestic values and rarely build a popular base for a shared transnational consensus (Chapter 8).

Part III presents evidence to support our contention that national politics remains the most effective vehicle for anti-globalism resistance. Gordon Laxer shows that the victory of citizen opposition to the MAI came largely from nationally based and even nationalist inspired movements (Chapter 9). Functioning democracies that act in the interests of the poor, as Henry Milner argues, requires for their emergence ‘civic literacy’ that is produced in national arenas by nationally based actors – political parties, trade unions, and states. These actors have long been, and remain today, the vehicles for the high ‘civic literacy’ that makes social improvement possible by empowering those at the bottom (Chapter 10). İsmet Akça provides evidence to refute the notion that a global labour movement is the only means of resisting globalization; arguments to this affect not only are problematic from a strategic/political point of view; but they ignore the social movement unionism emerging in many countries and waging successful campaigns against the encroachments of MNCs (Chapter 11).

By bringing into focus what, in our view, are unrealistic assumptions, empirical weaknesses and theoretical flaws in the current discourse on global civil society, we hope to open up a debate about where and how globalizing trends that undermine national and local democratic governance can be most effectively opposed. The notion that economic processes have changed so fast and so completely and irreversibly that the state and nationally based democratic struggles can no longer influence them, is part of an ideological campaign designed to immobilize citizens.

The first act of those who usurp power is to consolidate their victory by making it irreversible, or appear so. The notion of the demise of the state and national sovereignty, by propagating and instilling the belief

that engagement in national politics is fruitless, deflects collective energies from national political arenas. The chimera of global civil society drags such struggles onto the enemy's ground, where opposition forces cannot compete. Organizing within transnational networks and coalitions may also incur opportunity costs that can outweigh the benefits and, thus, be counterproductive. It may encourage workers and other progressive actors to give up communal resources and claims, and dissipate organizational capacities. In this context, the notion of global civil society, to the extent that it facilitates the efforts of multinational corporations and globalized finance capital to take control of national and local political spaces, becomes a useful tool of anti-statist, globalizing capitalists.

The main institutional mechanisms for resisting corporate globalization are states, and the main battle is to wrest control of states from corporate control. *The strategic issue affecting the possibility of effective resistance to globalism, then, is the ability to mobilize collective action in national arenas.* The idea that the state is no longer a site of political efficacy has been vigorously propagated to de-democratize politics and dis-empower democratic forces in national arenas. It was through national mobilizations that the rights of citizenship, democratic governance, and economic justice were won in the West. It is there that today they are being lost. It is vital, therefore, that progressive actors reassert themselves in national arenas. Yet, along with the growing discourse of global democracy in many Western countries, democratic participation has eroded.²⁴ If efforts to 'globalize' the struggle take precedence over, and divert energies from, national and grassroots struggles, the campaigns to preserve, strengthen, and extend bottom-up democracy may be undermined. Historically, national organization has always been a precondition of genuine internationalism from below. Thus, to the extent that the chimera of global civil society beckons and 'disembeds' the energies of activist citizens, it undermines the preconditions for its own success. A vehicle of resistance that depends for its success on processes that it undermines may, indeed, be a false promise.

Notes

- 1 Leslie Sklair (1995, 2001) argues that all these elements are factions of a transnational capitalist class, a 'global power elite, ruling class or inner circle in the sense that these terms have been used to characterize the class structures of specific countries'; and that these different factions work together through government agencies, elite opinion organizations, and the media to further the interests of global capital.

- 2 Barlow (2001). The FTAA draft agreement is modelled on NAFTA's language on foreign investment. For the official draft text of the FTAA, go to http://www.ftaa-alca.org/alca_e.asp. July 3, 2001.
- 3 Amory Starr made this point at the conference on Building a Post-Corporate Society, November 19, 2000. Parkland Institute, Edmonton, Canada.
- 4 Summers was Deputy Secretary of the US Treasury then.
- 5 Authors such as Ann M. Florini (2000) write about transnational rather than global civil society, because the border-crossing nature of the links rarely involves people from every part of the world. Transnational civil society is a more accurate term but debates around transnational civil society are similar to those around global civil society. Both suffer from the tendency to assume what must be proved.
- 6 In the earlier period, the number of INGOS rose from 32 to 1,083, a 33-fold increase in 40 years; during the 76 years from 1914 to 1990, there was an eightfold increase, from 1,083 to 9,849 (Anheier *et al.* 2001: 4).
- 7 *Ibid.* They might as well have called them 'international advocacy networks' rather than TANs, since they use the term 'international' in their definition of what TANs do.
- 8 Anthony Smith (1992: 1) writes positively of the convergence of the literatures on nationalism and ethnicity.
- 9 See the discussion of positive and negative nationalisms in Laxer (2001). Nationalism has been attached to a variety of disparate phenomena. The literature distinguishes between ethnic and civil nationalism; the latter refers to national identity that is based on feelings of attachment and identification with a political community.
- 10 Thus, for Thomas Risse-Kappen (1995), 'transnational' describes practices, forces and institutions that cross state boundaries and which may include state agencies or actors, but do not originate with them.
- 11 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7th edn, 1987.
- 12 Struggles to re-embed power at the national level can be conceptualized as struggles against a 'transnational state' that is accountable to corporations rather than people. See Robinson (2001), and other contributors to *Theory and Society*, 30:2 (2001).
- 13 In Chapter 5, Josée Johnston argues that both neoliberalism and its opposition operate at neither a wholly local, global, or trans-national scale, but within a complex intermingling of various geographic scales that change through technological innovation and resistance. This implies that no one scale of resistance is sufficient.
- 14 MacDonald (1994: 276). This interpretation is generally consistent with Liberal perspectives on transnational actors. Marxists and Gramscians view civil society as the contested space of class relations and production.
- 15 Friedrich Engels and John Stuart Mill were both sceptical about the future of small or 'backward' nations. See Mill (1962: 363–4); on Engles's views, see the discussion in Rosdolsky (1986: 124–33).
- 16 That globalization is the necessary product of the expansion of capital was argued, in 1848, by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto:
 The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

- 17 The Council of Ministers, representing governments, still has more power than the European Parliament. Rich countries have significant voting power in the IMF and the World Bank.
- 18 If Tilly is correct, we would expect more protests to be directed against supranational institutions in weak states where sovereignty has substantially eroded, than in the world's great hegemon, the USA, which has lost very little sovereignty.
- 19 Many people endorse the notion of 'global civil society' as a rejection of state-centrist social theory and as a much-needed corrective to the 'methodological nationalism' of the social sciences (Scholte 1999). While we sympathize with these methodological concerns, these must be clearly distinguished from the overtly political claims associated with the globalization campaign.
- 20 It is little discussed in the literature, but advocacy networks also exist at the national level.
- 21 See, e.g. Gil Gott, 'Caught in Traffic.' Paper delivered at the Annual Law and Society conference. Chicago, Illinois, May 27, 1999.
- 22 The question is 'how to defeat the five Goliath companies now controlling 85 per cent of the world trade in grains and around half of its world production'; and the answer, as the authors rightly note, cannot be to mobilize opposition globally, for 'Any change will wait forever if the challenge to the food Goliaths is delayed until equally gigantic transnational consumers' coalitions are forged' (Esteva and Prakash 1997: 280).
- 23 Some of the most prominent literature on transnational civil society has focused on the international campaign to ban landmines and the global sweatshop movement, the revision of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, human rights issues, and opposition to the building of big dams (Florini 2000).
- 24 As the authors of a recent study observe:

In recent decades, fewer and fewer people have been joining political parties, and more have been joined environmental, peace and human rights groups like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, and the anti-nuclear movement (Anheier *et al.* 2001: 15).

Part I

Global Civil Society: Critiques

2

Global Civil Society and International Protest: No Swan Song Yet for the State

Jeffrey M. Ayres

Introduction

The past decade has witnessed a notable shift towards more formalized, integrated and sustained international cooperation around social change goals. United Nations initiatives have contributed greatly to this trend: from the flowering of non-governmental organization (NGO) environmental activism around the Earth Summit in Rio, to efforts to strengthen shared understandings of international human rights, to the initiatives to eradicate globally the use of land mines. International actors have increasingly sought to carve out non-state political spaces to address common goals and strategize collectively (Lipschutz 1992; Wapner 1995; Lipschutz and Mayer 1996; Price 1998; Cameron 1999). These international collective efforts have encouraged observers to herald the rise of something resembling a global civil society.

For many activists and those sympathetic, moreover, to the recent efforts to reduce the power of global capital, the spread of international activism against neoliberal globalization fits this trend. The French government credited 'the emergence of a global civil society' with the collapse of the negotiations around the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The Zapatista rebels in the impoverished Mexican state of Chiapas have appealed to a global civil society in their Internet broadcasts. Meanwhile, NGOs and social movements continue to sign on to 'international civil society statements' opposing various multilateral trade and investment forums and negotiations, including the millennial round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) initiative.¹ These pronouncements, along with the rapid global spread of

information over the Internet, have encouraged this leap of faith by those who see such a global configuration emerging in short order.

However, a closer examination of the dynamics behind these international campaigns suggests that a more sceptical assessment is warranted, and that such popularized assumptions are overstated. Indeed, as one noted observer of international protest has argued, while the increased scholarly attention being paid to the growing phenomenon of transnational social movements is refreshing, too many observations then make too quick an analytical leap from protests against globalization, to transnational social movements, to global civil society (Tarrow 2001).

Specifically, the various campaigns that have mushroomed in recent years to protest against neoliberal globalization can be qualified in at least three important ways. First, the NGOs and social movements, which are at the heart of this activism, suffer from problems of representation and accountability. Second, the Internet, while clearly a significant new addition to transnational protest tactics, has not created a global virtual political community, but rather continues to suffer from the persistence of the so-called 'digital divide'. Third, and most significantly, the resilience of the state, and its continued dominance in many policy areas, especially the provision of domestic security, has undercut recent movement initiatives. Unquestionably, the state is still in the business of maintaining a monopoly over the use of force, and the police responses to international protestors in the wake of recent trade and investment summits, indicates that the state retains a great deal of repressive power. In short, this chapter sketches out these complications with the global civil society project, highlighting the sovereign limits that are weighing against this incipient and complicated international configuration.

1. Neoliberalism and the flowering of international protest

Certainly, neither globalization, through an increasingly integrated world economy, nor incidences of international activism, represent novel occurrences (Hannagan 1998; Tarrow 1998a). International social movements have arisen for centuries, to contest the practice of slavery, to challenge the spread of nuclear weapons, and to pressure for increased global attention to environmental degradation. Moreover, NGOs are not a new phenomenon, but rather have had a history of influencing international policy debates for decades even prior to the birth of the United Nations. However, there is mounting evidence of an

explosive growth in NGOs, as incidences of international mobilization and exchange increased during the 1990s (Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997a; Della Porta, Kriesi and Rucht 1999). Undoubtedly, the emerging new patterns of international protest mark a significant new trend in world politics. Various collective actors, from NGOs, transnational advocacy networks, or international social movements, have been increasingly active around a number of common goals and strategies.

Specifically, a major trend shaping this burgeoning pattern of especially contentious political activity has been the marked neoliberal turn of the world economy over the past two decades (Ayres 2001). Neoliberalism as an ideology marks a break from the political compromises, which the world's leading industrialized economies crafted to manage the world economy in the Bretton Woods era after World War II. North American and West European governments, under pressure by capital and increasingly formed in the politically conservative Reagan–Thatcher–Kohl–Mulroney mould, were quick to adopt the neoliberal ideological mantra as the 1980s unfolded. This approach deified business-friendly free trade and investment climates, criticized government interference in the market, and exhorted states to deregulate social and environmental programmes and privatize state-provided public services. The neoliberal programme was also quickly adopted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which largely relinquished its earlier postwar role as a temporary international fix for shortterm current account deficits and exchange rate instabilities, and instead became the enforcer of neoliberal discipline through its austere structural adjustment programmes for indebted and impoverished states.

This ideology became ascendant especially during the early 1990s, when a host of regional and multilateral trade and investment initiatives were implemented to 'lock-in' neoliberal policy prescriptions (Grinspun and Krekewich 1994; Gill 2000). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the 'Maastricht orthodoxy' implicit in the European Union's procedure for monetary union, and the completion of the Uruguay trade round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) marked important milestones in the advancement of an international neoliberal political architecture. Ultimately, the apogee of neoliberal globalization arguably arrived with the creation of the WTO in 1995, which unlike its predecessor the GATT, has enforcement mechanisms to secure compliance with its trade rulings. Its controversial mandate also has pushed the WTO in new directions, to consider as unfair trade practices a whole host of laws and regulations implemented by national governments.

While proving popular with business and political elites, neoliberal policies have antagonized a broad constituency of social groups that had largely benefited from public sector initiatives. Labour unions have witnessed their bargaining power decline as increasingly mobile corporations and capital have parlayed the threat of exit, downsizing or outsourcing to their collective competitive advantage (G. Ross 2000). Women's groups, environmentalists and human rights activists have also decried the constraints on public sector resources, the anti-regulation bias of trade regimes and the inhumane and unsafe working conditions suffered by workers from the Mexican maquiladoras, to African sweatshops, to free trade zones in China (Mittelman 2000). The lack of transparency and lack of accountability characteristic of neoliberal institutions have moreover created awkward political bedfellows: politicians across the political spectrum have decried the perceived loss of political sovereignty and the undermining of representative institutions through so-called 'democratic deficits' in the face of neoliberal policy initiatives (Steger 2001).

While social activist groups had been protesting the negative effects of neoliberal policies for years (Walton and Seddon 1994; Rodrik 1997; Ayres 1998), a highly publicized breakthrough came on 1 January 1994. As Josée Johnston describes more fully in Chapter 5, that day marked the beginning of the Zapatista uprising in the southern, poor state of Chiapas, Mexico. The Zapatistas purposefully chose that moment to begin their uprising, targeting the start of NAFTA to protest the expected social fallout from the neoliberal initiative, the disproportionate brunt of which, it was felt, would fall on the majority poor, indigenous people who live in Chiapas. This long-running, unresolved insurrection provided a significant morale boost to groups especially across the Western hemisphere who had been opposing the neoliberal policy directions recently adopted by their own governments. The Zapatista uprising also served as a spark for future, more widespread and increasingly effective protests against neoliberal policy initiatives. For example, the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, held in 1996 on Zapatista-controlled territory in Chiapas, attracted over 3,000 international activists, and helped to bolster a greater international awareness of both the plight of the residents of Chiapas and the more far-reaching ramifications of neoliberal policy initiatives outside the Americas (Cleaver 1998; Schultz 1998).

The Zapatista campaign, while evoking a great deal of international sympathy and solidarity, remained nonetheless physically isolated in southern Mexico. However, subsequent protests in 1997–8 against the proposed MAI, as well as the US-based campaign against the reauthor-

ization of presidential fast-track trade negotiating authority, demonstrated that a much broader pattern of both national and internationally coordinated contentious activity was coalescing against neoliberal policies. Despite the explosive growth in foreign direct investment over the past decade, member governments of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had proposed the creation of the MAI to further deregulate the international investment environment. Particular attention was paid to locking in so-called 'national treatment' for foreign investors wishing to do business in a domestic setting. Subsequently dubbed an 'investor's rights treaty', and fearful of the imminent deregulatory pressures arising from a successfully negotiated treaty, the MAI became a target of both national and international protests, as Gordon Laxer shows in Chapter 9. The international anti-MAI campaign that developed notably drew strength from a wide variety of NGOs, primarily from North America, Europe and Australia, whose skilful use of the Internet helped to convince already divided OECD delegates to drop the negotiations (Kobrin 1998; Ayres 1999).

The 1997 and 1998 battles over whether to extend fast-track negotiating authority to then US President Clinton also fed upon a groundswell of scepticism regarding the supposed benefits of neoliberalism.² Organized labour in the US had felt blindsided by the Democratic President's strong-arming of NAFTA through Congress in 1993, and this constituency heavily lobbied Democratic congressional representatives against extending the fast-track negotiating authority. This pressure, combined with opposition from other left constituencies including two national coalitions, the Alliance for Responsible Trade and Public Citizen's Citizens Trade Campaign, as well as a small but important minority of sceptical conservative Republican nationalists, convinced president Clinton to withdraw the proposal for fast-track renewal in the fall of 1997 in the face of certain defeat. The following autumn, the reintroduced proposal for reauthorized fast-track power (this time a Republican initiative) also went down to defeat, which marked a significant trade policy victory for organized labour (Shoch 2000).

Thus, even before the dramatic 'showdown in Seattle' during the fall of 1999 WTO ministerial meetings, it was evident that the neoliberal paradigm was facing a budding legitimization crisis. The protests, sit-ins, demonstrations and marches, which occurred in Seattle, disrupted opening day ceremonies, and contributed to the tensions between delegations. Ultimately, the failure at that time to reach any agreement on a proposed millennial round agenda only put a public face on the

rising uncertainties facing neoliberalism's promoters: that the project of creating a world economy based solely on market forces was now under increased suspicion, if not on the defensive. Suddenly, the biggest left-of-centre force for social protest in two decades, a budding international movement against neoliberal globalization, would prove a formidable obstacle to successful neoliberal summitry over the next year and a half. From IMF and World Bank meetings in Washington, DC and Prague, to the gatherings of EU delegates in Nice and Gothenburg, to the FTAA heads of state summit in Quebec City, to the G8 meetings in Genoa, to the successive meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, protests swelled, meetings were disrupted and agendas questioned, as activists successfully cast doubt upon the supposed mutual benefits to be derived from the neoliberal paradigm.

2. International protest and global civil society: popular assumptions reconsidered

Global civil society has been defined as civic activity that addresses transworld issues, involves transnational communication, is organized globally and unfolds on the basis of supraterritorial solidarity (Woods 2000). On the surface, then, the international movement against neoliberal globalization might be seen to share such characteristics. The activists involved in protests against neoliberal initiatives utilize global Internet and other recent technologies for communicating and strategizing, draw upon the resources afforded by what social movement theorists refer to as 'transnational mobilizing structures' (Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997b) and claim as a key component of their legitimacy, support from a wide swath of citizenry regardless of nationality, gender, race or ethnic origin. Moreover, those NGOs and social movements frequently placed at the heart of most global civil society configurations (Kaldor 2000: 107) constitute the core of this movement. Nonetheless, these popular comparisons are simplified. Undoubtedly the new organizational forms, transnational strategies and recent successes in affecting the neoliberal agenda are impressive, and represent challenges to the state-centred pattern that has traditionally organized world politics. Yet, much like the global civil society construct, the international movement against neoliberal globalization suffers from significant limitations.

Problems of representation

First, the movement against neoliberal globalization suffers from problems of representation and accountability. This critique by no means

overlooks the large numbers of people, regularly in the tens of thousands, who have been attracted to protest events around the world. Nor is this critique meant to underestimate the representative breadth amongst a whole variety of social activist NGOs involved in protests against neoliberalism. In fact, the movement at times has been accused of being composed of too wide-ranging a constituency of left-of-centre protest groups, a grouping with such diverse interests and goals as to, at times, muddle its appearance and objectives. Yet, one of the more erroneous popularized assumptions is to equate NGO representation in the movement against neoliberalism with global representativeness, if not outright support amongst civil society constituencies in various domestic settings. For the most part, the activism inspired by NGOs and transnational social movement organizations, which is at the heart of the mobilization against neoliberalism, is limited to a much smaller number of committed and professional social activists.

The tendency to link NGO membership to mobilization campaigns, thereby inflating the depth of social activism in any given campaign, is not new. One of the early salvos against neoliberal policy initiatives – the cross-Canadian coalition that arose in the late 1980s to oppose the Canada–US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) – suffered from just this sort of posturing. During that campaign, the Pro-Canada Network (PCN) emerged as the cross-sectoral umbrella vehicle that coordinated a campaign against the proposed accord. Dozens of some of the leading interest groups and NGOs in Canada joined the PCN: from labour unions, to women’s groups, environmentalists, aboriginal peoples, students, farmers, seniors and consumer groups. At that time the PCN claimed to represent over ten million Canadians, a boast that fell on the receptive ears of opposition political parties eager to challenge the governing Progressive Conservative party and its free trade agenda. Yet, in reality, those who coordinated the protest campaigns comprised a much smaller percentage of interest group membership, while representing vocally active segments of Canadian society.

Another more recent example of problems of representation and accountability can be found in the ongoing campaign against the FTAA. The FTAA negotiations have come on the heels of two previous, successfully implemented, neoliberal initiatives: the CUSFTA and NAFTA. Reviving former US President George Bush’s ‘Enterprise for the Americas’ free trade conception, the Clinton Administration hosted the first Summit of the Americas in Miami, Florida, in December 1994. There, representatives of countries across the hemisphere (with the exception of Cuba) pledged their commitment to the development of

expanding a NAFTA-style free trade accord across the Western hemisphere. From that meeting in 1994 through to April 2001 – which marked the third heads of state Summit of the Americas in Quebec City – ministers from hemispheric countries had been progressing through diverse sectoral negotiations towards the creation of an FTAA.

As Marie-Josée Massicotte's study of the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) more fully explains in Chapter 6, various hemispheric social activist groups met at a gathering parallel to the official FTAA trade ministers' meeting in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in May 1997. These groups partly built upon the links and mobilizing structures which emerged during the preceding battles against the CUSFTA and NAFTA. At the 'Our America's Forum', a number of cross-sectoral strategy forums were held, critiques of the FTAA developed, and a commitment was made to create a Hemispheric Social Alliance to craft a substantive alternative to, and coordinate a more effective protest against, the unfolding FTAA initiative. Ultimately, the HSA would become one of the key multi-sectoral transnational social movement organizations for strategizing against the FTAA, drawing upon the expertise and resources of dozens of its member civil society organizations from across the hemisphere.

On the surface, then, the HSA has fit the profile for global civil society enthusiasts: it has evolved to become an instrumental transnational social movement organization that has excelled at using the latest communications technologies to reach across national borders, attracting the support of a myriad of social activist groups to critique and mobilize against neoliberalism. Yet, as Massicotte shows, particularly as an organization spearheading hemispheric social activism, the HSA suffers from problems of representation and accountability. In addition, the HSA remains largely a hemispheric organization in name only, with the network sustained primarily by the commitment and resources of Canadian, US and Mexican civil society groups, with notable but still quite limited active participation from groups elsewhere in Latin America.

The Internet and its limits

Recent advances in telecommunications technologies have proved to be powerful and innovative new tools for organizing protests against neoliberal trade and investment accords. In particular, the Internet has been credited with reorienting claims-making, contributing to a broader transnational restructuring of the repertoire of popular protest (Smith 2001b). With reference again to the movement against neoliberalism, a

steadily accumulating body of research has attested to the Internet's effectiveness in amplifying the concerns of activists, bolstering protest efforts and in helping to create political dialogue across vast geographic-territorial spaces. It has played an innovative role in the Zapatistas' protests in Chiapas, in the international campaign against the MAI, in the planning and protests against the WTO at the millennial round meetings in Seattle, and more recently in the mobilization against the FTAA culminating in the demonstrations in Quebec City (Schultz 1998; Cleaver 1998; Smith and Smythe 1999; Diebert 2000; Lemire 2000).

In each of these protests campaigns, the Internet has been credited with galvanizing activists in several novel ways. First, the medium has been repeatedly recognized as an important information clearinghouse for material germane to developing critiques of a particular neoliberal policy initiative, as well as in preparing demonstrations against it. Through organizational web pages, listservs and emails, information can be disseminated to as wide a constituency as can access the technologies. Relatedly, the Internet's speed and its immediacy of impact have been heralded, as social activist groups post strategic email bulletins and send information across listservs much faster than in previous campaigns where newspaper inserts and faxes were the tactics of choice. The Internet has also proven to be a novel method for pressuring state authorities, as the posting of portions of leaked trade and investment texts, from the MAI to the FTAA, have sent embarrassed negotiators scrambling to explain the previously secret texts and their perceived negative impacts.

These important technological innovations in the protest tactics have in turn produced heady claims about the supposed virtual political community that has been created between global activists contesting neoliberal initiatives. Clearly, the Internet has altered the manner in which people contend for power and organize for policy change; activists have been quick to mount increasingly global campaigns that have been assisted by the tactical adaptation involving Internet usage. Yet, does this surge in examples of Internet-assisted activism warrant popularized claims about the supposed 'deterritorialization of protest', the emergence of 'an alternative political fabric' or the rise of an 'incipient global civil society' built on these Internet links (Schultz 1998; Diebert 2000; Warkentin and Mingst 2000)? The French government clearly gave strong credibility to such claims during the anti-MAI campaign, when it recognized the 'emergence of a global civil society represented by non-governmental organizations, which are often active and communicate across borders' using Internet technologies.³

Yet, a number of criticisms have arisen, noting that the Internet's effects in promoting protests against neoliberalism, while novel and important, fail to live up to much of the hyperbole. Early enthusiasm for the Internet's role in boosting the Zapatistas cause in Chiapas, Mexico, for example, has been recently tempered. As Johnston explains in Chapter 5, what looked on the surface like a clear case of indigenous guerillas exploiting the Internet to assist poor people in an underdeveloped rural area – a bridging of the digital divide and the construction of a North–South virtual political community – has been criticized as a 'developed world celebration of technology' (Froeling 1997: 302). Granted, critics do not deny that the Internet boosted the Zapatistas cause, but argue that it involved particularly developed-world activists, working through computer networks in the US, Canada and Western Europe. The digital divide remained a barrier to any incipient transnational political community, and the virtual community that existed remained largely contained within the developed North.

The case of the international campaign against the MAI reveals similarly unbalanced results regarding the breadth of the Internet's reach and depth of popular participation during this campaign. Observers from a variety of national contexts strongly credit the Internet for helping to galvanize a groundswell of popular opposition to the treaty being negotiated by the OECD. Moreover, on the surface, the electronic activism that encouraged officials to take the MAI off the OECD agenda seemed rooted in a quite diverse base: over 600 non-governmental organizations representing 70 countries strategically coordinated anti-MAI information (Kobrin 1998). Yet, similar to the case of the Zapatista rebellion, the Internet campaign against the MAI was rooted particularly in the developed North. As Laxer shows in Chapter 9, the anti-MAI campaign drew strength especially from widespread country-based opposition, notwithstanding the help provided by NGOs and an international communication network.

Thus, two of the more recent and most studied Internet-backed protest campaigns reflect the persistence of the digital divide. This is not exactly unexpected, when 19 out of every 20 people in the world still lack Internet access (Hammond 2001). Those countries which have information and communication technologies produce the most Internet activism, while those which have limited access to such technologies produce little. Yet, while understandable, these facts may highlight a further conundrum. In a twist of irony, those Northern activists who oppose neoliberal globalization for its tendencies to marginalize territorially, could be criticized for reproducing exclusions

similar to those encouraged by neoliberal policies, by their dominance of Internet-inspired activism.

Recentring the state

The supposedly weakening policy capacities of the state have been another important theme in discussions on the emergent civil society concept, and this critique is especially germane to discussions of anti-neoliberal protests. Yet, there is perhaps no better example of the sovereign limits to both the movement against neoliberal globalization and the broader global civil society project, than in the recent response by states to contain dissent. The state's strident reactions to international protest have appeared especially in two forms: a soft and a hard counter-response. The soft reaction can be seen in the largely vacuous consultative meetings held with protest groups prior to international trade and investment gatherings. Ostensibly designed to give civil society groups a voice in any deliberations, such consultations more often serve to take the steam out of dissenters, and serve as a public relations coup for state authorities.

The recent mechanisms created to foster civil society participation in the FTAA negotiations are one example of this soft response to protestors. As hemispheric social activist groups have intensified their protests and lobbying of governments in an effort to open up the secretive FTAA negotiations, state authorities responded in 1998 by establishing a Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society. However, this committee did not encourage genuine interaction between state authorities and activist groups. Rather, civil society groups have been encouraged to send submissions to a 'mailbox', where hemispheric trade ministers can review them. In fact, they have been ignored, and considerations of policy recommendations by civil society groups have been largely absent from the continually evolving FTAA negotiations (Macdonald 2000a).

The exclusion and constrained definition of citizenship resulting from such techniques is but one outcome of the state response to protest. The alternative, yet complementary, 'hard' response has been much more blunt: state security measures have been increasingly physically harsh, with little doubt left in the minds of the protest community that states remain those sovereign actors that have retained a great deal of raw repressive power. Especially striking has been the dramatic upsurge in violent police tactics that have been employed across North America and Europe. Where tough violent security measures have routinely and for years been employed across the developing

world against social activist groups protesting against IMF structural adjustment policies, such tactics have recently come home to roost in advanced industrial societies relatively unaccustomed to the blunt use of force. The intensifying harsh responses have paralleled the growth and tenacity of street protests against neoliberal policy initiatives, and the record of the intensifying crackdown reads like a list of recent, notable anti-globalization protests.

In November 1997 in Vancouver, British Columbia, for example, university students gathered to peaceably protest against the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC). The students were showing, in part, their displeasure over the police protection and the participation of such well-known dictators as Indonesia's President Suharto. In response, as a Public Complaints Commission report subsequently detailed, the RCMP violated the constitutional rights of protestors, suppressing free speech and public displays of dissent, while pepper-spraying peaceably assembled protestors (Pue 2000; Valpy 2001). Two years later, in November 1999, during the international gathering of protestors demonstrating against the WTO millennial round meetings, Seattle police, under the orders of the city's mayor, cordoned off a several square block area, designating it a protest-free zone. Similarly, a number of independent legal observers on the streets, as well as a subsequent report issued by the state of Washington branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, concluded that the city of Seattle's 'no protest zone' violated the rights to freedom of speech and assembly for protestors, as did the use of excessive chemical weapons for crowd control.⁴

The following April, in Washington, DC, police tactics took a new turn in an effort to contain protestors assembling for the meeting of the IMF and World Bank. Employing pre-emptive strikes against protest leaders, closing organizing spaces under the pretence of fire code violations and arresting large numbers of protestors not involved in civil disobedience (Scher 2001), police effectively limited critics of neoliberal globalization from organizing mass demonstrations. Continued harsh police tactics followed in April 2001 in Quebec City during the hemispheric heads of state second Summit of the Americas. The protest-free zone in the heart of old Quebec City, buttressed by a 10-foot-high fence, had a chilling effect on the abilities of protestors to peaceably assemble to have their grievances heard.

After the Washington protests in April 2000, courts threw out the majority of preventive arrests and trumped up charges pinned on US protestors.⁵ In the Quebec City protests against the FTAA, a Quebec

Superior court judge acknowledged that the Summit of the Americas' security measures restricted 'in an important way two fundamental freedoms guaranteed by Article 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in this case the freedom of expression and the freedom of peaceful assembly' (MacKinnon and Séguin 2001). However, the judge ruled that the fence and other security preparations were necessary to protect Summit participants.

The suspension of constitutional liberties and the intensification of police violence came to a climax in July 2001 in Genoa, Italy, during the G8 Summit. The first death of an anti-neoliberal globalization protestor in clashes with police in the North occurred during this Summit. Moreover, a late night raid and bloody beating and jailing by squads of Italian anti-riot police elicited a public and political outcry across Europe (Henneberger 2001; della Porta and Tarrow 2002). 'A state must never lose the monopoly on the use of force,' responded Italy's Interior Minister to European-wide critics, and must be able to 'guarantee the safety of the Summit'.⁶ Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi also excused himself and his government from any responsibility for the carnage during the Summit, claiming his governing predecessor was responsible for all aspects of the Summit's preparation.

In reflecting upon these events, it is not uncommon for state authorities to learn from and innovatively respond to claims-makers with new tactics for social control (Tarrow 1998b). The cell phones, email communications and fax machines used by anti-neoliberal globalization protestors can be easily monitored by responsive surveillance technologies, limiting repetitions of surprise that aided activists in earlier protests. What is perhaps unusual today is the racheting up of police tactics that so clearly violate constitutional civil liberties and challenge accepted notions of public space and acceptable police conduct. The markedly harsher treatment of protestors at recent international events contrasts with the overall trend towards less coercive styles of the policing of protest across Western Europe and North America that had developed in recent years (Ericson and Doyle 1999; della Porta and Rieter 1998). Police today are better prepared, have better intelligence, have larger numbers of officers at their disposal and engage in increasingly harsh tactics with relative impunity. This pattern has helped to clarify the endurance of an international system of sovereign states at the expense of the movement against neoliberal globalization, where activists have found themselves on the defensive for the first time after several years of effective national and internationally-coordinated social protest.

Moreover, the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 further clouded the outlook for those activists who have challenged and sought to reform neoliberal globalization. Following the attacks, the state became recentred in the minds of many citizens, especially in the US, and to a lesser extent in Canada and Western Europe. Almost overnight, the state became a welcome buffer against the anxiety and uncertainties of a new age of biological attacks and a war on terrorism. Especially in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the 'rally around the flag' effect reverberated across the United States and spread to other countries, especially to Canada and Western Europe, where citizens took a renewed look at the state as the locus for identity and the provision of security. In addition, international activists initially hunkered down in a retreat-and-reflect mode, increasingly questioning the viability of their repertoire of protest tactics (Peterson 2001; Bueckert 2001).

The escalating crackdown on dissent, which had predated the September 11 attacks, but which intensified thereafter, proved particularly challenging to activists. Alternative political views quickly became heresy – near treason in the United States – as heightened police surveillance, pre-emptive arrests and the resurrection of McCarthy-era style 'terrorist-baiting' quickly became common features (Carter and Barringer 2001). The anti-terrorist legislation, known as the USA Patriot Act, gave government agencies broad new police powers under the rubric of 'Homeland Defense'. Government bureaus won sweeping new authority to conduct 'sneak and peak' searches, in which suspects' homes and offices could be entered without their knowledge, and wiretap authority was expanded. The FBI gained much wider access to personal records and could share this information with other agencies, and the government could now designate US-based political organizations as terrorist groups and suppress, arrest or deport their members.

Perhaps more sobering for anti-neoliberal globalization activists, was the increased penchant for state authorities to equate protest against neoliberal policy initiatives with the violent terrorism of September 11. Italy's Prime Minister Berlusconi, still smarting from international criticism of the repressive crackdown on peaceful demonstrators at the July 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa, remarked several weeks after 11 September 2001, that he saw a 'singular coincidence' between the anti-globalization protestors and the terrorists attacks in Washington and New York City. Praising the 'superiority of our civilization', Berlusconi criticized the anti-globalization movement and radical Islamic terrorist groups for their hatred of 'Western civilization and the

Western way of life' (Erlanger 2001). Similarly, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, in a speech before the Institute for International Economics in Washington, DC on 24 September 2001, further laid out the logic of the suppression of critics of neoliberal globalization. He ruminated on the possible 'intellectual connections' between terrorists and 'others who have turned to violence to attack international finance, globalization and the United States' (Palast 2001).

The terrorist attacks also gave the supporters of neoliberalism a rare opportunity to push their corporate trade and investment agenda while national publics reeled from safety and security concerns. After the terrorist attacks, Zoellick demanded that Americans choose between free trade and terrorism. President Bush, weeks later at the APEC Summit meeting in Shanghai, China, told business executives that the key to fighting terrorism would be the promotion of more free trade and unrestricted commerce. US Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, noted that the terrorist attacks made it urgent that the WTO trade talks in Qatar in November 2001, succeed (Wayne 2001). Particularly prized by neoliberalism's promoters was the long-delayed renewal of fast-track authority, which the Bush administration sought as leverage in trade negotiations. Repackaged as a terrorist-fighting tool after September 11, the US House of Representatives, under Republican control, finally agreed to reauthorize fast-track in December 2001 by a single vote. Waffling members of the House certainly felt pressured to support fast-track reauthorization, as Republican leaders portrayed a vote against reauthorization as an unpatriotic act (Sanger 2001).⁷

3. The shifting grounds for international civic activity

The fallout from the terrorist attacks provided a fortuitous opportunity for a reasoned reassessment of the persistent limitations of the global civil society project, along with the practitioners of anti-neoliberal protests who have so often been equated with it. The terrorist attacks, and the recentring of states as the central actors in the international system, demonstrated that the proportions of the global civil society project had been overstated, and that it was certainly too early to conclude that such a global configuration had emerged.

Moreover, the persistent North–South divide in terms of human poverty, economic growth and resource allocation, continues to leave a mark on the nascent global civil society project. Residents in the resource-laden North continue to have much greater access to the components of a so-called global civil society – NGOs, communication

technologies, financial resources for funding and travel – than their counterparts in the South. Thus, barriers to a genuinely global civil society remain rooted in a lack of consensus as well as in power differentials between the North and the South, a divide that tends to erode both the diversity and unity of non-state voices at international conferences.

The cautionary tone of this chapter, developed from a brief overview of some of the national and international dynamics of recent campaigns against neoliberal globalization, is not meant to deny the real probability that power relations in the international system are shifting. The retrenchment of the state in the face of international civic activity could undoubtedly be part of a long-term post-Westphalian moment. While in the months immediately following the terrorist attacks, international activist campaigns appeared more circumscribed, it is unlikely that the momentum of several decades of increased international activism will disappear, as such activity will certainly prove to be part of the necessary solution to the indelible divisions over wealth and power that continue to mark the world.

In particular, international social activism has affected public debate and raised public awareness of the multiple possible trajectories of economic globalization. For example, international coalitions and NGOs have made a dramatic impact over the past several years in helping to halt or delay the MAI, the WTO millennial round and the FTAA. International activism has also helped to fuel policy debates about the crushing and unsupportable debt burden borne by states across the South, highlighted the unsustainable environmental and consumerism practices of resource-rich states across the North, and influenced trade negotiators at the WTO Qatar meetings to create exceptions to trade-related property rights for patents of key drugs to battle AIDS and other debilitating diseases in the South.

However, any reassessment of the prevailing limits of international civic activity should be matched by a sober appraisal of the constraints bearing down on all levels of civil society. A creeping neoliberal model of citizenship at the domestic level has recently complemented the global neoliberal trade and investment project. The former includes the attempted reprivatization of many aspects of social life, with politics having increasingly become the preserve of elites. Across many purportedly democratic societies, the role of the majority has been reduced to voting, in ever fewer numbers, in national elections. National civil societies have been increasingly undercut by aging political institutions, political systems appear less democratic, and the

populace less informed and feeling less efficacious (Pharr and Putnam 2000). The so-called 'democratic deficit' in Western Europe after the Maastricht orthodoxy cleared the way for European Monetary Union and a Europeanization of capital, has yet to be counterbalanced by an appreciable Europeanization of civil society or political culture (Habermas 2001). Moreover, what has been referred to as the 'democratic vacuum' in North America, in the wake of NAFTA, has similarly failed to be met by any countervailing continental social or political policies (Clarkson 2000).

In short, a balanced assessment of the limits of international civic activity can start with a realization of the endurance of the nation-state system, which in turn should spark a rediscovery of the practical work that remains to be done at local and national levels in the name of social and political reform. There has been a tendency over the past decade for analysts of international activism to overemphasize the global at the expense of the local or national as viable arenas of resistance. Often, as a result, the state has been conceptually left behind for a perceived imminent global civil society. Yet, to posit this global configuration as unambiguous is unwarranted, and smacks of insensitivity to the persistent global problems of representation, participation and accountability. A move beyond popularized writings and Internet bulletins will encourage a rethinking of the global civil society project, one that can begin with recasting what social movements and civil society can productively and realistically accomplish at national and international levels.

Notes

- 1 Frequent examples of popularized observations linking the spread of protest campaigns against neoliberal globalization to global civil society, can be found on many of the protest group listservs that send out daily information updating recipients on campaigns against neoliberal policy initiatives. One example is the 'MAI-NOT' listserv, which frequently addresses recipients with email postings 'attention civil society activists around the world', and regularly posts statements signed by so-called global civil society activists: 'Statement from Members of International Civil Society Opposing a Millennium Round or a New Round of Comprehensive Trade Negotiations', received 4 May 1999 from MAI-NOT listserv. <http://www.citizen.org/pctrade/mai/WTO%20Statement.htm>
- 2 Presidential fast-track authority since the 1970s has provided the US President with the power to sign international trade agreements, with the US Congress relegated to the diminished role of either approving or rejecting the entire treaty without opportunity for amendments. As both

Congressional and broader public doubts began to rise in the mid-1990s regarding the economic benefits supposedly reaped by US workers and consumers as a result of fast-track negotiated accords (including NAFTA), the Clinton administration renamed the sought-after power to 'trade promotion authority' in the hope of presenting a more benign spin on an otherwise unchanged policy objective.

- 3 See the French original of *Rapport sur l'Accord multilatéral sur l'investissement (AMI)*, which credits civil society groups and their cross border activism and communication for the demise of MAI talks. Retrieved on 4 April 2000 at http://www.finances.gouv.fr/pole_ecofin/international/ami0998/ami0998.htm
- 4 See 'Out of Control: Seattle's Flawed Response to Protests Against the World Trade Organization', July 2000. Retrieved on 8 August 2000 at <http://www.aclu-wa.org/ISSUES/police/WTO-Report.html>.
- 5 See 'Protest and Corporate Globalization', Editorial, *Multinational Monitor*, September 2000.
- 6 See 'Italian Police Chief Admits Some Police Used Excessive Force During Summit', *The New York Times*, 8 August 2001.
- 7 In the summer of 2002, the US senate finally reauthorized fast-track authority for US President Bush.

3

The Dis-Embedding and Re-Embedding of Capital: Lessons from History

Sandra Halperin

Introduction

In current discourses, 'globalization' tends to be misrepresented in two ways. First, it is wrongly characterized as a development that radically and absolutely breaks with the past. Second, it is treated as impelled by macroeconomic forces and the technological evolution of capitalism. Globalization is not new: capitalism 'globalized' from the start. Moreover, while there may be processes currently working to capitalist globalization they are, first and foremost, *political national* rather than macroeconomic. 'Globalization' represents a broad-based political campaign on many fronts. Its aim is to reverse the postwar social settlements that tied capital to the development of national communities by shifting power from labour to capital *states* and undermining democratic national governments.

A similar campaign to free capital from restrictions imposed by local communities was launched at the end of the eighteenth century. As with the current campaign, it worked to reconfigure the structure of political power by means of a broad-based, far-reaching, and all-encompassing ideological assault on what was depicted, and rapidly came to be seen, as the 'old order'. The aim of this chapter is to explore this earlier chapter in the history of capitalist globalization. It examines the 'dis-embedding' of markets that accelerated capitalist globalization at the end of the eighteenth century, and the conditions that made possible the 're-embedding' of capital in the course of the world wars at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The notion of markets as embedded and dis-embedded was inspired by Karl Polanyi's book, *The Great Transformation* (1944).

argued that, before the rise of the unregulated market system at the

end of the eighteenth century, exchange relations were governed by principles of economic behaviour (reciprocity, reallocation, and householding) that were 'embedded' in society and politics. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, states began to deregulate capital and to institute other changes that formed the basis of the unregulated market and the essentially dis-embedded capitalism characteristic of nineteenth-century European industrial development. Polanyi's notion of 'dis-embeddedness' focused on the commodification of land and labour. However, European economies were dis-embedded in another sense – one closely associated with the current campaign to dis-embed capital.

Throughout the nineteenth century and even in the most protectionist and interventionist states, capital was largely invested either abroad or in home production that was largely for export. Thus, external markets were developed in lieu of internal ones; labour functioned solely as a factor of production, and not of consumption.³ With the collapse of this system in the course of the world wars, and the post-World War II 'compromise' between capital and labour, the economy of European societies underwent a process of re-embedding.

Polanyi assumed that the demise of the unregulated market system would bring about a 'great transformation' both in the nature of the international system and in its constituent states. However, soon after the publication of *The Great Transformation* it became clear that this expectation would not be fulfilled (Polanyi 1947). Though the free market and the *laissez-faire* state gave way, in varying degrees, to regulated markets and interventionist states, the liberal international order survived. The term 'embedded liberalism' (Ruggie 1982) captured this hybrid system. However, by reversing post-World War II welfare reforms which partially decommodified labour, and through market and industry deregulation which promotes the dispersal of capital investment and production to foreign locations, 'globalization' is dis-embedding the market, once again.

In the history of capitalism, then, there have been phases of nationally embedded and global free market capitalism—periods when capital is relatively more and relatively less free from national state regulation. Today's 'globalization' represents an effort to reverse the nationally embedded capitalism established by means of the historic post-World War II class compromise and to return to the dis-embedded capitalism that characterised nineteenth-century Europe. 'Globalization' must be understood not as a radical and absolute break with the past, but as a recurring phenomenon within capitalism; and not as the result of the

'self-development' of capital. The questions that this chapter addresses, therefore, are as follows:

1. Historically, what have been the context and conditions for the dis-embedding and re-embedding of capital?
2. To what extent can this history provide insight into the social conditions, relations, interests, and forces driving and resisting efforts to reverse the post-World War II compromise and to dis-embed capital today? More specifically, are the causes and conditions of the class compromise that re-embedded capital after World War II relevant today?

Section 1 describes the nature of Europe's dis-embedded capitalist expansion in the nineteenth century, and the social relations and interests of those who maintained and opposed it. Section 2 focuses on the re-embedding of capital following World War II and, in particular, the role of war and social movement unionism in increasing working-class political power relative to the power of global capital. Section 3 considers whether and to what extent this history has relevance for contemporary struggles. Section 4 then endeavours to draw the lessons of the historical analysis for anti-globalization resistance today.

1. The de-regulation of capital and the rise of the unregulated market: an earlier chapter in the globalization of capital

Perhaps the most crucial chapter in modern history for understanding the accelerating globalization of capital today is the dismantling of eighteenth-century Europe's systems of national welfare and regulated markets, and the social conflicts that emerged as a result. The context of these events was the attack on the regulations of the Absolutist state.

In the eighteenth century, 'Absolutist' governments in England,⁴ France, and elsewhere in Western Europe were regulating local markets, as well as controlling employment, and settlement. 'Absolutism' was attacked by its opponents for its over-regulation. However, the aim of much of this regulation was to provision the local community and ensure fair practice, to protect the local population against monopoly and speculation, and against shortages and high prices. Thus, in England, marketing, licensing and forestalling legislation set maximum prices on staple foods such as meat and grain. Market officers ensured that sellers adhered to regulations and statutes

governing quality and price. Magistrates surveyed corn stocks in barns and granaries, ordered quantities to be sent to market, and attended the market to ensure that the poor were provided with corn at a favourable price. Official regulations prevented middlemen merchants from bypassing or cornering the market, and ensured quality control, a 'just price', and an adequate domestic supply of goods; and market courts enforced them (Lie 1993: 282). Those in England who demanded 'freedom of trade' during the eighteenth century were actually demanding freedom from the requirement to trade inside open markets, by means of open transactions, and according to the rules and regulations which ensured fair practices and prices (p. 283).

Demands to deregulate markets were accompanied by a clamour to end the state's role in the provision of welfare. In the sixteenth century, and in line with a Europe-wide movement, the government of England had begun a campaign to eliminate poverty, to push for legislation to set up new institutions for poor relief, and to establish a system of hospitals to provide medical care for paupers. By 1700, England had a national welfare system.⁵ *Ancien régime* France established a nation-wide welfare system in the eighteenth century. By 1770, Prussia had introduced measures establishing a cradle-to-grave welfare system that guaranteed every Prussian subject adequate food, sanitation, and police protection.⁶

In eighteenth-century Britain, entrepreneurs sought to escape government regulations through long-distance trade and expanded production for export.⁷ As a result, competition for labour increased, and this enabled workers to bargain for wages and regulate their work time. Wages rose throughout the century and labourers were able 'to take on less work and spend more time at leisure without endangering their traditional standard of living' (Gillis 1983: 41). Economies in Europe at the time were based on local markets and face-to-face relations between seller and consumer, so workers were often able to exercise economic power as consumers, as well.

On the eve of the 'industrial revolution', then, European governments regulated markets on behalf of local people, instituting wage controls and other labour protections, and were active in providing welfare. As a result, workers could exercise power both as labourers and consumers. However, by the end of the eighteenth century these features became the target of a broad campaign to 'dis-embed' capitalist development.

The Aristocracy vs. Absolutism and the rise of global capitalism

The development of industrial production in Europe owes much, according to most writing on the subject, to the dismantling of the reg-

ulatory systems established by 'Absolutist' monarchs and the consequent rise of the 'unregulated' market system. Standard accounts tend to portray these and the other socio-economic and political changes at this time as, in various ways, caused by and necessary to developing industrial production. This tends to mask the nature of the changes made at that time. Many were not necessary, and many that *were* originated not with the revolt against the mercantilist systems of 'Absolutist' states but with the 'Absolutist' monarchs themselves. It was, in fact, 'Absolutist' states that attempted to reform land, tax, educational and legal systems, abolish serfdom and the guilds, and establish the conditions for the freer circulation of property and goods. These reforms triggered the 'national' revolutions and revolts that led to the demise of 'Absolutism'.

Centralized state structures had developed to shore up the crumbling feudal social order. However, monarchical attempts to rationalize and liberalize these structures met with aristocratic opposition. A centuries-long aristocratic-'absolutist' feud intensified as opportunities to increase wealth expanded. With aristocrats eventually predominating in the late eighteenth century, monarchs, beset with fiscal difficulties, abandoned efforts at wide-ranging reforms and relinquished their regulatory and welfare functions.⁸ As a result, conditions for the masses began to worsen and violent conflicts became more frequent. The Speenhamland decision of 1795 set a minimum income for subsistence and required that poor relief be limited to the local parish. But though it restricted the mobility of labour and suppressed wages below subsistence, landowners objected to it because it set an external standard for subsistence income; thus, in 1834, the Poor Law Amendment Act swept away entirely the eighteenth-century social security system, and placed the administration of 'relief' almost entirely in the hands of aristocratic Justices of the Peace.⁹

Until then, European states had regulated local markets and were active in providing welfare. In Britain, France, Prussia, the Hapsburg Empire, Prussia, and elsewhere, governments established equality before the law, the free circulation of property and goods, and religious toleration, and confiscated church lands and removed occupational barriers.¹⁰ Nobles, urban patricians, the Church hierarchy, and guild masters opposed these reforms in struggling against 'absolutism'.¹¹

The aristocratic attempt to seize control of the French state in 1789 unleashed 25 years of social revolution and imperialist war. At its end, an aristocratic-'absolutist' compromise was forged in a new form of state, the 'national' state. The latter actually conformed more closely to

the 'absolutist' state ideal, but was committed to upholding the aristocracy's power and to limiting the rise of new classes and the power of foreign and minority elements living within the 'national' community.

The system that arose with the deregulation and the reorganization of economic relationships in the late 1700s was a product not of disembodied progress but of concerted political action. Those who demanded deregulation and an end to labour protections and social security were concerned with consolidating control over labour. Production processes, as Alfred Sohn-Rethel has shown, are structured to enable capital to retain control over the class struggle (1978a: 163). Thus, production processes were devised, not just to mobilize labour to expand production, but to enable property owners to control a potentially powerful mass of workers by transforming them into mere instruments of production – 'hands'.¹²

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, state legislation advanced the interests of dominant landed and industrial classes. In Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Russia and elsewhere this alignment was encouraged by the social integration of top state personnel with the upper classes, especially the landed upper class.¹³

Landowners experienced no significant political setbacks regarding tariffs, labour legislation, land reform, state allocations, tax policy, or internal terms of trade until after 1945. While tariffs varied throughout Europe and fluctuated throughout the period, at no time anywhere was agriculture left without substantial protection. Landowners blocked agrarian reform, maintained the social and political isolation of agrarian labour, and secured favourable state tax and pricing policies. States, by supporting old and new forms of corporatism, provided landowners and wealthy industrialists with privileged access to the state and its resources. At the same time, the state maintained legal, social and land institutions which excluded workers from politics and from opportunities for economic advancement. Most importantly, states supported economic expansion based on imperialist exploitation of other states and territories, within and outside Europe.¹⁴ By limiting the geographic and sectoral spread of industrial capitalism, elites were able to increase production and profits while retaining monopolies over land and capital. As a result, European industrial expansion was dualistic: characterised by repression and restriction at home, and imperialist expansion abroad.

To maintain control of labour, dominant classes sought to keep labour poor and in excess of demand. Gradually but persistently, they worked to destroy the market position of the skilled labourers of previous centuries who were more independent and valuable, and could

therefore command higher wages and regulate their own time. By expanding production largely for export, they obviated the need to provide labourers with sufficient means to buy what they produced and deprived them of the ability to exercise power through consumer choice or boycott, as they had in the eighteenth century. Dominant classes kept peasants and rural workers poor and weak by blocking land reform. They monopolized domestic industry and international trade through cartels and syndicates, tariffs and other controls. They instituted corporatist arrangements of a discriminatory and 'asymmetrical' nature to limit competition and they obstructed rising entrepreneurs and foreign competitors.

As the next section shows, industrial expansion in Europe was shaped, therefore, not by a liberal, competitive ethos, as is emphasized in most accounts, but by feudal forms of organization, monopolism, protectionism, cartelization and corporatism, and by rural, pre-industrial, and autocratic power structures.

Dis-embedded, dualistic development in nineteenth-century Europe

Europe's industrial expansion was, in more ways than is generally recognized, characterized by production for export and dependency on outside capital, labour and/or markets. This externally oriented system produced the essential dualism characteristic of industrial capitalist expansion both in Europe and in the contemporary third world. As in many contemporary developing countries, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany and much of the rest of Europe in the nineteenth century had modern industrial sectors oriented to and dependent on international markets. Production was largely for external markets; trade was external; capital was invested abroad.¹⁵

Trade involved an exchange of capital goods and manufactured articles (for railways, docks, and other infrastructural needs) for raw materials (including cheap food to lower the cost of wage goods in the countries exporting capital goods). This produced and reproduced a circuit of exchange that bypassed the mass of the populations of the trading countries and thus enabled production to increase without empowering labour.

The subordination of labour to capital is the basic relation of capital. Thus, capitalists adopted production methods in the nineteenth century that enabled them to consolidate and maintain their control over labour. Political power was based on wealth (rather than citizenship), so subordinating labour meant keeping the mass of workers

poor. Because skilled workers were able to command higher wages and regulate their own time, mechanization and skilled labour were restricted to sectors producing for export, leaving masses of unskilled labour 'in reserve' and the overall market position of labour weak.

Production expanded primarily through the intensification of labour, both in agriculture and in manufacturing. In sectors producing for export, the productivity of labour increased by means of technological improvements; but even here, mechanization was introduced far later and less completely than is generally thought. In the rest of the economy, methods of increasing absolute surplus production predominated: extending the length of the working day, intensifying work, and decreasing the standard of living of the labour force.¹⁶ These methods predominated in Europe far longer than is generally recognized. In most sectors of European economies, technological improvement came late, and only under pressure of military competition and war; workers were unskilled and wages remained low.

2. The re-regulation of capital: causes and conditions of the compromise of 1945

The achievement of nationally embedded capitalism and of democracy in Europe was made possible by an increase of working-class political power relative to the power of global capital (see, e.g., Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1992, and Schumpeter 1976). Two developments, in particular, helped to bring this about: (1) mass mobilization for war in Europe during the world wars; and (2) the increasing strength of the broad-based social movement unionism that had characterized working-class activism in the nineteenth century and early twentieth.

The mobilization of the masses for war in 1914, for the first time since the Napoleonic wars, was decisive in increasing the political power of workers relative to that of capital. Wars fought with professional armed forces have far less of an impact on the societies involved than mass mobilization. The mass mobilization undertaken during the Napoleonic wars had a significant social impact. Participation, both in the war effort and in areas of work and social life usually barred to them, worked to enhance the power of labour.¹⁷ This, in addition to the organization and politicisation of elements drawn from other sectors of society, helped to strengthen radical forces throughout Europe.

Demobilization contributed to the renewal of *sans-culotte* as well as trade union activity in France.¹⁸ Republican, liberal, or reformist army

officers in Italy, Germany, Russia, and Spain joined the ranks of secret societies and radical movements (e.g., the Italian Carbonari, German Conditionals, Russian Decembrist conspiracy). Officers and foot soldiers alike figured prominently in revolts and putsches in 1819, 1822, 1825, 1834, 1839, and 1844, and in the Europe-wide revolutions in 1820, 1830, and 1848. Thus, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, use of mass armies ended and there was a return to old-style armies of paid professionals, mercenaries, and 'gentlemen' (Silver and Slater 1999: 190). The new weapon, after having been used once and with great and frightening effect, was not used again for nearly a century.

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, with fewer possibilities for overseas expansion, and Europe itself becoming, once again, an arena of imperialist rivalry, ruling elites faced the possibility of a major war in Europe and, consequently, the need, once again, for mass mobilization. This is precisely what a century of overseas imperialist expansion had enabled them to prevent. But in the absence of redistribution and reform, external expansion continued to play the central role in European economic expansion. Thus, in the years leading up to the 1914–18 war in Europe, the two central features of European industrial production – internal repression and external expansion – were rapidly coming into conflict. World War I forced states, once again, to use the *levée masse*. Mass mobilization for the war accelerated processes of social change, setting in motion a social revolution that, between 1917 and 1939, swept through all of Europe.

A second development that worked to increase the power of labour relative to capital was the growth of what, today, is called social movement unionism. European working-class movements in the nineteenth century were always broad social movements in which the struggle for democracy, for workers' and minorities rights, and for protection against the market merged.¹⁹ Labour struggles, whether waged in the marketplace or in the political arena, were struggles against proletarianization and the proletarian condition.²⁰

Workers, historically, were embedded in ethnic, national, and other communities and identities. In places where class and ethnicity were overlapping social categories, class and minority (ethnic and religious) issues and conflicts were thoroughly intertwined.²¹ Thus, their struggles have often been wrongly interpreted as nationalist.²² Working-class struggles tended to be broad-based and to focus on issues of social rights.

The structure of rights throughout the nineteenth century and everywhere in Europe tended to advantage and disadvantage the same

groups; thus, the belligerents in labour, enfranchisement, and ethnic conflicts belonged to inter-national (in the sense explicated by Laxer, this volume) reference groups, making the outcome of a conflict in one state important to the relations of power between members of the same groups living in others. To what extent did these labour, enfranchisement, and ethnic struggles cross and bridge national boundaries?

Marx and his disciples attempted to create working-class internationalism by means of the labour Internationale and as a response to capitalist globalization. However, it ultimately proved ineffective. The International Working Men's Association, founded in 1864, was hardly 'the powerful, well administered, smoothly functioning organization of current legend' (Collins and Abramsky 1965: v-vi). It established regular contacts between labour leaders of different countries and, in many countries, inspired trade union organization and helped to formulate some of the ideas which later became the basis of the demands of organized labour. But it failed to organize the unskilled majority of the working class. The Second International (1889-1914) was much larger than its predecessor. However, labour internationalism ultimately proved

unable to move beyond the exchange of information and a reinforcement of national union identities. Unions looked in creasing towards the state as the source of economic and social protection Far from the workers having no country, that was almost all they had, including the transferred allegiance to another country, claimed as the workers' state, the Soviet Union. (MacShane 1992: 47)

It was not labour internationalism, but mobilization in national arenas and for World War I that succeeded in bridging the divide between urban/rural, skilled/unskilled labour. And it was this that succeeded in increasing labour's relative power within European societies.

In the years leading up to the war, there was a marked rise of socialist parties and a steady and dramatic increase in the number of their members, in the number of their candidates returned to representative bodies, and in their share of the popular vote.²³ By 1914, labour violence was raising alarms in all the capitals of Europe and social polarization and conflict was evident throughout the region. Thus, even as they declared war, European governments were unsure whether workers would voluntarily join the war effort, or whether oppressive measures would be needed to induce them to participate. However,

everywhere in Europe, industrial workers and peasant masses were inducted into national armies and moulded into effective fighting forces. In some places, they enthusiastically supported the war. In Britain, large numbers of working-class volunteers signed up before conscription was introduced in January 1916. By the time volunteering ceased, nearly 30 per cent of the men employed in industry had volunteered (Gill and Dallas 1985).

Many contemporary observers assumed that working-class participation in the war represented a victory of nationalism over Socialist solidarity.²⁴ But labour struggles continued throughout the war and, in many places, increased both in number and intensity. In 1917, millions of European workers participated in massive strikes and demonstrations in solidarity with the Russian Revolution. In fact, the war proved to be a watershed in the development of socialism and of organized labour in Europe. At its end, left-wing parties and movements emerged throughout Europe,²⁵ and trade union membership skyrocketed as unskilled and agricultural labour and women joined the ranks of organized labour for the first time.²⁶

In light of this, it seems reasonable to assume that when the working classes joined up with national armies, they did so to advance their own struggle for economic and political rights.²⁷ It was widely acknowledged that the war could not be won if workers did not support it; thus workers had reason to believe that their patriotism and sacrifices might win them rights for which they had struggled for over a century. Their struggle continued, both during and after the war; and, ironic or contradictory as it might seem, socialist solidarity continued to be an important means of advancing it.²⁸

During the war, the state's role in the economy expanded significantly. But these changes did not prove to be permanent. Following the war, the British government took a series of decisions that reversed the wartime trend; and socialist and partly socialist governments that came to power in Germany, France, and Austria, were brought down before they were able to effect any change in capitalist institutions.²⁹

In fact, in all Western European countries, leaders and ruling classes were committed to re-establishing the pre-war status quo. As Philip Abrams observes, the very term 'reconstruction' reflected the ambiguity of official thinking in Britain. Though Ministers spoke 'as though the word meant transformation...the original reconstruction committees had been set up...to restore the social and economic conditions of 1914' (1963: 58). Thus, despite the profound dislocations that the war

brought, it was not until a second massively destructive European war shifted the class balance still further that restoration of the nineteenth-century system became impossible and economies were placed on an entirely different footing.

Simon Kuznets has argued that the changes that this involved would have emerged in the course of time without the wars: they accelerated trends but did not create them (1964: 85). Others have pointed out that the political and military costs of developing and defending foreign markets made Keynesianism attractive to capital, as well as to labour. However, given the vigorous efforts by the US to mould post-war Europe in its own image, it is unlikely that a massive capitulation to social democratic reforms would have occurred there had not the wars brought about a decisive shift in the balance of class power. As Schumpeter observed after the war:

The business class has accepted 'gadgets of regulation' and new fiscal burdens, a mere fraction of which it would have felt to be unbearable fifty years ago And it does not matter whether the business class accepts this new situation or not. *The power of labour is almost strong enough in itself* – and amply so in alliance with the other groups that have in fact, if not in words, renounced allegiance to the scheme of values of the private-profit economy – to prevent any reversal which goes beyond an occasional scaling off of rough edges. (1976: 419–20; my emphasis)

Moreover, the organizational strength and power of the working classes had vastly increased at a time when capitalists needed to gain their cooperation in a war against socialism. In order both to 'keep workers away from Communism and create an army of consumers' (Lipietz 1992: 10) capitalists committed some portion of their profits to wage increases and home investment, and allowed the state to control investment. Wages rose with profits, so that labour shared in productivity gains, making higher mass consumption possible for the new mass consumer goods industries.

Class compromise brought about universal suffrage and a reinstatement of the welfare and regulatory functions relinquished by the state in the nineteenth century. Throughout Europe, the state began to manage economies with the aim of expanding domestic markets through increased production, raising the level of earnings and of welfare of the working class, and increasing and regulating domestic investment. State programmes partially decommodified labour through

free health care and education, housing subsidies and child care allowances. Thus, European economies were re-embedded, leading to a more balanced and internally oriented development, and to an era of unprecedented growth and of relative peace and stability.

Increased domestic investment and the rising real wages of the workforce altered the structure of demand for domestic goods and services. Although there was a strong growth of the volume of exports after the war, the proportion of resources devoted to them (measured by the current price ratio of exports to GDP) declined in Europe (and Japan) up to the mid-1960s. 'It was not until the end of the 1960s that production for international trade absorbed an increasing proportion of labour within the advanced countries – in this sense the golden age growth could be regarded as primarily domestically based' (Marglin and Schor 1990: 51).

The territorial coincidence of production and consumption and the resulting expansion of domestic markets brought to an end, for a time, the great movements of colonialism and imperialism and intense social conflicts. The integration of workers into the political process and changes in their status and level of welfare ended the labour conflicts that had recurred throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth. The reduction of protection and monopoly increased domestic investment, and the rising real wages of the workforce altered the structure of demand for domestic goods and services. The resulting expansion of domestic markets³⁰ ended the pursuit of profit through colonialism and imperialism.

3. Globalization redux? The incommensurability thesis examined

For a time, governments of advanced industrial countries pursued relatively more internally oriented policies that centred production and services on local and national needs. However, after 1973, productivity rates slowed in these countries. In the US, where productivity rates diminished as a result of intensified international competition from Europe and Japan, the response was a strategy to protect short-term profitability by keeping wage increases below productivity growth and pushing down domestic costs.

In pursuing this strategy transnational corporations and intergovernmental agencies have engaged in concerted political action to get states to deregulate industry and markets, privatize their assets, and curtail their welfare functions. The consequent increase in capital mobility

and foreign investment, the ability to move production to low-wage areas, as well as the development of global commodity markets, and of a global labour market, are forcing workers to compete with low-wage labour elsewhere. This reduces the relative bargaining power of labour and lowers wages and working conditions, in the industries experiencing capital outflow, as well as in related industries (Crotty and Epstein 1996: 131). As Greg Albo points out, this is leading to

an unstable vicious circle of '*competitive austerity*': each country reduces domestic demand and adopts an export-oriented strategy of dumping its surplus production, for which there are fewer consumers in its national economy given the decrease in workers' living standards and productivity gains all going to the capitalists, in the world market So long as all countries continue to pursue export-oriented strategies, which is the conventional wisdom demanded by IMF, OECD, and G7 policies and the logic of neo-liberal trade policies, there seems little reason not to conclude that '*competitive austerity*' will continue to ratchet down the living standards of workers in *both* the North and the South. (1994: 147)

The strategy is also facilitated by downsizing the workforce, re-setting corporate activity 'at ever lower levels of output and employment' (Williams *et al.* 1989: 292), the retreat of marginal capital from industrial production into financial speculation, and a return to the methods of absolute surplus value production: intensifying work regimes, reducing real wages, cutting health, pension, and social safety net protections; eroding job security by restructuring employment away from full-time and secure employment into part-time and insecure work.

The discussion of the preceding sections suggests that the way these trends can be halted is to politically mobilize labour and other forces in the national arena to secure concessions from capital. But are we at an historical juncture that precludes this remedy?

Many people characterize the historic class compromise concluded between labour and capital following World War II as a 'positive' class compromise, in that expanding aggregate demand through Keynesian policies benefited both capital and labour (Lipietz 1992; Glyn 1995; Brecher 1997; Wright 2000). Nationally regulated capitalism in 1945 offered capitalists a trade-off: higher labour costs and restrictions on hiring and firing, in exchange for stable commodities markets and labour markets. But a nationally based *positive* class compromise like that forged after World War II is no longer possible, they argue,

because of the development of a world market for commodities: the sale of commodities no longer depends upon the purchasing power of those workers who produce them. Thus, Keynesian demand management solutions no longer have the same appeal. Capitalists don't have to treat labour as a factor of consumption. They sell to other states and wealthy groups within other states.

Below, Table 3.1 shows that, up until around 1975, nationally-regulated capitalism in advanced industrial countries offered capitalists *some* advantages; however, after the mid-1970s the development of countries in other parts of the world and the possibilities for significantly expanding commodities and labour markets, increasingly eroded the conditions on which the advantages of nationally-regulated capitalism were based. Today, globalization allows capitalists to have it all, without the need to make trade-offs. Thus, it follows that the only remaining option for gaining concessions from capital is *negative* class compromise – one in which both sides give up something.

However, many contend that the conditions for any compromise – positive or negative – have been irrevocably eroded, as well (e.g. Teeple 1995; Standing 1997). The post-World War II compromise was concluded with permanently employed full-time workers represented by national industrial unions. Today, however, globalization has produced increased heterogeneity and inequality within labour markets, thus eroding the economic conditions for labour solidarity (Teeple 1995; see also Wright 2000).

Table 3.1 Changing conditions for positive class compromise

<i>Interests of capitalists</i>	1950–75		2000	
	<i>Capital nationally-regulated</i>	<i>de-regulated</i>	<i>Capital nationally-regulated</i>	<i>de-regulated</i>
• Minimize labour costs		X		X
• Hire and fire labour at will		X		X
• Sell all commodities produced	X			X
• Have a particular mix of skills in the labour market	X			X
• Have predictable and adequate supplies of labour	X			X

This argument is based on the erroneous assumption that labour had become largely permanent and full-time by the end of World War II. It had not. It only did so as a *result* of the postwar compromise. The assumption that increased capital mobility and the subsequent downward pressure on wages and erosion of labour solidarity are new, and insurmountable, conditions facing labour is also erroneous. The conditions of labour were no more favourable for forging labour solidarity in the past than they are today. They facilitated neither the development of solidarity internationally among labour forces, nor the development of strong unions and high solidarity within national workforces. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, continental wages were substantially lower than in England, and English labour leaders feared competition of goods produced by low-wage industries, as well as threats by employers to replace striking English workers with Europeans (Collins and Abramsky 1965: 39). Industrial development in Europe in 1914 was largely carried out by atomized, low-wage and low-skilled labour forces. It was mobilization for war in 1914 that, by driving unskilled labour into the ranks of organized labour for the first time (between 1914 and 1921), created a unified and powerful labour force.³¹

4. Lessons from history

The globalization of capital has been driven throughout its history by processes that are largely national and political.³² In the eighteenth century, the *dis*-embedding of markets was made possible by a shift in the overall balance of capital and labour in favour of *capital*. The *re*-embedding of markets after the world wars occurred when a shift in the overall balance of capital and labour in favour of *labour* required capital to make concessions in order *to maintain its position* in relation to labour.

In the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, when capitalists were free to take their capital elsewhere, and labour was neither permanent nor full-time, the power of labour relative to capital grew as a result of (1) the broad social movement unionism which became increasingly strong in national arenas during the end of that period, and (2) mobilization for the world wars. Social movement unionism and mobilization for war both grew out of a system of externally-oriented capitalist expansion that reduced labour entirely to a factor of low-wage, low-skilled production, and generated rivalries and tensions among the advanced capitalist countries. Both, in turn, made

possible the democratization of national politics and the establishment of systems of nationally regulated capitalism.

After World War II, unions became more narrowly based and focused; since the beginning of the 1980s national union federations have come to represent a declining and often minor part of the working population (Norway and Sweden are exceptions). Overall, this has weakened the bargaining position of workers and strengthened the position of capital. After World War II, states citizen armies and the mobilization of mass populations to fight wars were eliminated. Thus, as was the case with nineteenth-century European imperialism, the deployment of military force to secure and defend capitalist globalization today is being carried out by professional armies. As Joachim Hirsch has argued, 'The replacing of mass conscript armies with professional armed forces... is incompatible with maintaining the principles of citizenship. Universal liability for military service has historically been inseparable from democracy' (1999: 309). If the masses had to be mobilized to fight wars, the military option would be far less attractive to governments, and it would be, in any case, more difficult for them to gain support for military action to advance or defend the interests of capital. What would be the consequence, in the current context of widespread anti-globalization sentiment, if governments had to use mass citizen armies in order to facilitate and defend the further globalization of capital?

Recent changes in the organization of production are not being driven by the 'logic' of technological development, markets, or international capital. Production processes, as Alfred Sohn-Rethel (1978b) has pointed out, are designed, in part, to consolidate and maintain the basic relation of capital – the subordination of labour to capital. These changes are therefore never politically neutral. Globalization is fundamentally political in nature and related to an on-going struggle over the terms and conditions, and distribution of gains from industrial capitalist production. States and interstate regimes have played a key role in globalization; the mobilization of opposition in local and national arenas has played a key role in opposing it. International solidarity ties have helped too, even if they have been less effective than national mobilizations.

Notes

- 1 That globalization is the necessary product of capital's expansion was asserted, in 1848, by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*: 'The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe.'

- 2 John Ruggie popularized the term, arguing that the postwar international system was one of economic 'multilateralism ... predicated upon domestic intervention', which he termed 'embedded liberalism' (1982: 393).
- 3 This argument is developed, to some extent, below; but more fully in Halperin (2003).
- 4 Many historians assume that England did not experience a form of state corresponding to the absolute monarchies of the continent because English monarchs could not take the property of their subjects without their consent in parliament. But continental absolutisms were also based on the rights of property. The term 'Absolutism' was used by those who opposed state policies and reforms which, today, we associate with the welfare state and with progressive liberalism. Conventional accounts of this history assume that opposition to absolutism was principally concerned with a variety of 'freedoms'. The record of the states which emerged with the defeat of 'absolutism' provides little, if any, support for this.
- 5 Pat Thane (1998: 55) rightly points out that 'There is a real question as to whether the vastly richer Britain of the twentieth century is relatively more or less generous to its poor than the England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.'
- 6 The legal measures were never fully implemented, however, because of resistance from aristocratic office-holders whose job it was to apply them.
- 7 British exports increased 67%; production for the home market increased only 7%.
- 8 Critics of the welfare system demanded restriction of relief to the truly needy and reduction in doles and pensions. They argued that charitable activities made poor rates unnecessary, and that poor relief destroyed incentives to work (Slack 1990: 52–3).
- 9 Ashford (1992: 154–5). Polanyi (1944) had a different view of Speenhamland, seeing it as part of the self-protective countermove against economic liberalism. However, Speenhamland's measures were not designed to protect workers, but to provide employers with virtual gang labour, subsidized by public funds.
- 10 In France, Louis XIII (1610–1643) attempted (unsuccessfully) to eliminate the purchase of offices and of courts based on class. Louis XV (1715–1774) attempted to abolish feudal rights and guild restrictions and to introduce a general property tax, a tax on aristocratic incomes, and abolition of numerous feudal burdens of the peasantry. In the Hapsburg Empire, Joseph II (1765–1790) decreed the abolition of serfdom and the guilds and toleration for the denominations. Frederick William I of Prussia (1688–1740) instituted far-reaching educational, fiscal and military reforms. Frederick II (1740–1786) introduced legal reforms and sought to extend freedom of religion to all his subjects.
- 11 Toward the end of the centuries' long aristocratic–absolutist feud, the struggle against absolutism assumed a new name: 'nationalism'. Both sides in the feud had attempted on occasion to gain support from the masses in order to shift the balance of power in their favour. In the eighteenth century, aristocrats in France, calling themselves 'nationalists', i.e. proponents of the view that the *natio* (aristocratic owners of wealth) should rule

rather than the king, sought to gain support from the masses by claiming that they, the *natio*, represented the interests of the people. Thus was born the notion of nationalism as a movement that represented the interests, not of a privileged few, but of whole societies.

- 12 See Sohn-Rethel (1978a) on the division of intellectual and manual labour.
- 13 Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992: 92); Goldstein (1983: 252); Badie and Birnbaum (1982: 113–14); Samuelsson (1968: 214); Rosenberg (1966: 43, 44, 199). The British state remained an ‘administration of notables’ throughout the nineteenth century (Weber 1978: II, 974): until 1905, every British cabinet was dominated by the traditional landed elite (excepting the Liberal ministries of 1892–5).
- 14 Cain and Hopkins (1993) argued that overseas expansion was linked to a ‘gentlemanly capitalism,’ centred on an alliance among aristocrats, City financiers, and the professional classes, forged to promote their common interest in creating an international regime based on the anti-democratic values of ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ (1993: 45).
- 15 In the US, internally-oriented growth based on smallholder patterns of land ownership emerged only after a struggle between landowners and industrialists culminated in civil war and the victory of the industrial capitalist bourgeoisie. The creation of a German customs union (the Zollverein) established a common frontier for the collection of duties, but did not encourage production for mass local consumption, any more than did processes of ‘nation-building’ elsewhere.
Expanding production for export did not depend on possession of colonies. The US before 1870, and Germany throughout the 1800s, had no colonies, but also pursued this strategy.
- 16 Increasing absolute surplus value (ASV) involves increasing the duration or intensity of labour, while increasing relative surplus value (RSV) involves increasing the productivity of labour. An increase in either one supplies more products in a given day. But increasing RSV holds certain disadvantages: it requires skilled workers; and, it does not cause any change in the value of labour power (nor in the magnitude of surplus value) unless the products of the industries affected are articles habitually consumed by the workers.
- 17 War, as numerous scholars have noted, can bring about an extensive redistribution of wealth within societies. As Pitirim Sorokin has observed, in time of war, ‘the social rise of the poor and the disenfranchised and the social sinking of wealthy and privileged groups is more intensive than in time of peace’ (1927: 348–9); see also Schumpeter (1976: 419); Marwick (1980: chap. 11); Andreski (1968: 33–8). However, it is *mass mobilization* for war which has this capacity: wars fought by professional armies have a minimal impact on society.
- 18 Labour organization had played an important role in radical movements in France and England during the 1790s.
- 19 Because governments were allied with employers against workers, working-class activism focused on both the marketplace and the political arena. Thus, the call for industrial reform tended to overlap and merge with that of political reform. The first serious attempt to found a Labour International, the establishment of the Fraternal Democrats in Britain in the 1840s, came from the leaders of Chartism.

- 20 Proletarianization: lacking ownership or control over the means of production and over the labour power of other workers.
- 21 In certain parts of Hungary, for instance, the landed gentry were Magyars, the urban middle-class German-speaking, the peasants Croat or Slovak natives. In Galicia, landowners were Polish and the peasantry was Ruthenian.
- 22 In the ethnic sense, rather than the civic nationalism of 'les citoyens'. Hobsbawm (1990), Gellner (1983), and Wallerstein (1996) all argue, though for different reasons and in different ways, that nationalism and class conflict are intimately related.
- 23 Trade unionism and socialism grew apace, fuelled, no doubt, by the Great Depression of the 1880s and 1890s.
- 24 Many historians and social scientists have assumed this: see, e.g., Braunthal (1967: 355); Schumpeter (1976: 353); Carr (1945: 20–1).
- 25 Socialist parties came to power in Sweden (1920), Denmark (1924) and Norway (1927); a Labour government took office in Britain at the end of 1923; the Left triumphed in France in 1924; in Belgium and Holland, socialists entered the cabinet for the first time in 1939.
- 26 Trade union membership doubled in Britain (from 4 to 8 million: Geary 1981: 151–5); in Italy, it doubled during the war and nearly doubled again by 1920 (Maier 1975: 47). By 1920, Europe had 34 million trade unionists (Ogg 1930: 759–97).
- 27 Hobsbawm has argued this view persuasively (1990, especially pp. 120–30).
- 28 Workers were probably also motivated to join the war effort for the economic security of army pay (Benson 1989: 162).
- 29 Thus, in Britain, 'Nationalization of mines, heavy industries, and other economic branches subsisted only at the margin of the economic system' (Menderhausen 1943: 340).
- 30 Tariffs and various other controls had enabled a narrow elite to monopolize domestic markets and international trade, obstructing rising entrepreneurs and limiting the expansion of industry at home. In contrast, postwar policies focused on expanding domestic markets through increased production rather than dividing up and exploiting national markets through restrictive practices.
- 31 Unskilled workers became active in Germany for the first time after World War I. Revolutionary protests and strikes in the Balkans, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia after World War I involved mainly urban unskilled labour and peasants (Seton-Watson 1962: 134–8; McClellan 1964: 275–96).
- 32 This, I have argued elsewhere (Halperin 1997), is as true for the periphery as for the core: it is local dominant classes which are decisive in bringing about external reliance and in determining how the benefits of collaboration with foreign capital are distributed and used.

4

'Civil Society': Critique and Alternative

Lawrence Hamilton

Introduction

Globalization is perceived as representing a threat to democracy. it raises concerns with how to enhance citizens' rights and deepen democracy. 'Civil society' is used as a means of developing an understanding of how to do this: the most common assumption or argument underpinning the many contemporary conceptions of 'civil society' is that the concept and creation of 'civil society' creates deeper forms of democracy and citizen power. However, as I will argue in this chapter, contemporary conceptions of 'civil society' are based on idealistic notions of states, markets, freedom, rights, and citizen power and, therefore, hinder rather than facilitate the attainment of deeper forms of democracy. And, inasmuch as it depends on these conceptions, this is particularly true of the notion of cosmopolitan democratic citizenship within a global 'civil society'.

I focus most of my attention on one theoretical account: Cohen and Arato's voluminous study, *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Why this particular theoretical analysis? One reason is that it was well received. For example, Richard Wolin heralded it as 'undoubtedly one of the most significant treatises in the realm of political theory to have been published in the last two decades' (Wolin 1993: 575). I question that assessment, but I maintain that Cohen and Arato's study is important for three reasons. First, it is the most developed recent attempt to defend 'civil society' as a means of 'deepening' democracy (Cohen and Arato 1992: 3). Second, it is the most widely cited and influential theoretical tract across the whole range of 'civil society' and global 'civil society' discussions. Third, it is illustrative of the theoretical weaknesses, unrealistic assumptions and empirical flaws within current

usage of the concept. I concentrate on Cohen and Arato's conception in order to pinpoint the flaws that underpin the entire 'civil society' discourse.

In the first section of the chapter I analyse how the concept of 'civil society' has been used by different theorists and identify that within contemporary thought it is not only a vague and confused abstraction but also its employment is associated with a misconceived idea: that 'civil society' is an autonomous arena, or in extreme cases even causally independent from the state. In the second section I show how and why Cohen and Arato's constructive defence of the concept is heavily dependent on a Habermasian theoretical template of the requirements for 'free' dialogue, and of what it means to interact 'freely'. This template rests on a misconceived understanding of freedom: individuals are only (can only be) 'free' if completely uncoerced; and are therefore unfree if coerced in any sense. I then argue, in section three, that Cohen and Arato's conception of 'civil society' is obfuscatory because it has been developed under the aegis of this misconceived understanding of freedom and its related conception of rights. In line with Habermas's 'discursive' approach to politics, it presupposes polar ideals of complete freedom as against complete coercion. I unearth some of the other intellectual historical sources for this misunderstanding and define and adopt an alternative non-metaphysical, political definition of freedom. Further, I clarify why the assumption that there is, or could be, a 'sphere' completely free from coercion is an obstruction to our critical understanding and evaluation of the institutions and practices of modern society and the modern state. Finally, in section four, I outline an alternative conceptual framework based on a novel conception of human needs and institutional evaluation and transformation.

1. The varied and vague usage of 'civil society'

There are four *analytic* distinctions or models within the concept of 'civil society' as it is used in *contemporary* political and social theory. (1) 'Civil society' is employed to describe the institutions and forms of interaction that have emerged within those societies that are characterized by market relations and capitalism; and, its alleged existence is the main indicator of a society's having reached a level of development where individuals treat each other with 'civility'. (2) In a two-celled model in which 'civil society' incorporates all aspects of society (institutions, relations, practices) that are not covered by the state: a

state/society couple. (3) 'Civil society' embodies everything between the state and the family within a three-celled model in which 'the economy' – that is, markets and their related institutions and practices – is an important part of 'civil society'. (4) Finally, 'civil society' is an alternative, critical polity or arena between the economy and the state within a three-celled model that (obviously) excludes the economy from 'civil society'. (See Table 4.1.) There are also a number of older traditions and conceptions of 'civil society', which modern theorists plunder freely for their various models, but which often are quite different from these modern interpretations and formulations (Hont 1992; Kumar 2002). For example, for Montesquieu and Locke, 'civil society' is synonymous with 'political society', while Hegel and Gramsci use it to refer to more specific economic and political institutions and practices (about which more below). Moreover, the differences between these conceptions are often overlooked. For instance, for Locke, a 'civil society' is a legitimate political order that remedies the inconveniences of the state of nature; that is, it is 'the state liked' as determined by pre- or meta-political natural law (Locke 1988; Dunn 1996). In contrast, in Montesquieu's more 'political' conception of society, the rule of law and the '*corps intermédiaire*' stand and fall together; that is, the autonomy of 'civil society' is not achieved in contra-position to the state (Montesquieu 1989; Taylor 1995a).

The analytical distinctions I identify are not mutually exclusive. Authors often (inadvertently) combine two or more of the above in their analyses, depending on the tradition to which they attach themselves and/or the normative prescription they wish to advance. I have identified three distinct broad conceptions that link to specifiable traditions and normative positions. I call them the liberal conception, the civic virtue conception and the post-marxist anti-statist conception.

Table 4.1 Analytic distinctions: four models of 'civil society'

1 'Civilized'	Capitalist institutions and market relations characterized by civility
2 Two-celled	State/society couple; everything outside the state is 'civil society'
3 First three-celled	'Civil society' embodies everything between state and family
4 Second three-celled	'Civil society' is an arena between the economy and the state

The Liberal Conception: Vaguely in line with Locke's position, this conception is characterized by the idea that 'civil society' is a relatively autonomous 'sphere' that lends legitimacy to the liberal state. However, even within this category there is wide disagreement over the nature and significance of the concept. For example, Rawls (1996) and Lehning (1998) argue that 'civil society' is a space of voluntary association between government and the private sector that is free from the coercive structure of the state. Furthermore, although 'civil society' is neither 'public' nor 'private', it can reinforce the legitimacy of 'state rule' and 'liberal constitutional democracy'. Their conceptions take the form of the above-discussed analytical model (4), and they make typical liberal assumptions about and distinctions between the 'private' (or 'nonpublic') and the 'public' (Rawls 1996: 14, 220; Lehning 1998: 223). Another strand of liberal thought defends the idea of 'civil society' for similar reasons but characterizes it differently. Gellner (1996) and Giner (1985; 1995), for example, argue that civil society emerges in societies where the economy and polity are distinct, and it is 'justified in part by the fact that it seems linked to our historical destiny' (Gellner 1996: 212). They adhere to analytical model (1) connected to model (2) or (3).

The Civic Virtue Conception: This conception emerges from an emphasis on the 'idea of civil society' as a means for the creation of virtuous citizens. For example, Seligman holds a form of analytical model (1) with an emphasis on virtue and solidarity, and does not position the locus of 'civil society' in any specified arena distinct from 'political society' widely construed (1992; 1995: 215–16, 218). Shils, on the other hand, argues that 'civil society' comprises a complex of autonomous institutions that are 'distinguishable from the family, the clan, the locality, and the state', but that it is constituted by the institutions that 'embody civility'. Civility is 'appreciation or attachment to the institutions which constitute civil society' alongside an attachment to the whole society (1991: 4, 7–13). Shils holds, therefore, to analytical model (3).

The Post-Marxist Anti-Statist Conception: This is associated with distaste for the state and a faith in the emancipatory possibilities of interaction within 'civil society'. There are three distinct approaches under this conception. First, there is a *proceduralist* account, like the one developed by Cohen and Arato, in which 'civil society' is depicted as an autonomous 'sphere' of voluntary association and discursive freedom between the economy and the state: institutions that are (and should be) *coordinated communicatively* appear under the heading of 'civil

society' (1992: 480). Their conception of 'civil society' is analytical model (4). The next two are variants of a *postmodern* approach. In the first, 'civil society' encompasses the 'economy' within a larger 'sphere' of multiple non-state institutions and relations (Keane 1988; 2001); that is, an example of analytical model (2). In the second, 'civil society' is understood as an 'imagined community' or 'imaginary institution of society' between the state and the family (Tester 1992: 8–11, 124 [Castoriadis 1987: 160]): that is, an instance of analytical model (3).

Hence, even on a conservative reading of this non-exhaustive list there are currently at least eight different conceptions of 'civil society' from which to choose (see Table 4.2).

This confusion is alarming, especially since it is an under-estimate: a thorough dissection of each author's work would identify many more permutations. But, for obvious reasons, in itself it is not reason enough for discarding the concept completely. However, an explanation for this conceptual confusion may shed some light on how to proceed. As my analysis indicates, this confusing proliferation is *not* simply the result of different readings dictated by different traditions of thought or circumstance, for there is disagreement even within ideologically like-minded thinkers. So, does the confusion arise simply because the concept is being made to do too much by theorists who attempt to capture a reality that is too diverse? In other words, were it to be used with greater control, would the concept still remain unhelpful? However, apart from the disinclination I have to add to these categories and confusions, I maintain that an adequate answer to that question adds nothing to an understanding of the problem under

Table 4.2 Eight conceptions of 'civil society'

<i>Conception</i>	<i>Analytic model</i>	<i>Representative author</i>
1 Liberal	'Civilized'(1)/ first 3-celled (3)	Gellner
2 Liberal	Second three-celled (4)	Lehning/Rawls
3 Liberal	Two-celled (2)	Giner
4 Civic virtue	'Civilized' (1)	Seligman/Shils
5 Civic virtue	First three-celled (3)	Shils
6 Post-Marxist anti-statist (Postmodern 1)	Two-celled (2)	Keane
7 Post-Marxist anti-statist (Postmodern 2)	First three-celled (3)	Tester
8 Post-Marxist anti-statist (Proceduralist)	Second three-celled (4)	Cohen and Arato

scrutiny. For, as the above examples begin to indicate, the main problem with the concept is not simply that it has been put to a large number of 'uses' but that most of them are attempts to think of 'civil society' as causally independent from the state; or, at least, the analytical distinctions they make end in them speaking about 'civil society' as if it were 'autonomous'. This is true of seven of the eight conceptions (1–3, 5–8), and is most blatant in the global 'civil society' literature – for good examples of which see the contributions to Anheier *et al.* (2001). A more revealing question is one that relates this confusion within the 'discourse' of 'civil society' to a misunderstanding about freedom, which leads to a futile search for a free, autonomous arena of interaction and a consequent lack of institutional focus. What is wrong with the way theorists of 'civil society' understand freedom and free action and why does the consequent lack of institutional focus undermine a critical theory to 'deepen' democracy?

2. The autonomy of 'civil society'? Cohen and Arato, and Habermas

Cohen and Arato's conception of 'civil society' is in the tradition of Tocqueville, Gramsci, Parsons, and Habermas, and their aim 'is to further develop and systematically justify the idea of civil society' (1992: 409–10, 17). They see themselves as defending the theoretical aims of Hegel's synthesis but his 'statist bias' (1992: xiv). Hegel is a good theoretical spring-board, for he has come closest to depicting an unambiguous concept of 'civil society', called '*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*'. But, unlike Cohen and Arato, Hegel's conception is the archetype of analytical model (3) and it is not 'statist' in the way they understand the term. For Hegel, 'civil society' includes the economic sphere – the 'system of needs' and relations of exchange and production – and the institutions of the administration of justice, welfare policing, and the corporations (Hegel 1991: §189–208, §209–29, §230–48, §249–56). It is a broad notion within which there are certain institutions whose role it is to begin the process of overcoming the fragmentation created by individualist need satisfaction, exchange and production. These institutions connect 'civil society' to the state; they are intended to mediate between the individuals and their state in such a way that the individuals are able to feel part of a larger whole and begin to see the 'other' not simply as a competitor within the market. If this conception can be called 'statist' it is only in the sense that without the state, the individuals that make up society would remain fragmented.

Cohen and Arato are in search of something similar but by different means. They argue that it emerges out of feelings of 'solidarity', 'self-limitation', and 'societal community' that surface in an arena separate from the institutions that constitute the state and those that comprise the economy. They call this arena 'civil society' and argue that it is characterized by a form of interaction, discourse and institutional configuration in which individuals are free from the control and power relations of both the state and the economy. They argue that this arena is autonomous and its participants exercise universal individual rights to defend this autonomy. They lay most emphasis on the alleged fact that interaction in 'civil society' is characterized by the kind of discursive interaction that can only obtain in conditions of non-coercion; in other words, in a discursive environment that is (or at least can be) sealed off from the coercive forces and power differentials present in the state and economy (1992: 480ff). Hence, 'civil society' is defined in terms of its spatial situation and in the light of its characteristic *linguistic* activity, coercion-free discourse. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Cohen and Arato adopt Habermas's Discourse Ethics (DE) as a normative analysis for what occurs within 'civil society'. They defend DE as a 'political ethics' and as a 'theory of democratic legitimacy and basic rights' that provides a 'standard with which we can test the legitimacy of socio-political norms' (1992: 21, 350–1, 357). Following Habermas, they argue that the participants can *evaluate* the empirical norms, traditions and consciousnesses in terms of the meta-norms provided by DE: they can be evaluated in comparison to the norms that would emerge within the 'ideal-speech' situation. For Habermas, communicative interaction in the ideal speech situation is characterized by rational discourse undistorted by differences in power or position/status. Thus, for Habermas and Cohen and Arato, the main evaluative criterion is the degree and kind of discursive freedom the empirical institutions allow and engender.

This discursive evaluative framework is supplemented by an analysis of the role of social solidarity. According to Cohen and Arato, it is within 'civil society' that 'social solidarity' is created and out of which arises an allegedly more refined conception of Habermas's stress on the 'general interest' (1992: 370ff; Habermas 1984: 99). They maintain that the associations that constitute 'civil society' presuppose solidarity. This is the case because they involve direct participation, which eliminates power and monetary relations: 'civil society' is characterized by solidarity because the individuals that comprise it 'respond to and identify with one another on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity ... without calculating individual advantages, and above all *without compulsion*' (1992: 472).

The first half of this statement *may* be descriptively accurate, but the same could not be said for the two claims in the second part. For, even if there was a degree of discursive freedom, it does not follow from that (or from the fact that the arena abounds in mutuality) that self-interest, coercion and compulsion somehow evaporate in the solidary ether. (Even if the claim were intended as a purely normative wish, it would still need more reference to reality to carry any political significance.)

Cohen and Arato use illuminating empirical examples to substantiate these theoretical claims. As in their previous work, their main focus is on the form of what they call 'self-limiting' social movements that arose under the banner of Solidarity in the former communist East European countries, especially Poland (Cohen and Arato 1984; Arato 1981–2; Arato 1981). They compare this to 'civil disobedience' in western nation-states and social movements in the democratization of Latin America (1992: 61–3, 492ff). They maintain that these activities have two things in common: they defend a certain universal and delineated set of rights; and they are self-limiting. That is, they are not interested in state power but rather the defence of a set of rights that delineate an area within which individuals and collectives are 'free' in the discursive sense outlined in the work of Habermas.

The case of Solidarity provides a seemingly excellent example of anti-state 'civil' (uncoerced) activity. Consequently, it is tempting to extrapolate from this particular movement to make universal claims about the general form of 'civil society' activity. However, there is significant empirical evidence to show that this is a highly problematic theoretical move. As in the case of Latin American democratization, Solidarity were fighting an authoritarian and blatantly coercive state (rather, Party) and, as a consequence, began to envisage freedom as equivalent to activity within a 'sphere' of 'civil society' free from coercion. Yet, they were not so much fighting from within 'civil society' but *for* an imagined (usually Western) 'civil society'; and their apparent (and avowed) opponent, the state, became their ally once they destroyed their actual opponent, the Party. Solidarity's self-awareness within their context allows them to see that it is not the state *per se* against which they are fighting, but rather the Party and its (ab)use of its coercive power (Neocleous 1996: 167n). In imposing the concept of 'civil society' to explain these movements and changes, Cohen and Arato force a mismatch between causal reality and normative theory.

Cohen and Arato repeatedly force causal reality to fit normative theory. Their argument is particularly problematic at two points, which highlight how their problematic assumptions about freedom underpin

the flaws in their account as a whole. First, Cohen and Arato identify the partial insulation, autonomy and 'free' discourse of certain institutions and practices within 'civil society', and argue that it follows that the 'sphere' as a whole is free and autonomous. This is illusory: it does not follow from the fact that parts of the alleged 'sphere' called 'civil society' are characterized by partial autonomy that the 'sphere' as a whole is autonomous or independent. Moreover, their argument for the alleged autonomy of 'civil society' (based on its unique communicative coordination) is contradicted by their own argument for its causal significance or influence over the rest of society. The claim that 'civil society' can causally influence the creation of law implies (at least the possibility) for the opposite causality (1992: 480–7): that the state and economy affect the needs and values of 'civil society'. Although *in principle* there could be only one-way causality from 'civil society' to the rest of society and the state, it is empirically highly unlikely. Second, Cohen and Arato reduce various kinds of freedoms into one form and area of interaction. They conceive of 'free' acts in terms of their linguistic components alone and exclude an array of causally significant components. They thereby misconstrue coercion, consent and rights. I explain these points with the help of an analysis of Gramsci.

3. Freedom, coercion, consent and rights

Cohen and Arato's analysis fits well with the common anachronistic interpretation of Gramsci's account of 'civil society', which they invoke and follow (1992: 142–59). However, the common understanding that Gramsci was the archetypal type (4) 'civil society' theorist (of a kind similar to Cohen and Arato) belies a more ambiguous and confused textual and empirical reality. At different points in his work, Gramsci (1) contrasts the state with 'civil society'; (2) argues that the state encompasses 'civil society'; and (3) maintains that the state is identical with 'civil society' (Gramsci 1971: 238, 262–3, 159–6). Why this ambiguity? Gramsci is determined to explain why the 'bourgeoisie' hold near complete hegemonic power in Western societies and he makes various attempts. He first argues that the preponderance of 'civil society' over the state in the West as the mode of 'bourgeois power', indicates that it is the cultural ascendancy of the ruling class that creates stability in the capitalist order (Gramsci 1971: 170; Anderson 1976–7: 26). As Anderson notes, this is not sufficient because it fails to see that the 'principal ideological lynchpin' is the general form of the representative state in bourgeois democracy. Later, Gramsci argues that hegemony is distributed

between civil society and the state. Here he makes the mistake of placing coercion at the level of the state *and* 'civil society' because he argues that hegemony is constituted by coercion and consent (1971: 246). But, as Weber has argued convincingly, coercion ('the monopoly of legitimate physical violence') lies fairly and squarely within the (modern) state; a defining feature of the modern state is that it alone controls the ultimate coercive force (Weber 1994: 310–11, 1978: 54–5). Gramsci's final attempt occurs when he includes both political society and 'civil society' within the state (1971: 160, 261). This leaves us with a totalizing picture, that is later picked up by Althusser with his analysis of 'ideological state apparatuses', that fails to give any real *causal* significance to capitalism rather than (or, alongside) the state (Anderson 1976–7: 34ff).

These problems and slippages emerge because despite Gramsci's insights into the nature of hegemony, he tends to under-emphasize the relationships and differences between consent and coercion. This simplifying tendency is the result of a voluntarist hangover that informs his work (Gramsci 1994: xiv–xvi, 43–57); that is, he holds that there are arenas, or at least he holds out the hope that arenas could be created, in which individuals can or could act (and consent) completely free from coercion. He has a normative conception of freedom that is all or nothing – that is, any coercion amounts to complete unfreedom – and this affects his analysis of 'civil society'. Cohen and Arato fail to take full cognizance of the ambiguities in Gramsci's account of 'civil society' and thus do not attempt to understand why this is the case. Consequently, they conceive of freedom in the same way.

The problematic ramifications of this approach to freedom are exemplified in Cohen and Arato's treatment of civil disobedience and rights. They argue that civil disobedience is the paradigm case of 'free' democratic and rights-based activity. Its locus is 'civil society' and it is by definition extra-institutional and above the law; but its 'self-limiting' nature distinguishes it from criminality and outright revolution (1992: 564ff, 592ff). They maintain that this limitation is self-imposed, or self-created, since it is constrained by rights that are self-created. According to Cohen and Arato, these rights are antecedent to positive law, but are not supported by natural law dogma. Rather, they 'link the idea of rights to the metaconditions of discourse'; '[R]ights can be interpreted as normative requirements for participation in practical discourses about society' (1992: 397). For Cohen and Arato, these metaconditions are grounded in a Kantian and Rawlsian conception of autonomy that rests on: (1) 'self-determination and individual choice'; and (2) 'the ability to construct, revise, and pursue one's own life plan'

(1992: 398). Hence, although they claim to connect the *formation* of rights to a discursive arena, their own analysis of the rights under which the movements actually develop indicates that the rights are metaphysically prior to the movements in question. Cohen and Arato wish to connect them to the historical development of an autonomous 'sphere' called 'civil society' that encompasses these self-creative movements, but in fact they base them in a set of 'communication rights' that are grounded in *a priori* transcendental assumptions about human rationality (1992: 399–402). Thus Cohen and Arato base this self-creating sphere's activity on a set of rights that are clearly not self-created.

Cohen and Arato claim that their account of rights can be supported by the fact that those involved in civil disobedience are united around the creation and defence of the rights that delineate 'civil society' (1992: 472). But anyone with even a brief experience of civil disobedience would question this interpretation of the evidence. Diverse groups often unite over a single issue, even constitute a single movement – say for the equal recognition of women in the workplace – while otherwise supporting a wide variety of goods not all of which are either compatible with or in defence of rights generally and/or can be reconciled with the conditions under which the rights emerged. For example, the Marxist anti-WTO activist who joins the movement for equal recognition of women in the workplace might specifically and vehemently not support the discourse of rights, one part of which allegedly provides her with the freedom to protest. And, some feminists involved in the same movement might disagree with the Marxist position more generally and yet also strongly oppose the conceptualization of their claims in terms of rights – a significant conceptual support of the gendered discourse against which they stand. Probably the single most assured thing that could be said of single-issue movements is that they attract widely diverse groups, who in other contexts are discordant. Cohen and Arato are under the grip of an idea that collective action indicates a great deal more than it actually does. It is too much of a leap to infer from normal collective action that: (1) there exists an underlying solidary consciousness (either in terms of rights or otherwise); and (2) that those involved in collective action are all defending the same set of political and moral values. This is not to say that those involved in civil disobedience do not create change, but that, as the activities of Italy's *centri sociali* and Brazil's *Movimento Sem Terra* highlight, civil disobedience is most effective when it is neither 'civil' nor constrained by an antecedently imposed structure of procedural means for the articulation and recognition of demands.

The most alarming aspect of the theoretical and empirical flaws within Cohen and Arato's account is that it is more likely to create conformity than criticism, difference and disobedience. The theoretical idea that there exists a place within which citizens freely defend their values and differences has the effect of providing the illusion amongst citizens that they are in fact doing as much even when and where they are not. The *idea* that I (and like-minded others) defend our difference in a causally significant arena, when in actual fact we do not, might gratify our need to 'self-create' while actually keeping us from criticizing those institutions and practices that forced us into a position in which we felt the need to emphasize our difference. It is not inconsequential that the granting of rights, even special rights, in line with citizen demands is often concomitant with a failure even to begin the transformation of relevant pathological extant institutions and practices; or, at least often adds little to our comprehension of the relation between extant institutional matrices and the institutions that 'grant' us our rights.

It is more realistic and potentially transformative to acknowledge that freedom (and various different freedoms) do not occur completely coercion-free. Rather, freedom should be thought of as positioned somewhere along the continuum between the polarized analytical distinctions of the Hobbesian notion of freedom at the one pole and Kantian autonomy at the other; that is, as somewhere between the understanding of freedom that argues that an individual is only free if *free from* interference, and the notion that to be free is to be *free to* act in a certain morally autonomous manner. I maintain that it is at least possible to construe freedom in non-metaphysical terms as a multi-dimensional concept, and to think of freedom in terms of degrees of freedom that will depend on concrete issues like the form of the society's institutions (including those of the state). And, this conception should be understood as involving coercion; freedom is not (at least not only) a negative concept but always presupposes (and then involves) some element of coercion.² In other words, there is both a logical and empirical connection between freedom and coercion, and freedom is never in fact 'complete'. An individual is more or less free, and theory can distinguish between forms of coercion and how they relate to, impinge upon, and/or enhance individual freedom. Hence, if freedom and coercion are understood in this way, i.e. *not* as polar opposites, it can be shown that the act of consent must also involve coercion, but *that any actual motivation to consent* may have little to do with coercion (or its alleged lack). The motivation to consent is dependent normally upon other institutional factors and evaluative power differentials. Conversely, the fact

that we are able to dissent does not necessarily mean that where we do so we are free from coercion, whatever that could mean.

Consent is created both in the state *and* within the institutions that make up the rest of society; that is, economic, educational, judicial, and leisure institutions, some of which are included by different authors under the concept 'civil society'. Moreover, the rights that Cohen and Arato claim are created and defended in 'civil society' are by definition always first granted by the state; that is, they would not exist, could not be granted, without the state and its coercive authority. The realities of how consent and rights are 'created' is clouded if the act of avowed consent and communicative discourse is identified with freedom, and universal rights are understood as the outcome of this communicatively free process. In arguing that 'civil society' is the arena of coercion-free interaction while failing to maintain a strict conceptual distinction between coercion and consent, Cohen and Arato ride roughshod over the institutional interrelationships between coercion, consent and freedom. This lack of institutional focus and critique allows them to think of rights as logically and historically distinct from privileges, immunities, or estate-type liberties (1992: 413). This is empirically false. Most of the rights that are now the *objective* property of political subjects that are *universally* equal (before the law) were once rights in the form of special privileges or liberties for property ownership and political participation (Mann 1986–92; Hall 1984; Tuck 1979, 1999; Geuss 2001). In line with mainstream liberal discourse, this mistake acts to legitimize and forge consent for the 'liberal' state: the accountability for the form and scope of rights and their consequences is removed from actual states, state-forms, governments and political philosophies and situated in an ephemeral sphere of 'free' communicative interaction. Thus Cohen and Arato's main achievement is to create an illusory 'sphere' of freedom and rights that supports the hegemonic ideology of the liberal state.

4. An alternative conceptual framework

The 'civil society' discourse has been resurrected as a means of enhancing citizen power in the generation, interpretation and satisfaction of needs. But this is attempted using futile cosmetic adjustments within the prevailing discourse of rights. Cohen and Arato attempt to escape both natural law conceptions of imprescriptable individual rights and legal positivist accounts of rights but end up developing a discursive, idealistic and conformist account of freedom, rights, citizen power, and actually existing states and markets. This account reinforces a related

idealization: cosmopolitan democratic citizenship within a global 'civil society' (Held *et al.* 1999; Anheier 2001). Together these impoverish a clear causal understanding of politics and, consequently, fail to offer transformative proposals for change (Hamilton 2002b). It is more helpful simultaneously to move beyond rights discourse, focus on the causal significance of existing mechanisms, institutions and practices, and remain realistic about coercion and freedom. Real democratic participation is dependent on the power and opportunity for the contextual evaluation of needs and the contemporary mechanisms and institutions within which needs are formed and met, in particular states, markets and market-based institutions.

Human needs are not reducible to wants or preferences (the avowal of wants). Needs are distinguishable from wants because their satisfaction, lack of satisfaction, and trajectory of development have direct, specifiable consequences on human functioning.³ These needs have *general* and *particular* forms, which include *general* material requirements and ethical and political objectives *and* the everyday *particular* felt needs that demand satisfiers. I call the general material requirements 'vital needs' as they are the necessary conditions for minimal human functioning. The ethical and political objectives I call 'agency needs'. They are the necessary conditions for political agency and the everyday control over needs and choices that is characteristic of full human functioning; or at least this is true of the ones with which I am concerned, 'intersubjective recognition', 'active and creative expression', and 'autonomy as goal' (Hamilton 2003a: ch. 1).

Although vital and agency needs do exist in general form in theory and practice, needs are *normally* formed, experienced and satisfied as particular needs, as particular drives or goals. This is both cause and effect of their relation to wants. Particular needs *and* wants are both formed as a consequence of the creation of an object of desire (a satisfier) or the perception of a particular drive or goal irrespective of whether an object of desire or satisfier exists. As a consequence, needs are often felt in the form of wants. This is reinforced by the fact that, over time, some wants become interpreted as needs. Think of the history of the need for refrigerators, televisions and cars. But the exact form of the causal relationship between wants and needs and the historical transformation of wants into needs is dependent on existing institutional structures. Most economic and political mechanisms, institutions, and practices satisfy extant needs and/or create new needs. There are also a number of ideological and moral institutions and practices that affect the formation of needs and wants. This is the case because at any

point in time in any society there exists a normative distinction between needs and wants that is influenced in part by extant moral codes and ideologies (such as ideologies of consumption). Together, these different institutions and practices determine (or at least legitimize) how needs and need claims are perceived, interpreted, recognized and satisfied. Thus, greatest evaluative focus should be placed on two related structural matrices: first, the mechanisms that produce knowledge, beliefs, conventions, rules and commodities; and, second, the institutions and practices that constitute and determine these mechanisms, for instance the institutions of private property, education and health, welfare-state and market-related institutions, and rights-based constitutions.⁴

Groups and individuals can be oppressed in terms of need in four different ways. First, they can exist in a condition in which their vital needs are not properly satisfied. Second, they can misinterpret their agency needs because they are forced to spend all their available time struggling to satisfy their vital needs. Third, they can misinterpret their agency needs because their particular needs become distorted and they spend too much time satisfying needs that act against the satisfaction of their agency needs. Fourth, they can misinterpret their agency needs because they do not have the relevant information and power to make the requisite evaluations and judgements.⁵ The two latter forms of the condition in particular are dependent on the individual's institutionally determined relative power to affect the formation, trajectory and satisfaction of needs. Institutions determine to a significant degree both the way particular needs are formed and satisfied and the participative power of individuals over these mechanisms.

Thus the focus of political philosophy shifts from how to engender deliberative consensus over needs and rights to how to improve the participative conditions under which needs are formed, perceived and satisfied. These conditions are the existing matrices of institutions and practices. Extant institutions can be criticized, evaluated and transformed in the light of whether and how they meet the requirements to meet needs and ensure participative control over the meeting of needs. The goal is, therefore, the constant criticism and transformation of institutions and practices in line with needs rather than the relegation of need to either a moral or technical domain, which reduces them either to individual, moral concerns (charity) or the uniform dictatorship by a central administrative authority (like the welfare state).

Although extant states and the predominant current state-form (the welfare state) are inadequate responses to the problem of human needs, it does not follow from this that the state *per se* becomes

redundant in a politics of needs. Some kind of coercive state-like authority is a precondition if the evaluative and transformative goals outlined here are to obtain. This is due to the nature of needs and the realities of coercion. There is a requirement for an ultimate need evaluator, first, because some people's needs can and do retard the satisfaction and development of other people's need; and, second, because power and coercion are pervasive within and amongst the practices, institutions and roles that constitute the formation, satisfaction and evaluation of needs and institutions. Moreover, *pace* Habermas and Cohen and Arato's faith in consensus, groups will vehemently defend the criticized institutions, for institutions inevitably legitimize highly cherished beliefs, attitudes and needs, such as those upheld by the predominant distinction between the 'private' and the 'public'.

But why should this locus of authority be a state-like authority and not some other locus of authority, say the United Nations, World Bank, or other possible global authority? First, there is the important point that as things stand the ultimate coercive authority for all living humans is their state, and that any changes theorists have in mind should therefore start from that reality, rather than abstract from it and propose ideal solutions. In other words, work by the dictum: 'Don't prescribe a solution before you describe the predicament' (Shapin 2002: 27).

Second, as I have argued, although we may be able to talk about general needs at the level of theory, needs in context are normally particular needs with epistemological, causal and ontological relations to wants. Consequently, the coercive authority can properly act as the required ultimate evaluator of needs and institutions only if it is in responsive contact with individuals' needs *and* preferences. This evaluative exercise must therefore be as localized as possible in order to be able to deal with the contextual interpretation of the needs.⁶ And this coercive body must be under the control of the citizens since it is their needs that it will ultimately evaluate and adjudicate. This is important for both short-term need satisfaction and long-term considerations. Certain choices in politics involve long-term actual and possible paths of need development, or what I call 'need trajectories', along which citizens could develop positively or negatively as humans. Think, for example, of the long-term consequences involved in choosing between building a new motorway or investing in a safer and more efficient public rail transport, or of building constitutions founded on rights or needs. These are collective, public choices that governments make with varying degrees of reference to citizens' needs. In this account of needs a government's choice over need trajectories would be legitimate only when the choice

is made with regard to extant vital and agency need satisfaction and avowed preferences over needs and possible need trajectories. This requires legal safeguards for *two* main forms of participation: the frequent local (and less frequent state-level) evaluation of everyday needs and institutions; and the periodic evaluation of vital and agency needs and need trajectories. In this way, individual preferences are indispensable within a politics of needs, both as evidence in the evaluation of needs, institutions and trajectories and also as claims in themselves.⁷

The third reason a state-like authority is the best kind of coercive authority is to do with the efficacy of coercive control. At base coercion is about enforcement. Thus it is important to think about the realities of efficient coercive control. Could a global authority efficiently enforce the decisions and evaluative preconditions of a global 'civil society'? Could a global authority effectively legislate in line with these decisions? Do we not need a local authority backed up by a local police force that can be effective in responding to the requirements of coercion? Global police forces like NATO (and to some degree the UN) have displayed dismal ability in this regard, but often they are simply beaten by distance and lack of local knowledge.

Conclusion

I have argued that the concept of 'civil society' is not only too vague and ill-defined it is also self-defeating. It emerges out of a normative framework that blocks our critical understanding of the realities of coercion, freedom and necessity in contemporary politics. Freedom and unfreedom are positioned at opposite sides of a categorical divide. Rights are understood as self-created. And, now, thanks to the work of others, the holy trinity is complete: a utopia in which a global rights-based legal order will guarantee life, liberty and global citizenship. My conceptual alternative makes none of these assumptions. It links material necessity and ethical objectives to freedom and the enhancement of citizen participation and power. It is more realistic about the pervasiveness of states and markets in the legitimation of extant modes of participation *and* about the ineluctability of the coercive power of a state-like authority for improving participative possibilities. Global transactions, institutions and practices do affect local resources, conditions and possibilities, and thus they affect the evaluation and satisfaction of local needs, but it does not follow from this that the solution be global. Given the nature and spatial location of needs and the significance of evaluation in context, citizens can best gain greater control over the development and

satisfaction of their needs if they transform their state into a need-based state-like authority that takes greater control over these global transactions, institutions and practices. This will involve transforming institutions that oppress individuals in any of the four ways stipulated here or push citizens further and further away from grasping the communal and political nature of their needs. The prevalent rights-discourse is one example that deserves further research, for it tends to inhibit the attainment of a realistic degree of freedom and need satisfaction and it conceives of needs as the 'property' of individual subjects.

Notes

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- 2 As Nietzsche and Foucault have shown in different contexts, the freedom to choose and the capability to make choices involve self-discipline and imposed discipline, i.e. coercion.
- 3 Cf. Doyal and Gough (1991), Brock (1998), where need is defined in terms of lack and objective harm. This is simply mistaken. It is not the case that I lack whatever I need; many things that I already have are things that I need (Wiggins 1998: 6n). Or, in other words, I still need something that I no longer lack – I still need shelter even though I have a house and so do not lack shelter. Nor is it the case that I need whatever I lack. The objective harm created by lack is also experienced when strong wants are left unsatisfied.
- 4 Institutions are the stabilized outcomes of the interplay between past practices, intentional action that is purposive towards specific institutional ends and unintended consequences of action and societal discourses more generally (Goodin 1998). In contrast, practices involve the performing of an action that is part of a 'temporally unfolding' collection of linked actions (Schatzki 1996: 89–90), which involve practical understanding, rule following and explicit (or at least evident) human goods. They are therefore characterized by a significant degree of intentionality and human agency. Cf. MacIntyre's (1981: 187–8; 1988) and Oakeshott's (1975; 1991) conservative conceptions. Examples of practices include the eating of an evening meal together with friends and relatives, and kinds of democracy.
- 5 Marx's concerns about the working class and their 'underdeveloped' needs oscillates between the first three forms of need-based oppression (Marx 1973; 1976; 1976–1978; 1992; Hamilton 2003a: ch.1).
- 6 This inclines communitarians such as MacIntyre (1981; 1988), Taylor (1995b) and Walzer (1983; 1991) to think small, to regress to the local community. But they do so because they mistakenly understand identity as mono-significant and unchanging, and conflate political communities (that should encourage change) with other kinds of communities (that restrict change and experiment). This tends to reinforce racial, ethnic, and national

prejudices. Ideally, the coercive authority must coerce an area and group of people large enough and diverse enough to encourage diversity, experiment and change, and small enough for it to be able to be responsive to avowed needs and interests. However, the actual size can only be decided in context and only once the need-based institutions of participation are in place, which is the case in no existing state. Political theory must first think about how to secure these institutions before stipulating from afar the preferred size or demographic makeup of political communities.

- 7 See Feher (1983) for the consequences of ignoring preferences: Soviet communism, or the 'dictatorship over needs'.

Part II

Transnational Advocacy Networks: Harbingers of a Global Civil Society?

5

We Are All Marcos? *Zapatismo*, Solidarity and the Politics of Scale

Josée Johnston¹

When the dust raised by our uprising settles, people will discover the simple truth: in this whole struggle and thinking process, Marcos was just one more fighter. That's why I say: if you want to know who Marcos is, see who's hidden behind the mask, then take a mirror and look at yourself. The face you see there will be the face of Marcos because we are all Marcos.

Subcomandante Marcos (as cited in Ramonet 2001: 9)

Introduction

Capital has gone global, but can activism go the same route? Does the fact that activists use Zapatista slogans at anti-globalization demonstrations around the world provide enough evidence to substantiate the claim that 'we are all Marcos'?

This chapter explores the contradictions of transnational solidarity through an examination of *Zapatismo*, the transnational network that lobbies in support of the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Mexico.² It draws on Internet resources, participant observation, and interviews with solidarity activists to examine the Zapatistas' aspirations and to outline the various types of activism involved in *Zapatismo* solidarity. It finds that 'actually existing solidarity', at least in this case, does not possess the cohesiveness and extensiveness implied by such notions as 'global civil society' or even 'transnational social movements'. What such efforts represent, instead, are 'transnational advocacy networks' that exploit deficits in the ethico-political legitimacy of neoliberal globalism.

Unifying claims like 'we are all Marcos' have helped constitute a master-frame to unite diverse activists contesting neoliberal globalism. However, this chapter argues that cosmopolitan narratives of solidarity

tend to obscure different scales of struggle that are linked across borders by social, economic, and political relations, and that there is a need, therefore, for reflexivity on the part of solidarity workers who use universal ideals or slogans to struggle for liberation on behalf of a distant Other.

1. Naming the enemy: neoliberal globalism and the transnationalized state

So they tell us about globalization. And we realize that this is what they call this absurd order, where there is only one country – the country of money. Where frontiers will disappear, not as the result of brotherhood, but through the hemorrhage that fattens the powerful who have no nation. *Marcos*

Discussions of solidarity movements and networks often take place without consideration of the ‘recipients’ of these efforts. Often they focus on new technologies (the Internet), or theoretical debates (post-modernism) of concern to the elite mobile participants in struggles for social justice.

To evaluate the efficacy of *Zapatismo* as a solidarity effort, analysts must understand the ‘enemies’ that Zapatista communiqués identify. These include ‘bad government’, racism against indigenous peoples, patriarchal oppression of indigenous women, and capitalist exploitation of Lacóndon resources. One target that stands out as particularly important, but is often overlooked in writings about the Zapatistas, is the federal state’s adoption of neoliberal policies.³ Neoliberal globalism (henceforth globalism, or NLG) is an ideology that emerged in the 1980s advocating a new mode of capital regulation supporting the free movement of capital. Its prescriptions include dismantling national economic sovereignty over foreign ownership, investment and exchange; privatizing public enterprises and deregulating businesses; reducing public expenditures, balancing budgets and lowering corporate taxes (Williamson 1993: 18).

One of the most important, but less noted, consequences of these prescriptions has been the dismantling of the ‘agrarian welfare state’ instituted after World War II, and the consequent exacerbation of a global trend of ‘depeasantization’ (Araghi 2000: 147).

Since the debt crisis of the 1980s, the Mexican state has enacted policies involving, among other things, the end of the rural welfare state and, to a significant degree, of the ability of indigenous *campesinos* to determine the shape of their land and livelihoods.⁴ Though the elec-

tion of Vicente Fox in 2000 represented a victory for unmanipulated electoral transitions in Mexico, it also represented a continuity of the neoliberal model established by predecessor presidents Carlos Salinas (1988–1994) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000). Neoliberal strategies are part of a neoliberal historic bloc comprised of transnational capital, the concrete material interests involved in the Chiapas political economy (e.g. cattle ranchers, biotechnology firms, agricultural plantations, oil and gas interests), as well as local caciques and clientelist structures organizing state politics (Ross 1998; Barrera 1999). Working together in effective counterpoint, these forces subverted the already tenuous subsistence agricultural sector in Chiapas by promoting capital-intensive commodity production at the expense of local, democratic control over land and other resources, effectively reducing the means of subsistence for small food producers.⁵ Food policy was removed from the public realm and reoriented towards providing ‘inputs for a transnationalized agro-industrial network’ in accordance with the neoliberal logic of globalism (McMichael and Mhyre 1990: 67–8). According to this ‘logic’, *campesinos* in Chiapas should exploit their comparative advantage in cheap land, labour and water by eating subsidized corn imported from the US, and providing a reserve army of labour for agribusiness.⁶

Contrary to the anti-state anarchist bent of anti-globalization activities in advanced industrialized countries, the Zapatistas view the state as critical for providing the conditions that permit the exercise of autonomy, or positive liberty. While the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) opposes state violence and its patrimonial use of resources to divide and rule rural populations, it also sees the federal state as necessary for creating conditions for socio-economic equity and self-determination. The Zapatistas contest global neoliberalism, but also more specifically local targets. They defend an indigenous vision of subsistence-based agriculture, and a vision of a state that is democratic and responsive to citizens.⁷ They have called for a new pact among the elements of the federation, which puts an end to centralism and grants political, economic, and cultural autonomy to regions, indigenous communities, and municipalities. This multinational vision of autonomous regions within a larger federal entity is not one of indigenous isolation or separation from a larger Mexican state. In Marcos’s words:

our aspiration is to become citizens like everyone else. We want to be part of Mexico, without losing our identity, without being forced to give up our own culture, without ceasing to be Indians. Mexico

owes us a debt. A debt two centuries old, which can only settle by recognising our rights. (Cited in Ramonet 2001: 8; my emphasis)

Transnational activism is often romanticized as a goal of bottom-up globalization. However, the Zapatista struggle suggests that the federal state continues to be an agent of violence and, also, a potential agent of redistribution. The Zapatistas demand that the Mexican state act on behalf of citizens, rather than of international capital.⁸ They have challenged the loss of sovereignty occurring through globalism, and demanded that Mexico provide for the public good, respond to the structural irrelevance of large sectors of the Mexican population,⁹ and end its reliance on a politics of suppression and subordination to silence dissent at a time of supposed democratic transition.¹⁰ They challenged the ethico-political legitimacy of the neoliberal project through a reassertion of nationalist traditions in the Mexican public sphere.¹¹ They made it more difficult for the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) to reassert its hegemony, and are at least indirectly responsible for the historic change of regime that occurred with the election of Vincent Fox in 2000 (Gilberth and Otero 2001).

What Zapatista resistance shows is that the transnationalization of the state is never complete. The state's unwillingness to act on behalf of small producers 'provokes countertendencies sustained by domestic social groups that have been disadvantaged or excluded' (Cox 1987: 253). Thus, there is a contradiction at the heart of the globalist mode of regulation: its inability to absorb large populations in its developmental wake. Rather than simply exploiting people, it makes them structurally irrelevant, and denies them the means of subsistence.¹² Anthropologist June Nash argues that key conflicts of the last decade in the South have been 'not so much the struggle against exploitation defined in the workplace as they are the assertion of the right to live in a world with a diminishing subsistence base' (2001: 20). As the goal of broad-based mass 'development' becomes increasingly elusive, international capitalist institutions aim to contain and manage the most noxious and threatening symptoms of this asymmetric system. This weakens state legitimacy and provokes resistance, particularly where the dismantling of welfare systems is linked to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment policies. For these reasons, globalism is increasingly characterized by a politics of supremacy and subordination, as rulers respond to ethico-political legitimacy deficits with more coercion (Gill 1995a: 400). Subcomandante Marcos clearly articulates how this relates to the emergence of the Zapatistas: 'the Zapatista rebellion is not

just an indigenous problem but also the problem of the excluded in this gigantic genocide that the big money and great financial powers of this world are doing that decides to exclude a part of the population at any cost, even at the cost of human lives' (Apple 1997).

2. Solidarity observed: potentials, strengths, and contradictions

Having identified the state as the target of the Zapatista movement, we can now evaluate the role of solidarity efforts in the Zapatistas' struggle for indigenous autonomy in Southern Mexico. What have these efforts hoped to achieve, and by what criteria can we gauge their success?

Zapatismo solidarity efforts outside Mexico takes three basic forms: human rights lobbying, pedagogical activities, and economic solidarity. Human rights interventions constitute the most prominent form of *Zapatismo* solidarity. Part of this has involved the efforts of activists to publicize the 'low-intensity' war in Chiapas and to lobby their home states to pressure Mexico to concede to Zapatista demands. They have gathered outside courthouses, consulate offices, and legislatures to demand an end to military aid to Mexico, the implementation of the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, withdrawal of all Mexican military from Chiapas, and prosecution of paramilitaries.¹³ Non-profit organizations like *Enlace Civil* and the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas human rights centre in San Cristobal, Chiapas, have trained and sponsored thousands of *campamentistas* (accompaniment volunteers) who, since 1994, have travelled to Chiapas. These projects have played a critical role in ensuring the security of threatened communities.¹⁴

A second form of *Zapatismo* solidarity consists of pedagogical activities that publicize and educate core citizens about low intensity warfare and other injustices in Chiapas. These activities take advantage of the increased information flows made available as a result of globalization processes. As Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have noted, '[a] dense web of north-south exchange, aided by computer and fax communication, means that governments can no longer monopolize information flows' (1998a: 21). Through electronic *Zapatismo* networks, there are daily information flows on military harassment, human rights violations, and the status of resistance.¹⁵ Getting the word out, and educating citizens in developed countries about events in Chiapas is a key goal of activists. For Wes Rehberg, a member of the Strategic Pastoral Action Network, solidarity efforts are important because they 'keep the light of public opinion on areas of oppression that otherwise would be

obscured from public view', and these efforts 'are welcome and invited by those at sites of resistance against such oppression'.¹⁶

The third form of *Zapatismo* solidarity involves efforts to establish direct economic connections with Zapatista communities, and to organize protests against corporate exploitation of the region's human and material resources. These efforts take myriad forms, including Pastors for Peace, which delivers humanitarian aid from the US to impoverished communities; a Zapatista School Bond Programme that sells five-dollar school bonds and sends the money to indigenous educators in Chiapas (Escuelas 2000); and fax campaigns in support of Chiapan coffee cooperatives experiencing difficulty collecting from distributors (Christian Peacemaker 2000).

While such projects represent important attempts to channel wealth from north to south, in general, economic forms of solidarity tend to be more episodic and less routinized in comparison with the two other forms. There are a number of reasons for this. Economic solidarity requires more altruism than human rights activism. It involves a much more challenging, ambitious agenda, with less immediate benefits to volunteers. People find it easier to attend 'solidarity' trips to southern climes, than to accept and act on the fact that their entire way of life depends on a system of exploited labour and unsustainable modes of production.¹⁷ Solidarity projects reject a discourse of altruism and charity; but its subtle persistence often goes unnoticed.¹⁸ To some extent, appeals to altruism persist as part of a strategy to coax a wealthy (but indebted) public to alter their consumption habits in the name of social justice.¹⁹

These shortcomings do not arise because economic solidarity efforts are misguided or poorly planned. They are inherent in capitalist domination itself, and are a key dilemma for activists engaged in struggle against the historic bloc of neoliberal globalism. Projects of economic and anti-corporate solidarity must not only challenge ethico-political legitimacy deficits – they must also address the issue of *institutional* and *material* alternatives to current modes of production. This is particularly difficult given that identities and lifestyles of core solidarity workers are inextricably intertwined with a system of production producing cheap consumer items reliant on low wages and environmental degradation in the periphery. It is important to investigate the extent to which privileged actors unwittingly perpetuate inequitable power relations.

3. Fighting for a global civil society?

There is a tendency in the otherwise diverse and multifaceted academic writing on globalization to view transnational solidarity efforts as con-

nected to the retreat of state power and its displacement to transnational and subnational levels (Lipschutz 1992). Effective resistance to globalism is therefore seen as dependent on transcending national boundaries and establishing a global civil society (GCS) and cosmopolitan governance (Held and Archibugi 1995). Cosmopolitan imagery is not just academic, but has a strong resonance in popular culture, appearing in everything from Coke commercials to rap videos, to political speeches about the new global order. While it usually self-presents as an oppositional perspective, upon closer examination cosmopolitanism also displays qualities of a new hegemonic consensus that is often blind to its own privilege (Brennan 1997). Mobility is the new norm, and placelessness a virtue. Grateful Dead lyricist and cyberguru, John Perry Barlow, holds his powerbook up to the sky and tells the crowd, 'This is where I live now!' (Adbusters 2001).

The cosmopolitan emphasis on the possibility of new forms of political agency beyond national boundaries is a useful counterpoint to monolithic portrayals of globalization and of nation-states. It draws our attention to how space-time compression has not only facilitated capital movement, but makes new forms of social interaction possible. It offers a vision of two competing globalization processes: one engineered from 'above', and another emerging from 'below' in the uncharted territory of global civil society.²⁰ Top-down globalization, a globalist mode of regulation characterized by integrated financial capital markets and global market discipline, is accompanied in varying degrees by a bottom-up globalization of resistance and transnational solidarity movements. Thus, while developments in information technology are facilitating the integration of financial markets, they are also allowing diverse communities around the world to gain knowledge of global suffering and injustice. This consciousness then works to establish the 'initial condition for a true universalization of the idea of justice and the undertaking of the necessary actions that will lead to its progressive realisation' (Vilas 1995: 280).

Thus, neoliberal globalism, by advancing the interests of transnational financial capital, creates contradictions and disruptive counter-hegemonic forces. NLG is neither fixed nor complete, and should be understood as a dialectical process rather than as a fixed conceptual entity.²¹ The transnationalization of the state is never complete: 'the further it advances, the more it provokes countertendencies sustained by domestic social groups that have been disadvantaged or excluded' (Cox 1987: 253). As national governments surrender power (willingly or unwillingly) to transnational capital, legitimacy deficits emerge, giving rise to myriad social movements that challenge the loss of sovereignty and the emptiness of procedural democracy.

The Zapatistas are one such movement exploiting ethico-political legitimacy deficits beyond national boundaries. Yet dominant globalist depictions of the Zapatista struggle would imply that this group is living up in the sky with John Perry and other cyberwarriors – not cornered by the thousands of Mexican militia and paramilitaries positioned in the Lacandón jungle of south-eastern Chiapas. More specifically, analysis of the Zapatistas tends to emphasize qualitative breaks from the past (e.g. ‘postmodern rebellion’), inadvertently lumping together *campesino* self-defence groups together with Internet activists.²² A focus on discontinuity tends to minimize continuity with historical struggles, and belies the importance of struggles to re-embed economic and political control in democratic state structures accountable to national citizenry. While the Zapatistas have challenged a global capital accumulation that limits the autonomy of the Mexican state (and the multiple nations within state boundaries), it is not clear that their struggles can be described as primarily global, or even primarily transnational. Targets are both more specific, and rooted in specific places and substantive visions of democratic life. At the same time, this struggle is not exclusively local; the Zapatistas call for the implementation of universal human rights, and see themselves as a mirror of oppression throughout the world. How, then, should we conceptualize these solidarity linkages?

4. Scale, place, and transnational advocacy networks

Debates about how to understand and ‘classify’ *Zapatismo* are complicated by the tendency to reduce complex phenomena to a singular level of geographic scale, to see struggles as either global or local. Much, if not most, social phenomena involves a complex intermingling of various scales of struggle.²³ Questions of analytic and material scale, like the ‘global’ and the ‘local’, are frequently treated as static ontological entities, obscuring their fluid construction and alteration by technological developments, social struggles and class conflicts.²⁴ Smith argues that geographic scales should not be seen as a harmonious mosaic – as in the profoundly banal and depoliticizing slogan, ‘think globally, act locally’ – but as a nested hierarchy embedded in a global division of labour (N. Smith 1992: 73, 75). For example, the global tends to involve the ‘scale of financial capital’; the national usually constitutes units of political and military cooperation, and legislates questions of labour; the ‘locality’ is the scale of ‘social reproduction and embodies the geographical territory over which daily activities normally range’ (N. Smith 1992: 73–5).

When we understand the interrelations of scale, it becomes less important to classify *Zapatismo* solidarity into a local/national/global classification scheme. Rather than to select a scale of struggle *a priori*, we need to explore the ways these levels interact, which scales are most effective for certain struggles, and how the scales themselves change through technological innovation and resistance. For example, how are transnational Internet flows related to the struggles of *campesinos* in the south-east of Chiapas? How are these local struggles related to struggles over control of the state, both regionally and nationally? The limits of the global scale, in particular, are not always considered in discussions of the formation of global solidarity networks. While we might agree on a common protagonist (e.g. neoliberalism, or transnational corporations), it is not clear how to resolve fundamental contradictions between the scales targeted in the course of these struggles. While this challenge is fraught with difficulties, it is an unavoidable part of building resistance to neoliberal globalism. As Harvey writes:

How to build a political movement at a variety of spatial scales as an answer to the geographical and geopolitical strategies of capital is a problem that in outline at least the [Communist] Manifesto clearly articulates. How to do it for our times is an imperative issue for us to resolve. (2000: 52)

The sentiment 'we are all Marcos' expresses resistance to common patterns of structural irrelevance, depeasantization, and transnationalized states of low-intensity democracy. The challenge of scale – both analytically and politically – is to dialectically combine universality and particularity. This is no easy feat. For Raymond Williams, this challenge was so great he could only find reconciliation through the medium of fiction. To describe this challenge, Williams used the concept of 'militant particularism'. Militant particularism requires that we are simultaneously aware of the 'systemic qualities of the damage being wrought across geographical scales and difference', and, at the same time, are rooted in a specific politics of place (Harvey 2000: 81).

The challenge of 'militant particularism' for academics is to set aside abstract theorizing about *global* civil society, and explore the difficulties of political organizing across vast geographic expanses. Constructing a truly *global* solidarity is a highly ambitious undertaking. A truly 'global' solidarity would involve multiple continents (rather than simply bilateral engagement across nations) and alleviate inequities across them; create democratic structures enabling mass

participation across multiple national boundaries (Shaw 1994: 654); and develop a global media with a diversity of views to stimulate common debates. Non-state actors from around the world would regularly interact (with both state and non-state actors), and share understandings of substantive issues.²⁵ Despite the homogenizing force of global capital (Barber 1995; Ritzer 2000), cultural diversities present obstacles to understanding and the construction of shared identities. Thus, while solidarity *beyond* national boundaries is not new (e.g., diaspora politics and pan-nationalisms), when the scale is broadened to this extent, it is unclear how global projects can effectively create alternative imagined communities of solidarity.²⁶

These challenges suggest the need to temper our usage of such ambitious terminology. Luckily, other concepts come to the fore. 'Transnational'²⁷ is a less ambitious concept, referring to organizations or movements operating across nations without necessarily subsuming the national. Keck and Sikkink usefully elaborate the differences between transnational social movements (TSMs) and transnational advocacy networks (TANs) (1998a: 219). A TSM is built on a scale of concrete linkages deriving from ties such as shared locality, experiences, or kinship, and possesses some capacity for mass mobilization. TANs usually involve a smaller number of morally committed activists linked together in several nations to share 'values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information' (Keck and Sikkink 1998a: 46). The goal is not just to influence outcomes but to *change the terms of the debate*. While TANs have historic roots in struggles against slavery and for universal suffrage, contemporary TANs like *Zapatismo* can be seen as a response to the ethico-political legitimacy deficits of neoliberal globalist projects.

Such distinctions are important because they allow us to consider appropriate scales of resistance to neoliberal globalism. TANs are only one form of resistance and operate at only one scale. They should not be seen as a substitute for social movements based on daily interaction, shared locality, and mass mobilization.

5. Exploiting ethico-political legitimacy deficits and working across scales: strengths and weaknesses of the *Zapatismo* TAN

Transnational social movements are often depicted as an ultimate form of social organization. In debates about *Zapatismo*, for example, it has been argued that Internet organizing is inferior because contact

between activists is episodic, and heavily reliant on discursive, non-experiential information sources. So, for instance, Judith Adler Hellman notes that electronic communication provides a 'remarkably "flattened" picture of the actors and events in Chiapas' (2000). This technological activism 'constitutes a kind of "virtual" Chiapas that is instantly available to us on a computer screen, but which bears only a very partial resemblance to the "real" Chiapas'.²⁸ Tarrow cautions: 'anyone who has caught the internet virus can attest, virtual activism may serve as a *substitute* – and not as a spur – to activism in the real world' (1998b: 193).

These concerns raise important issues. However, the distinction between 'real' and 'virtual' Internet activism is based on a misunderstanding of multi-scaled strategizing. All activism is mediated by culturally specific mind-sets as well as by various mediums of information. Recognizing this does not disparage the critical role of personal experience in the development of a grounded political consciousness.²⁹ However, the inevitability of mediated social activism – temporally, spatially, and epistemologically – means that scales of activism other than direct person-to-person experience can express solidarity with the Zapatista struggle. The *Zapatismo* TAN is just one scale of struggle – one that capitalizes on new opportunities to exchange information. Internet-related activities of TANs do not distract activists from 'real' mobilization, but are an invaluable tool for quickly transmitting information on military repression, human rights violations, and the subordination of citizens' interests to transnational capital.

Efforts of the *Zapatismo* solidarity network to expose the Mexican state's politics of supremacy and subordination provide a clear example of this. One important case involved the now infamous leaked memo from Riordan Roett to Chase Manhattan Bank's Emerging Markets division. In the memo, Roett, on leave as Director of Johns Hopkins University's Latin American Studies programme, advised the Mexican government of the 'need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy' (Roett 1995).³⁰ This memo was widely distributed through *Zapatismo* listservs and websites and is thought to have been a key part of the decision to halt the military offensive in Chiapas. Through its human rights witnessing programmes in Chiapas, the solidarity movement continues to champion the sort of autonomous self-development embodied in the San Andrés Accords, and to highlight how and where the current situation is incongruent with international human rights.

Struggle against neoliberalism cannot exist purely at the transnational or local level. Transnational Internet information flows are part

of a multi-scaled resistance strategy to neoliberal globalism. They do not substitute for face-to-face social movement connections, or projects of mass mobilization. But they play a critical role, nonetheless, by providing the means for information exchange.³¹

It should not be assumed that social movements operate most effectively or efficiently at the scale of the transnational. National-level movements may retain importance for logistical and institutional reasons, as the Zapatistas themselves suggest in their ability to articulate themselves as legitimate actors in national publics.³² Mexican activists draw on support from transnational *Zapatismo* networks, but organize mass mobilization primarily at the national level, and against targets such as the Mexican Congress, the presidential office, and the Mexican military.

Sustained mass mobilization at the national level satisfies one criterion for a social movement. However, we cannot assume that a *transnational* social movement will inevitably follow; the public demonstrations supporting the Zapatistas outside Mexico have been relatively minor events compared with the large-scale mass-mobilizations held within Mexican borders.³³ The other marker of a transnational social movement – a common master-frame amongst transnational participants – is only present to a limited degree. The dilemmas of trying to construct multi-scaled solidarity politics remain a challenge. Considerations of scale and inequality allow us to establish priorities for solidarity work, understand the limits of single-scale campaigns accessible only to elite actors, and identify broader issues in the ‘fourth world war’.³⁴

While the term ‘transnational’ is more specific than ‘global’, it tends to disguise key contradictions within *Zapatismo* networks between relatively privileged participants with easy access to electronic information networks, and the Chiapaneco struggles where participants are primarily indigenous and generally do not have access to computers.³⁵ The lives of elite participants in transnational advocacy networks contrast sharply with the drama of *campesino* survival in the militarized region of Chiapas. This was dramatically evident on a trip to the Zapatista capital, La Realidad, with a solidarity group of US citizens. While a member of the group complained loudly of high tuition fees at her California university, several *campesinos* questioned the visiting gringos about work opportunities in the US, and the average hourly wage for illegal migrants. Many elements of solidarity – visiting the region, standing together with local citizens facing danger, transferring resources to isolated communities – are voluntary, and are undertaken

only by the most committed activists. In the case of extreme power differentials amongst participants, voluntarism can work against the construction of a solidarity based on equality by blinding participants to the lack of choices and mobility afforded to the recipients of their solidarity.

It is often forgotten that most political attachments are rooted in particular times and places, as Raymond Williams (1989) and many others point out.³⁶ Most people in the majority world are not only rooted in particular places, but lack access to technologies of space-time compression like the Internet, or even telephones. When individuals of the majority world are connected to technologies of time/space compression, like television, this often entails a relatively passive participation in unidirectional corporate media involving populations 'who are simply on the receiving end of time-space-compression' (Massey 1991: 26).

Sensitivity to scale requires recognition not just of difference, but of *inequality* within the transnational *Zapatismo* network. To build transnational solidarity a common frame must be shaped from the bottom up, but this is difficult when ideas and outlooks fail to transcend a multiplicity of local boundaries. While theorists may assume that globalization makes increased cross-cultural communication inevitable, network participants continue to be divided by cultural barriers, linguistic gaps, tactical differences, and radically different lifeworlds.³⁷

The romanticization of the 'Other' that tends to accompany post-colonial solidarity projects further hinders the development of a common transnational master-frame. As Yi-Fu Tuan cautions, the grace of non-Western communities is often exaggerated to alleviate Western guilt about the uncertain moral codes of capitalist modernity (1989: 168). Romanticization of the local South not only obscures the ubiquitous potential for parochial insularity and conservative reactionism, but assumes a common logic of global capitalist expansion and exploitation. It is this logic that underlies the sentiment, 'we are all Marcos'.

Herein lies the real problem of creating a 'virtual Chiapas' – where elite actors fail to recognize inequality and their privileged political-economic positioning in global hierarchies. This virtual Chiapas involves the construction of an exotic Other to underpin Orientalist constructions of elite benevolence, and may serve to substitute small acts of kindness for more radical redistribution projects.

This is not simply an epistemological dilemma (how to know the 'real Chiapas'), but a thorny material problematic haunting all

transnational solidarity projects: how do we build a solidarity based on a dialogical project of cultural exchange *and* broad-based material redistribution and reorganization? As Massey points out, it is virtually impossible for even the best-intentioned activist to stand outside these unequal systems of exchange:

[T]he ‘time-space-compression’ which is involved in producing and reproducing the daily lives of the comfortably-off in First World societies – not just their own travel but the resources they draw on, from all over the world, to feed their lives – may entail environmental consequences, or hit constraints, which will limit the lives of others before their own. (1991: 26)

Although the world economy links people to distant others through global commodity chains, these relations across scales are embedded in hierarchies of class, gender and race. Not only is space-time differentially distributed, but the unequal distribution of mobility is interconnected:

It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others... *It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people...* We need to ask, in other words, whether our relative mobility and power over mobility and communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups. (Massey 1991: 26; my emphasis)

In short, the cosmopolitan ideal of a global civil society as a level playing field where mobile global citizens are free to enter, exchange ideas, and form solidarities is a naïve fantasy that obscures important obstacles to building solidarities across geographic scales.

Despite these difficult challenges, possibilities exist for transnational solidarity. Despite the logistical problems of transnational mass mobilization, ideas readily flow across borders. The Zapatista uprising inspired activists around the world to analyse neoliberalism at home, brought three thousand activists from forty-five countries to Chiapas to plan a more ‘just humanity’, spawned a series of international encounters on the same theme,³⁸ and inspired anti-globalism activists in Seattle, Prague, and Québec City (Blackened Flag 2001). The Zapatistas have inadvertently generated a loosely knit, grassroots philosophy and solidarity network that is connected by shared normative concerns, and effectively exploits the ethico-political legitimacy

deficits of neoliberal globalism. Part of how they did this was by naming neoliberalism as a common enemy, and creating a unity encapsulated in the phrase, 'we are all Marcos'. Despite these impressive successes, a comprehensive transnational master-frame, let alone a TSM or a set of institutional and material alternatives to globalism, has not yet emerged, and serious obstacles remain in the struggle for solidarity across different scales of struggle.

Conclusion: scales of struggle in the fourth world war

And what you in France at *Le Monde diplomatique* describe as *pensée unique* (unchallengeable received wisdom associated with neoliberalism) supplies the ideological glue needed to convince the world that globalization is irreversible and that any other project would be utopian, unrealistic. At the world level, the big battle now taking place – which we could call the fourth world war – has its own lineup of forces. On one side, the supporters of the global economy and, on the other, everyone who, in one way or another, is resisting it. *Marcos* (Ramonet 2001: 9)

Seen through dialectical eyeglasses, we appear to be in the midst of a wave of counter-hegemonic efforts against the deepening of market relations in late capitalism. The failure of states to provide public goods demanded by citizens generates ethico-political legitimacy crises and struggles to re-embed markets within democratically organized political systems. The Zapatista rebellion in 1994 provided a powerful focal point for these trends, and encouraged the creation of vibrant solidarity networks that brought diverse activists together across multiple national boundaries. In a very general way, resistance to the expansion of the corporate market forces of globalism was united under a common banner: 'we are all Marcos'. Yet it is important for materially privileged activists in core countries who proclaim that 'we are all Marcos' to understand how they [we] are *not* Marcos. Barriers of wealth, class, and cultural heterogeneity divide forces of 'bottom-up globalization'. Power and wealth are more highly concentrated than ever before in human history. The basic needs of a huge percentage of the world's population go unmet, and the 'four horseman of the apocalypse stalk the earth in the form of war, violence, disease and epidemics (such as AIDS), and famine' (Gill 1995b: 74).

With the emergence of a fourth world of structurally irrelevant populations, top-down modernization discourses are being replaced

with 'bottom-up' development narratives focused on heterogeneous ways of life in multiple 'localities'. This shift from universalist preoccupations to cultural pluralism is a necessary corrective. However, cultural pluralist accounts are often accompanied by a stubbornly apolitical discourse that focuses on micro-managing crisis situations rather than on global capitalist exploitation (Hoogvelt 1997: 178–80). We must beware of localist micro-development discourses that bolster an 'emerging system of global governance with methods and instruments geared to containing and managing symptoms rather than removing causes' (Hoogvelt 1997: 181), as well as unreflective universals and Eurocentric growth models.

As always, the difficult but critical work lies in the middle ground. Drawing on the work of critical geographers like Neil Smith and David Harvey, I have referred to this as a *politics of scale* that dialectically combines universality and particularity, does not assume the sufficiency of one scale of resistance, and roots out contradictions between different scales in the international division of labour and resources. We must be alert to the political-economic connections that privilege certain terrains and scales of struggles over others, and link seemingly unconnected local scales through commodity chains and information flows. This requires that activists root themselves in local struggles, while simultaneously evaluating their own positioning in global flows of capital and information.

The aim of this discussion of the politics of scale is intended to discourage unreflective assumptions about global civil society and universal ideals, and encourage further investigation into the logistic scalar limits of transnational solidarity. While a small number of peripatetic activists attend anti-globalization protests in multiple national contexts, for most people in the majority world such mobility is impossible. Thus, an exclusive focus on this scale of activism draws critical resources away from other scales of struggle rooted in particular places, against specific governments, and over particular resources like land, food, and water. Challenging the assumption that a transnational master-frame extends from indigenous *campesinos* in Chiapas to solidarity activists in the minority world, does not discount the possibility of a unifying frame centred around criticism of transnational corporate rule. Standards of universal human rights have been effectively used to deride social exclusion, and are part of an emerging transnational master-frame inspired in part by the Zapatistas' critique of neoliberalism. But power and material imbalances make it possible for certain network actors to dominate the construction of these master-frames and make unreflective assumptions

about their universality. Thus, we must find a way of strategically employing universals to unite diverse resistance movements, as we simultaneously pay attention to what divides us.

Notes

- 1 I would like to acknowledge the SSHRC doctoral fellowship; University of Alberta dissertation scholarship; SSHRC-MCRI globalism research grant; and the helpful contributions of Zapatismo activists and researchers (the Global Exchange staff in San Cristobal, Ted Lewis, Wes Rehberg, Jorge Aros, Dan la Botz, Mary Anne Tenuto), and the multiple audiences that gave tough but helpful comments: Marie-Josée Massicotte, Janet Conway, Sandra Halperin, Gordon Laxer, Thomas Oleson, Ryan Meili, and the globalism research working group at the University of Alberta.
- 2 The term '*Zapatismo*' also refers to the Mexican social movement supporting the EZLN; my focus is on the solidarity networks that have emerged outside the state of Chiapas and Mexico.
- 3 For a comprehensive discussion of the peasant revolt, see Ross (2000a). For an account of international solidarity movements, see Waterman (1998b); Thomas Oleson's forthcoming doctoral dissertation documents Zapatismo. A concise English-language account of the solidarity movement within Mexico is the ChiapasLink: <http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch13.htm>.
- 4 Between 1981 and 1992, public investment in agriculture declined by 79% (Saxe-Fernández 1994: 334). Another indicator of the transnationalized state and the rural sector is the constitutional amendment to Article 27 of the Mexican constitution that President Salinas announced in 1991. The amendment effectively terminated Mexico's historic commitment to land redistribution, opened the door to the privatization of communal land holdings (*ejidos*), legalized land-holding by investors and corporations, and reshaped the social vision of agriculture born out of the Mexican Revolution. Subcomandante Marcos described the amendment as the most 'powerful catalyst in the communities', as it 'cancelled all legal possibilities of their holding land' (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 1995b).
- 5 Throughout the developing world, staple cereal production for direct human consumption by small-scale producers is being displaced by capital-intensive food production for upper-income markets, export, and livestock consumption.
- 6 The amendment to Article 27 of the Mexican constitution promoted an exodus from subsistence plots, thereby lowering wages in the labour market for farm workers (*journaleros*). It is estimated that some 15 million peasants will leave the land in the next twenty years (Araghi 2000: 158).
- 7 The Zapatistas' ethico-political challenge to the Mexican state involved a rejection of a narrow procedural vision of democracy, and a call for a new democratic project based on autonomous control over national and local resources. Under low-intensity democracy, citizens make occasional trips to the ballot box to choose between elite leaders, while power is concentrated in the hands of non-elected economic elites. This is why the Zapatistas

insist that they are not interested simply in a change of government, or getting into power themselves. Marcos insists that 'the problem isn't one of taking power. We know that the space once occupied by power is now empty... What is needed in these times of globalization is to build a new relationship between government and citizens'; in Ramonet (2001); see, also, Gills, Rocamora and Wilson (1993); and Vilas (1994) on the question of low-intensity democracy in Latin America.

- 8 For this reason, the Zapatistas demand the renegotiation of NAFTA, 'given that in its current state it does not take into consideration the indigenous populations and sentences them to death for the crime of having no job qualifications' (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 1995a: 157).
- 9 In Marcos's words: 'The government has tried to portray Mexico as a First World country. They want to show the World Trade Centre, the big malls, the Zona Rosa, the big, modern cities – Acapuloco, Cancun, Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara. They want to show the tourists the lovely Mexican culture – the mariachis, the folkloric dancing, the beautiful clothing and crafts of the indigenous people. But behind this picture is the real Mexico, the Mexico of the millions of Indians who live in extreme poverty. We have helped to peel off the mask to reveal the real Mexico' (Medea 1995: 58).
- 10 Despite Fox's claim to have pulled back the armed forces, checkpoints are routine, and the military is omnipresent (Barreda 2001).
- 11 On debates over nationhood in the Mexican public sphere, see Hilbert (1997). The Zapatistas' positive view of nationalism offers an interesting contrast to that of the director of Global Exchange, a major non-profit organization involved in Chiapas: 'I see nationalism as fundamentally very dangerous. When those [nationalistic] forces are let loose in conditions of [economic] crisis, fascism and nationalism are birds of a feather.' Ted Lewis, interview with author, 12 January 2001, San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico.
- 12 An estimated two billion people will become redundant if neo-liberalism is fully implemented (Araghi 2000: 151).
- 13 See, e.g., de Yoanna (2000); Burke (2000).
- 14 The expulsion of foreign activists is one indicator of the success *Zapatismo* has had exposing Mexico's ongoing militarization (Stevenson 2000).
- 15 For example, one email detailed how the military was involved in a project spraying Zapatista communities with a harmful pesticide over the last five years (Castillo 2000).
- 16 W. Rehberg, interview with author, 13 October 2000.
- 17 It is no coincidence that one of Global Exchange's most popular 'reality' tours gives American citizens a chance to visit the tropic climes of Cuba – an irony that Global Exchange staff are well aware of.
- 18 On the distinction between altruism and solidarity, see Esterovic and Smith (2001).
- 19 Schor (1998) reports that two-thirds of US citizens in the \$75,000+ income bracket stated that they would need an increase of 50–100% of their income to be satisfied. More generally, her research documents a state of psychological denial about consumption and spending patterns.
- 20 Although used by other writers in various contexts and meanings, the phrase 'globalization from below' is attributed to Richard Falk (1998). Falk treats globalization from below as an open question, one made more ques-

- tionable by the absence of a coherent alternative to neoliberalism, and the piecemeal nature of bottom-up critiques.
- 21 On dialectical methodology and its relationship to the study of globalization, see Harvey (1996: 46–8).
 - 22 In North America, it is difficult to find left-leaning analyses of the Zapatistas that do *not* use the postmodern label, or insinuate a radical disjuncture from so-called ‘modern’ political forms. See, for example, Burbach (1994); Carrigan (1995). Mark Berger protests this tendency in his excellent review of the Zapatista literature: ‘even though the movement that has emerged represents a break with the cold war era, the Zapatistas clearly continue to operate in the shadow of the Marxism and guerrilla politics of that era and of the Mexican Revolution’ (2001: 159).
 - 23 Given the dominance of the ‘globalist adaptation’ perspective, these biases occur in varying degrees. The focus is often on the global or the local or the global/local nexus, while the national and state levels are relegated to the dustbin of history.
 - 24 It should be noted that the term has two meanings which are related, but distinct: (1) material scale, as landscape; (2) analytic scale, which refers to the level of abstraction we use to understand social relationships, regardless of their geographic nature (N. Smith 1992: 74).
 - 25 Clark *et al.* (1998) do not find substantial evidence of global civil society in their study of NGO participation in UN world conferences. While the number of NGOs is increasing, they are disproportionately from the North. Evidence of deepening common frames among NGOs was found, but states’ interpretations continued to dominate in international forums. The study concludes that state sovereignty continues to limit the development of a global civil society.
 - 26 Even national solidarity projects have traditionally had to create shared imagined communities of understanding across wide expanses of inequality and heterogeneity. See James 1996.
 - 27 Unlike the editors of this volume, I employ the term ‘transnational’ rather than ‘international’ (or ‘supranational’). The prefix ‘supra’ implies a connection that subsumes national bodies and identities. In contrast, the prefix ‘trans’ suggests connections that cross and transform national boundaries, without necessarily erasing them. This is akin to the meaning of the term ‘transpersonal ecology’, an approach which does not deny the existence of the individual ego, but attempts to seek out identification and connections beyond the self which then transform the narrow, egoistic limitations of the self (see Fox 1995: 198–9). Transnational solidarity similarly aspires to create connections that establish shared meanings and connections beyond national identities, challenging both a chauvinistic nationalism, and a totalizing universalism that erases national identities.
 - 28 A review and critique of Hellman’s *Real and Virtual Chiapas* by Harry Cleaver can be found at <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/anti-hellman.html>. A critique by Josh Paulson, and a rebuttal by Hellman, can be found in *Socialist Register 2001* (<http://www.yorku.ca/socreg/>).
 - 29 As Paulo Freire writes, ‘[s]olidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is in solidarity; it is a radical posture’ (1995: 31).

- 30 For a list of the many electronic messages and political implications of this memo, see the Chiapas95 archive at <http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/chiapas-1/1995.11/msg00080.html>
- 31 Mary-Anne Tenuto of the Chiapas Support Committee writes: 'I agree that the Internet is a cheap and efficient way of disseminating information around the country and around the world. It is best used as a communications tool to reach many people quickly. I would agree that it should not be used to REPLACE local organizing, but to ENHANCE it.' Interview with author, 13 October 2000.
- 32 This national articulation makes the Zapatistas a bona fide social movement according to Charles Tilly's definition: 'social movements effectively establish the presence of an important entity – and identity – in national politics. They assert the existence of a worthy, unified, numerous, committed, and aggrieved claimant' (1999: 262).
- 33 While there is a social movement dimension to Mexican *Zapatismo*, it should not be forgotten that the movement originated with the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) – an army complete with guns, bullets and a combat history. The use of violent tactics is often occluded in the rush to employ social movement terminology, and obscures the intimate relationship between violence and neoliberal globalism. See Johnston (2000). In the EZLN's own words: '[the EZLN] is organized as an army, and it fulfills all international regulations for recognition as an army. When the war began, the EZLN fulfilled international conventions: it formally declared war, it has recognizable uniforms, ranks and insignias, it respects the civil population and neutral bodies. The EZLN has weapons, military organization and discipline' (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 2001).
- 34 At the time of this writing, the tensions between global inequity and solidarity efforts were dramatically manifest in the varying efforts to raise money for the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York, and the bombing of Afghanistan. While more than one billion dollars was collected for the families of those who died in the terrorist attacks, the UN received only \$147 million in donations – far short of the \$654 million it estimated it needed to help the 7.5 million Afghans in danger of starving to death. *Globe & Mail*. 10/23/01. A1.
- 35 A notable exception is the Chiapas Media project, which provides computers and video recorders to indigenous communities. See <http://www.chiapasmediaproject.org/>.
- 36 Robyn Eckersley provides an excellent summary of eco-anarchist and eco-communalist positions that directly pertain to a conceptualization of appropriate struggle and attachment to place (1992: 145–78). For a criterion of 'place' that is global, but avoids insularity, see Massey (1991: 24–9).
- 37 Some supporters of the EZLN, such as Jorge Aros from Witness for Peace, explicitly reject its militarism (Interview with author, 12 October 2000).
- 38 The Acción Zapatista website has an entire section on the *encuentros*. <http://www.utexas.edu/students/nave/>.

6

'Local' Organizing and 'Global' Struggles: Coalition-Building for Social Justice in the Americas

Marie-Josée Massicotte*

Introduction

With the multiplication of mass demonstrations for global justice – Seattle, World Trade Organization (WTO), Québec City, Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) – 'global civil society' has become a popular concept among academic, activist, and government circles, and among citizens in many countries.¹ The 'revival' of civil society was first associated with Poland's *Solidarnosc* movement. It extended to other East European and Latin American groups which were similarly challenging authoritarian regimes (Cohen and Arato 1992). The United Nations world summits on global issues like population and gender also marked the explosion of civil society, especially 'globally'. Ann Florini notes that mega-gatherings of governmental representatives 'spurred the development of a stronger, more integrated transnational civil society', especially since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, when 'accredited NGOs outnumber[ed] governmental delegations two to one' (Foster and Anand 1999; Florini 2001: 37). Both phenomena led many scholars to describe civil society *in opposition* to the state, seeking autonomy. I contend that these two spheres are in continual interaction, mutually shaping each other.

Most recent analyses of civil society discuss the possibility of an emerging citizens' movement, cutting across state borders, to become the future conscience of the people in an interdependent world in which states' capabilities are seen as eroding or inadequate. This 'global civil society' would promote cooperation and 'good governance', to better manage the global commons within the global village.

chapter is sceptical about the optimistic literature on the emergence of a *global* civil society, which is largely seen as *progressive*. Based on fieldwork mostly in Mexico, I examine the processes of coalition-building and transnational networking which emerged in response to economic integration and free trade agreements in the Americas (NAFTA, FTAA). Studying their strengths and limits, I argue that coalition-building processes are complex sites of struggle and fertile sources of innovation. They can strengthen cooperation across sectors and borders, and challenge or transform the political analyses and strategies of the participants. They also facilitate the organizing of major events like those in Porto Alegre (World Social Forum) or Québec City (FTAA). Nevertheless, transnational coalitions have local and national roots and histories. Grassroots sociopolitical movements, anchored in specific places, are still the core spaces where most people can get involved on a regular basis and implement projects.³

1. A Gramscian-inspired approach to civil society

I am sceptical about associating mass protests with an emerging 'global civil society' that is described as 'progressive' and unified around a common project to counter the neoliberal, corporate agenda. The latter is consolidated through agreements like NAFTA and promoted by advocates of the 'Washington consensus', including powerful governments and multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank.⁴ Civil society often bears citizens' hope for a better world, or a 'cosmopolitan democracy', but there are few detailed analyses about what it means and accomplishes (Archibugi and Held, 1995). Which actors are included?⁵ Although mass demonstrations and transnational networking challenge this corporate agenda, I contend that there is no unified global civil society, distinct from local and national expressions, that by its existence could transform dominant power structures.

Building on Antonio Gramsci, I argue that it is more useful to define civil society as a *conflictual* space where a multiplicity of emancipatory, conservative, *and* repressive actors interact and compete to define and promote different values and sociopolitical projects from local to global levels (Jubilee 2000, Trilateral Commission). Civil society includes unions, business, sexist, racist and anti-democratic groups, some of them promoting a neoliberal world order. Hence to evaluate the emancipatory potential, market forces must be included as powerful civil society actors. Moreover, peasants, unions, as well as unpaid

home-workers, non-unionized, 'illegal' and unemployed workers are also market forces (Massicotte 1999).

The Gramscian perspective defines civil society as the main space in which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces are continually competing, making alliances and compromises, either to build and maintain a consensus around existing power structures, or to challenge and transform them. Hegemony refers to the political and cultural leadership of a class/social force within civil society and emerges when consent predominates over state coercion. The state's coercive apparatus is not regularly used but remains available to counter opposition when consent for the established order diminishes. Thus Gramsci emphasized the mutual interaction – not necessarily opposition – between historically specific civil society and the state. He distinguished between political society (formal political institutions) and civil society (school, church, media) for methodological and political reasons. Yet he also highlighted their organic link in practice. The two spheres often reinforce each other to maintain a hegemonic order. As Alonso (1996) notes, for Gramsci,

civil society is the ethical basis of the State, it is the articulation of the consensus and the moral direction through which private organisms develop a public function. The State ... is the union, the identification between civil society and political society. The hegemonic function is exercised at the cultural level. Between these two complementary structures, an equilibrium is established, that can vary and even break up ... when consent weakens, the dominant class is urged to resort to force ... In this form the statist (*lo estatal*) penetrates civil society and vice versa. (my translation)

Civil society is therefore the principal sphere where consent is negotiated and maintained, without direct use of force (Gramsci 1971: 12–13). But there are opportunities for change. If civil society forces are embedded in a particular, historical state, with the dominant correlation of forces imposing limits on their actions, they retain some autonomy. There are always spaces for counter-hegemonic forces to push 'the limits of the possible' and challenge the existing order and its underlying common sense (Braudel 1981).

Gramsci sought to build a counter-hegemonic movement, through a 'war of position', to challenge the dominant vision, the 'common sense', of the world. A war of position, a long-term cultural battle within civil society, can transform people's vision and values orienting

their day-to-day practices, thus bringing social change. The following case study analyzes emancipatory civil society actors as sources of innovation and change, continually interacting with ‘official’ political institutions, and challenging ‘neoliberal common sense’. Yet it also shows that today’s resistance to neoliberalism is far from a grand alliance or a single, global counter-hegemonic movement.

2. The emergence of cross-sectoral coalitions in Mexico and across the Americas

This section briefly describes the historical roots of two cross-sectoral coalitions before turning to a fuller analysis of their limits and accomplishments.

The Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC)

In early 1990, some Mexican social organizations and researchers met to discuss the implications of the corporate free trade agreement being considered by the US, Mexico and Canada. At the time, a Canadian coalition of popular organizations, the Pro Canada Network (PCN) (Ayes 1998), played a catalyzing role in the emergence of the Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC, Mexican Action Network on Free Trade). After enduring the early impact of the Canada–US Free Trade Agreement, many Canadians were eager to share their experience with Mexicans and to cooperate to avoid the deepening of the corporate agenda. Animated by the Canadian experience and sceptical about the benefits of free trade, a group of Mexican activists created their own cross-sectoral coalition, on the same model as the PCN.⁶

RMALC (Red Mexicana 1996: 11) was founded in April 1991 as a national coalition of popular organizations and NGOs from different regions, and linking independent labour, environmental, peasant, women’s, urban-popular, and human rights organizations, as well as research and education groups. Starting with 42 founding organizations,⁷ there are now over a hundred affiliated groups; although this number fluctuates with political conjunctures. RMALC’s member-organizations are spread across Mexico and ‘represent’ many citizens. However, as often happens with national coalitions, regular participation in RMALC activities are limited to sociopolitical leaders from roughly ten organizations. Regular participation in daytime, weekly meetings, requires residency in or around Mexico City. Few grassroots activists directly participate. In fact, since its foundation, a few

researchers, social leaders, and politicians are closely involved and committed. Many have been, in turn or simultaneously, researcher, deputy/senator, *and* NGO, union or sociopolitical activist, cutting across the 'civil' and 'political' society spheres. Although it often sparked criticism, many Mexican activists are involved in party politics and governments, seeking to transform a deeply corrupt system. This supports the Gramscian argument about the mutual interactions and participation in both political and civil society spheres. Like the EZLN (Chapter 6), RMALC doesn't reject the state but seeks its transformation, asking for popular sovereignty, democracy and equity.

Despite the powerful pro-NAFTA coalition and propaganda by the Mexican government and the business community, RMALC survived the ratification of NAFTA (Thacker 1999). It has even expanded its activities and expertise, monitoring other trade agreements/negotiations, and deepening its proposals for economic justice nationally and across the hemisphere. RMALC is a space of coordination and discussion among various NGO and grassroots organizations. Its main activities and objectives are: analysis and monitoring of free trade negotiations and agreements; diffusion of analyses about their impact; lobbying governments and interstate institutions; and building national and hemispheric coalitions of civil society actors around an alternative model of development and trade, promoting social justice and sustainable development across the Americas.⁸ Although there were cross-border influences before the founding of RMALC, it is ultimately a local initiative, created by Mexican activists from different NGOs and social organizations, who recognized the imperative shift in macroeconomic policies and their potential impact on popular and citizens' groups.

The HSA: a transnational advocacy network in the Americas

The Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) is a 'transnational advocacy network' (TAN) of sociopolitical leaders representing local, national, regional and sectoral NGOs and social organizations from across the hemisphere.⁹ It emerged in response to the negotiations of corporate trade agreements, first with NAFTA and then around the FTAA initiative. For the first half of the 1990s, most cross-border networking was informal, relying heavily on interpersonal contacts¹⁰ among a small group of social leaders from four nationally-based North American coalitions: RMALC, Action Canada Network/Common Frontiers, Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale (RQIC), and Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART – US).¹¹ Anticipating the FTAA negotiations, these coalitions and major labour organizations became the

main promoters of the HSA, seeking to include social organizations from every region and popular sector of the hemisphere.

In May 1997, during a 'meeting held parallel to the FTAA Trade Ministerial in Belo Horizonte, Brazil', network participants decided to formalize their cross-border linkages to strengthen their capacity of influencing FTAA negotiations (HSA 2001). From the beginning, the HSA sought to shape (inter)state institutions and policies. The FTAA official launching took place in April 1998 in Santiago (Chile), during the second Presidents' Summit of the Americas. In parallel, a group of sociopolitical leaders organized the first 'Peoples' Summit of the Americas', also in Santiago. About 800 civil society representatives shared their views on hemispheric integration. One of the ten forums, on 'Social and Economic Alternatives', was organized by leaders of the North American coalitions with help from a Chilean and a Brazilian research institute. They presented a first version of their joint analysis and proposals called *Alternatives for the Americas*, which were elaborated through intense networking. Since then, each major intergovernmental gathering around the FTAA is accompanied by civil society meetings organized by the HSA. Despite numerous obstacles discussed later, and important divergences within and among national coalitions, there was an expansion and intensification of cross-border networking.¹² The HSA offers spaces for emancipatory forces to discuss alternatives to corporate globalization. Transnational exchanges led to the publication and diffusion of at least three enriched versions of their proposals, around which the network's key members attempted to build the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA 1999).

Like RMALC, the HSA's key objective is to develop and promote alternatives to neoliberalism, which may be further consolidated through the FTAA's ratification, by 2005. While the HSA seeks to build a broad-based hemispheric coalition of grassroots movements, what Keck and Sikkink call a transnational social movement, the Alliance most resembles a TAN. Indeed, regular participants are limited to activist-researchers who exchange information and work intensely on deepening their proposals and lobbying governments and interstate institutions for democratic and sustainable development.¹³ They seek policy changes to benefit popular sectors by putting people's well-being and equity above profits and ceaseless growth. By doing so, the HSA reaches out to grassroots movements, but only a few social leaders coordinate its regular activities.

The HSA is a good example of cross-sectoral and cross-border coalition-building, as it includes diverse organizations like labour,

peasant, indigenous groups and NGOs from almost every country in the Western hemisphere. Among its members, there is a diffusion of strategies (mobilizing, lobbying, monitoring), political analysis (sovereignty, justice, sustainable development, democracy), and forms of organizing (cross-sectoral, national coalitions) (McAdam and Rucht 1993). While it has gained the support of mass membership organizations, only a few *leaders*, maybe a hundred, from key national and regional coalitions, regularly participate in the HSA's activities. Its limited resources and the 'hemispheric' scale at which it primarily functions make it extremely difficult for grassroots participation. On paper, the general policies and annual planning of the HSA should be decided through the Peoples' Summits as the most representative body. In practice, however, there is no effective regular mechanism to ensure democratic decision-making by grassroots participants. The Hemispheric Council meets about once a year. It is more apt to make such decisions, but consists of 30–40 representatives of the Alliance's affiliated organizations. For daily operations and most decisions, the HSA relies heavily on the Coordinating Committee consisting of delegates from eight organizations (see fn. 11). The delegates continually interact through conference calls, e-mail, and face-to-face meetings in different regions. Their work is facilitated by a rotating Executive Secretariat, first based in RMALC (Mexico, 2000–02), and since May 2002 in the Brazilian Network for People's Integration (REBRIP).

3. The potential of coalition-building and transnational networking

Focusing on RMALC, the HSA and its antecedents, this section highlights some of their accomplishments. It shows how transnational networks/coalitions have historical roots in specific places, and are consolidated through local and national organizing.

Increasing exchanges and dialogue across sectors and borders

Despite the very hostile environment of corporate globalization for emancipatory forces, RMALC and the HSA have succeeded in increasing and sustaining dialogue, exchanges and collaboration, across popular sectors and borders. Economic integration pushed many activists to organize beyond state borders. During the last decade, transnational information exchanges, meetings, and workshops flourished around trade issues. There is a growing interest in, and knowledge of, these issues among citizens, a very different situation

from that of the early 1990s. However, before transnational exchanges could happen, there was an intensification of interactions and partnerships nationally. The strengthened relationship between labour, NGO and grassroots organizations was remarkable, considering historical tensions among these actors.

In coalition-building in Canada and Mexico, for example, unions were key in bringing together labour, environmental, church, nationalist, women, and anti-poverty activists. They provided essential human and material resources to build national coalitions. When comparing unions to other grassroots organizations in different regions, we observe that unions are more institutionalized and have more stable memberships. They usually have better access to meeting rooms, computers and fax machines, as well as permanent staff, experienced organizers, fundraisers and researchers. This also applies to Mexican independent union fronts like the FAT (*Frente Auténtico del Trabajo*), despite their limited resources and the resilience of repression (Hathaway 2000).

From protectionism to mutual learning and cooperation

Beyond dialogue, another accomplishment of RMALC and the HSA is the change in the priorities, strategies and political analyses of activists and their organizations. It is mostly within existing 'local' organizations that questions and doubts emerged about free trade. When people from different sectors shared their experiences, it opened opportunities for coalition-building. Different priorities, concerns and principles existed. Unequal power relations were at play. But over time, and despite cultural and material differences, the potentially deep-reaching impact of neoliberal integration rallied people in rainbow coalitions like RMALC. They became fertile ground for debates and confrontations between different views and strategies.

Coalition-building fosters the transformation of political analysis among grassroots participants. For instance, trilateral networking around NAFTA 'widened their horizons to such fields as democracy, culture, electoral processes, education, labour affairs, the environment and human rights' (Gutiérrez-Haces 1996). Such coalitions broadened the participants' political views, who better trust each other while becoming acquainted with the specificities of their respective struggles. Coalition politics allow a better understanding of the different actors, sociopolitical contexts and power relations within today's global economy, beyond the immediate environment of activists. It gives them a clearer sense of the possibilities and limits for action.

For example, there are clear differences in the organizational structures, strategies, and resources among unions and other grassroots organizations within trade coalitions. Most unions have a hierarchical structure and generally privilege negotiations with businesses and governments. In the early 1990s, their strategy toward NAFTA was to negotiate a favourable agreement for workers by lobbying governments and sometimes allying themselves with national entrepreneurs fearing open border competition. Other popular forces however were sceptical about governments' willingness to take their concerns into account. They searched for community-level solutions, and/or adopted a more confrontational strategy vis-à-vis the state, especially as it became clear that their demands were marginalized or blatantly excluded from NAFTA negotiations. These forces usually favoured informal and horizontal solidarity links to counter the effects of neoliberal policies. They sought alternatives addressing the majority's needs, not only those of organized workers. Despite remaining tensions within coalitions, significant compromises were reached.

In Canadian and Mexican trade coalitions, for instance, unions are still the most powerful actors in material resources and memberships. Nonetheless, they accepted more horizontal forms of participation and made spaces for less powerful groups that sometimes favour very distinct tactics and strategies. For example, in the Action Canada Network (ACN), every organization had an equal right to participate and an equal voice in decision-making, regardless of resources. Its 'pay as you can' policy meant that each organization contributed in different ways (volunteer research, leafleting, offices...). These compromises emerged through sustained interaction within cross-sectoral coalitions. They did not erase all tensions that are always present in the complex processes of grassroots activism. Internal differences partly explain the ACN's dissolution in 1995. However, the value of mutual learning among ACN participants remains. Coalition politics have allowed compromises and changes in the political analysis of the participants who are evolving in new spaces. Moreover, the network of contacts and friendships of the ACN is still very useful. Common Frontiers – an ex-ACN member – still relies heavily on these past experiences and contacts to mobilize people and strengthen its analysis. Many key ACN activists now support Common Frontiers' work and alternative proposals on trade and development.

In RMALC and the HSA, we witnessed surprising rapprochements between, for example, the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT), a Mexican independent front of unions, cooperatives, peasants and community organizations, the American Federation of Labour – Congress

of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and the United Workers Confederation (CUT-Brazil). The latter is one of the most progressive union confederations in the hemisphere. By contrast, the AFL-CIO was long considered, especially among Central and Latin American unions during the Cold War, an arm of the US government or CIA, transmitting information and facilitating US 'imperialist policies'. Yet, the negative effects of economic restructuring on their respective workers and recent changes within the AFL-CIO allowed a rapprochement among them, despite remaining obstacles.¹⁴ These union confederations are members of the HSA and ORIT, the organization representing about 45 million workers from 19 countries in the hemisphere. ORIT (Organizacion Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores) is one of the HSA's most influential members. Collaboration between Southern and Northern organizations is not exempt from tensions either. Some are better able to impose their priorities. However, as some activists mentioned in interviews, there is progress toward more respectful relationships than the old paternalist practices of many North American unions. Participants aim at mutual help and learning from their respective experiences. Sometimes they are only rhetorical changes, but concrete actions also ensue.

An example of commitment is the UE-FAT Strategic Organizing Alliance between the United Electrical Workers of America (UE) and the FAT since 1992. As Robin Alexander and Peter Gilmore note, opposition to corporate free trade 'provided the crucial, initial link across the border between the UE and the FAT' (1999: 258). They created permanent linkages, organizing joint campaigns and activities to strengthen US-Mexico solidarity and working conditions. Together, they 'set the stage for the first labor complaints filed under NAFTA and Mexico's first-ever secret-ballot union representation election' (Alexander and Gilmore 1999: 257). They also cooperated in some organizing drives. For instance, in 1994, the FAT sent a Mexican rank-and-file activist from a General Electric plant in Juarez to help organize Mexican immigrant workers employed in the US company (Carr 1999). Also, in a 1997 cultural exchange, a Mexican artist painted a mural on a UE building in Chicago while a US muralist did the same in the FAT's headquarters, in Mexico City.

Another example of solidarity across borders and sectors were the rallies, fundraising and protests organized in Tucson, Arizona, to support striking copper miners and their community across the Mexican border. Ian Robertson, steelworker and president of the Southern Arizona Central Labor Council, noted:

We've seen up close the effect of NAFTA and the need for cross-border solidarity. When the Sindicato Number 65 copper miners went on strike... we raised about \$100,000; the Food and Commercial Workers were able to buy supplies at cost. That helped keep the miners strong and put a lot of heat on the company. (AFL-CIO online, 2001)

Solidarity initiatives may justifiably start as self-interested strategies to protect one's job. But cooperation and exchanges allow labour and community activists to learn about each other's working and living conditions. Through action, they better understand the growing inter-connections between their socioeconomic conditions and the mutual benefits of longer-term cooperation. As a Mexican woman worker emphasized after participating in a FAT-UE worker-to-worker exchange:

I learned that although a nation may be very powerful it does not mean that the people don't have a lot of problems. It is only by getting to know people like the brothers and sisters in the UE and others in the United States and Canada that we can really begin to work together. (Sauza, in Alexander and Gilmore 1999: 263)

The FAT-UE Alliance highlights the crucial role of face-to-face, grassroots exchanges, which also happen across borders, to strengthen mutual respect and trust. Labour and community activists' involvement on both sides of the border reinforced solidarity and the bargaining position of workers. In some cases, transnational networking helped change the discourses and strategies of grassroots organizations. If at first many unions reacted to the threat of free trade by favouring protectionist or even xenophobic strategies to defend their co-citizens, workers or culture, there has been progress. The tone of fair trade campaigns is usually more respectful of 'foreign' cultures and workers, and the alternatives promoted seek better working and living environments for the majority, not only for fellow citizens.¹⁵

Similar changes also happen in nationalist and popular organizations, through participation in coalitions. When popular resistance to free trade first emerged in North America, some community-based organizations mobilized around protectionist and nationalist arguments. Such political analyses led to national coalition-building. André Drainville (1997b) contends that it was only after protectionist strategies failed to derail free trade that some organizations recognized *the necessity* of transnational cooperation. For some activists, it was not a

sudden desire for solidarity that led to transnational networking, but a sense that cross-border cooperation was necessary to defend their respective interests in each country. The early strategy of transnational cooperation around regional integration was largely based on national structures of representation and identification. However, because from the beginning different perspectives coexisted within and among various organizations – some clearly emancipatory and internationalist – coalition politics brought significant transformations.

There was a noticeable change for instance in the discourse of the Council of Canadians (COC), and especially its national chairperson, Maude Barlow, who is now a key speaker at the International Forum on Globalization and other global justice events. The COC is a nationalist organization, created to defeat the corporate Free Trade Agreement and that helped form the Action Canada Network. When Barlow and others started their crusade against the Canada–US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), they used protectionist arguments, particularly between 1985 and 1988. When founded in 1985, the Council's stated goal was to create 'the most widely-based coalition possible of Canadians in favour of maximizing Canadian cultural, economic and political sovereignty and autonomous development, and to work for a consensus among Canadians...' (Bleyer 1992: 106). The COC fought for state sovereignty, as well as *Canadian* jobs, culture and the welfare state. In 1991, Barlow denounced free trade, based on the following arguments:

Survival, not dominance, is central in our definition of self. Our strong historical wish to live and resist the commercial links of the North–South pull [that is, the pull of Canada into the US orbit] led to the creation of national institutions to serve the people. A broadcasting system ... National universal programs that distribute resources more equitably ... In its place is a new corporate-directed regime. We daily grow to resemble America's society ... This is what we mean by losing our sovereignty. (Barlow in *Pro Canada Dossier* 1991 (29): 5)

Barlow and others in the COC became very active in the Action Canada Network (ACN), where popular groups with more internationalist perspectives were also involved. Through the coalition, Barlow also participated in transnational networking, meeting activists from poorer countries who challenged the protectionist arguments of many northern activists and NGOs. Following these experiences, in 1992, the COC shifted its analysis. Many activists consciously emphasized 'popular' sovereignty and democracy, rather than state sovereignty.

Today, they insist on the need for the peoples of each country to have control and participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives. Peter Bleyer, former executive director of the COC, argued that starting in 1992, left activists stressed that 'the enemy to fight was the neo-corporatist agenda' and not Americans in general. Canadian popular organizations needed to join with counterparts in other countries, who are also affected by this corporate agenda.¹⁶ Tony Clarke, ex-ACN chair, then maintained that

any ACN-organized campaigns on continental free trade would be carried out in collaboration with our counterparts in Mexico and the United States. Through Common Frontiers, the ACN participates in joint strategy meetings ... with Mexican and US coalition representatives ... discussions will focus on developing a trinational analysis of the NAFTA texts, organising common action events ... a new 'Fortress America' is being built to counter the threats ... posed by the formation of the European Economic Community ... and the Pacific Rim ... For these reasons, it is important that links be forged with popular movements that are challenging this corporate free trade agenda elsewhere in Latin America. (In Sinclair 1992: 126)

In the international campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) (see Chapter 9), Clarke and Barlow were very active. Still insisting on 'Canadian sovereignty', they developed a more nuanced analysis:

corporations are fast being granted first-class citizenship rights at a time when people in Canada and elsewhere in the world are losing whatever basic democratic rights they have managed to achieve through prolonged struggle. ... Institutions like NAFTA, the WTO, and the proposed MAI are ... operated by a clique of government and corporate bureaucrats with little or no public accountability. ... Unless people, not only here in Canada but throughout the world, can effectively participate in decisions affecting their lives, there is little or no chance that they will gain control over their economic, social, cultural, and environmental futures. (Barlow and Clarke 1997: 163)

The only way to effectively block a global treaty like the MAI is to build an international movement of political opposition. (Ibid, p. 179)

This statement reaffirms the need to transform political institutions at local, national and global levels, and for cross-border cooperation. Like

Clarke and Barlow, many activists have influenced, and been influenced by their experiences in the ACN, RMALC and other coalitions. Some adopted a transnational strategy (Ayres 1998: 135–42). Years of networking and sharing of experiences, within and among countries and sectors, have had an impact on the participants and their organizations. Coalition-building is thus a creative process which allows mutual learning, innovation and change. Even when coalitions like the ACN dissolve, acquired experiences continue to shape activists' strategies and political analysis, within their respective organizations. Moreover, grassroots activists and leaders build on those past experiences and networks for future organizing and struggles, like Barlow did during the anti-MAI campaign.

4. Lobbying strategy: a limited impact on (inter)state policies

RMALC and the HSA's affiliated coalitions failed to influence (inter)state policies toward social justice however. They developed linkages with some party representatives who raised criticisms around the corporate agenda. They also highlighted the contradictions and raised questions among the public, who better understand problems linked to free trade.¹⁷ They even helped add new issues to the trade agenda, facilitating the inclusion of NAFTA's parallel agreements on labour and the environment. Nevertheless, these 'gains' are very limited, as expected by activists. Corporate priorities still dominate over trade and development policies.

NAFTA and the proposed FTAA are 'conditioning frameworks', or a new form of 'constitutionalism', that secure the neoliberal agenda for liberalizing trade, finance and services (Grinspun and Kreklewich 1994; Gill 1997). As many activists claim, once these agreements are ratified by governments they limit their democratic power, like NAFTA's chapter 11, which allows corporations to sue governments when state regulations threaten 'potential' profits (Barlow and Clarke 1997). NAFTA has enforcement mechanisms to protect business profits, not workers' rights or the environment. But because of the hard work of coalitions, this criticism is shared by many citizens, and challenges state policies.

The 'consultation mechanism' for civil society participation in the FTAA negotiations is another limited 'gain'. In response to many struggles denouncing the secrecy and undemocratic procedures of trade negotiations, a 'FTAA mailbox' was implemented. The mailbox is an

Internet space where individuals, businesses, social movements or NGOs can send comments. Submissions are transmitted to trade ministers who can consult or ignore them. Moreover, state representatives have agreed that only 'constructive' proposals 'specifically related to trade' are 'acceptable' (Shamsie 1999). The committee running the mailbox can therefore exclude submissions dealing with gender, poverty, or even labour and environmental issues, since some governments like Mexico consider these unrelated to trade.¹⁸ This mechanism does not allow civil society participation, but 'demonstrates' governments' willingness to 'listen' to civil society actors, without having to meet or respond to them (Macdonald 2000b). These examples reinforce activists' frustrations around such 'consultation mechanisms' that seek to legitimize the neoliberal model and demobilize resistance.

5. Mass demonstrations for social justice: toward a global civil society?

Despite limited impacts on state policies, national coalitions, transnational networks and mass demonstrations remain important sites for struggle and innovation. The frustrating experiences of emancipatory actors trying to negotiate with governments and the reduced power of organized labour, help to explain the popularity of mass protests and growing interactions across sectors and borders. Most governments' refusal to include *significant* civil society participation, beyond the business community, is a catalyst to mass protests. The fluidity of the movements for global justice is a strength, allowing activists, with distinct horizons and objectives, to rapidly organize their own group and join protests. However, the latter are not simply the result of frustration, or a sudden response to the many calls to action diffused very effectively on a myriad of listservs. Undoubtedly, new technologies enable organizations such as Direct Action Network and Global Exchange to quickly reach many people. Yet these tools do not represent a whole new way of organizing.

Mass protests may seem to be the work of a few core organizations. But they result from intense mobilizing by many activists, from different organizations and countries. The 'planners' of mass protests use critical analyses that have been diffused for many years by a wide range of organizations, researchers and cross-sectoral coalitions like those affiliated to the HSA. They rely heavily on existing contacts, analyses, and past experiences of social organizing in specific places. Thus, mass protests are not the result of the HSA, nor of a single

transnational network. Nevertheless, the analyses of the HSA and many similar networks *were present* in several street demonstrations.

There is a wide diversity of tactics, strategies (direct action, lobbying), and political projects (anti-capitalism, cosmopolitan democracy, self-reliance) within 'global justice movements' (Bond, 2000). Yet there are two points of convergence: they demand the democratization of decision-making processes; and they reject the neoliberal agenda, fighting instead for global justice. They successfully challenged the idea that 'there-is-no-alternative' (TINA) to neoliberal policies and corporate imperatives, since so many activists claim that corporate globalization is neither the only, nor the best alternative. Such arguments were developed and diffused by the HSA's affiliated groups and many other networks. Their critical analyses widen the spaces for resistance and cooperation. Indeed, the presence of so many organizations and activists, investing precious time and resources to participate in mass demonstrations, helps to destabilize the neoliberal 'consensus' and highlight the emergence of alternative kinds of 'common sense'. Global justice movements force governments and multilateral institutions to recognize a general malaise and a growing opposition to corporate globalization. The declining consensus, or cultural hegemony, around neoliberalism is revealed through increased state coercion and repression.

Yet, mass protests are not the product of a progressive global civil society, with a mass constituency agreeing on a common political project for social change. Rather, they result from a wide range of activists and organizations, with various political projects, spending years in organizing and mobilizing, and in thinking and diffusing alternative analyses. Mass mobilizations and coalition-building became possible only after meeting and building linkages within and across borders. They had significant impact on their participants and public opinion. And because of their actions, many governments and interstate institutions felt pressured to respond, co-opt or repress these resistance forces.

By using existing networks, and making references to alternative analyses, protest organizers attracted sympathizers who were not necessarily active before these events, and who may or may not become militants. They may not share the goal of forming a 'global movement' around a common agenda to counter corporate imperatives. But these experiences will likely influence their views and political analysis. No unified counter-hegemonic movement has emerged to overthrow capitalism. However, all kinds of alternative projects are continually discussed, confronted and redefined within global justice movements.

6. Internal dilemmas: the Achilles' heels of national and transnational coalitions

Two internal weaknesses of coalition-building and transnational networking must be highlighted. Within RMALC and the HSA, only a few leaders regularly develop political analyses and alternative proposals on trade and development. Many grassroots activists support their analyses but are disappointed about not being able to participate. They often see coalition politics as the preserve of a few social leaders who can travel to meetings and participate in conference calls to deepen their analysis and plan joint activities.¹⁹ Many are therefore sceptical about the idea that coalition-building strengthens their struggles for deeper democracy and justice. The HSA promotes the latter goals, but there are continual dilemmas and debates about how to ensure representativity and democratic participation, especially at 'transnational' levels. Many coalitions work hard to expand these spaces.

RMALC and HSA leaders organized many fora, and popular education workshops, and they are involved in local and national organizations, which help to develop grassroots-leadership connections. However, as Rafael Reygadas notes about RMALC, but which also applies to the HSA, their lobbying strategy and activities are generally driven by the quick pace of trade negotiations (1998: 374–6). This constrains their capacity for grassroots organizing and popular education, which require much time and resources, all very scarce within the coalitions. But these are necessary to consolidate and sustain strong grassroots participation. This is the central challenge of most national and transnational coalitions, for without further grassroots involvement, their proposals risk being marginalized by popular organizations.²⁰

A related problem is the limited outreach of many coalitions in certain sectors and regions. Although RMALC is strong in Mexico City where many organizations have their headquarters, it has difficulty reaching outside, especially to rural areas. Some organizations want to participate more, but cannot attend the weekly meetings in the capital, nor do they get regular information from RMALC. Outreach is also limited among student, women and indigenous groups, although specific efforts are made to include them.

The HSA faces similar problems. The lack of resources limits the possibilities for mass participation, particularly at this scale. The Alliance is not as hemispheric as its name suggests. Regular participants live in major cities, and come from about ten countries.²¹ Being in large cities

provides leaders with easier access to information and governments for their lobbying strategies, especially national offices dealing with interstate trade. They also have unequal access to information and new technology such as the Internet. These are not available to most grassroots organizations in poorer or rural regions of the great majority of Western Hemisphere countries. It is amazing that the HSA document, *Alternatives for the Americas*, was almost entirely elaborated through e-mail exchanges, where participants deepened their analysis to develop common proposals. Yet, this also reveals accessibility problems. Participants must read and write in more than one language or have access to translation, be computer-literate, and have Internet connections.²² These are some of the concrete obstacles that coalitions continually face when trying to encourage grassroots participation in developing alternative political analyses and projects.

Conclusion

Coalition-building among emancipatory actors are complex sites of struggle where conflicts and innovation often emerge. These contentious encounters and the practical experiences of grassroots activists can lead them to question and redefine their values, priorities, strategies and political projects. Although they face powerful institutions, emancipatory movements are spaces where people can learn from each other and develop alternative projects anchored in their everyday lives. In this sense, sociopolitical activism can facilitate a 'war of position' to challenge the dominant 'common sense'. Over time, it may put enough pressure on (inter)state institutions to destabilize existing structures of power at different levels and bring about social change.

However, if only a few social leaders are involved, as usually happens with national/transnational coalitions, the potential for change from below is limited. Sustained participation and capacity-building within grassroots organizations remain a crucial complement to transnational networking. I am sceptical about global civil society because trying to create a sustained, unified 'global' mass movement is overly optimistic. This attempt goes against the goal of many within global justice movements who reject hierarchical organizing and promote democratic participation. It is very difficult and time-consuming to reach consensus on priorities and strategies and to sustain democratic grassroots organizations 'locally'. Given this, we realize how problematic the same process can be transnationally, among a myriad of organizations with different needs, and a variety of social, cultural, and linguistic back-

grounds. Most global justice activists are formed in specific communities. Their diverse experiences and identities enrich the debates and discussions within coalitions. Yet, most of the work occurs in grassroots organizations where activists can regularly meet face-to-face.

If more decisions about today's world economy are made at interstate levels, one cannot neglect grassroots activism. Efforts to construct a 'global civil society' to counter the corporate agenda risk losing touch with activists rooted in specific communities. The potential of mass protests and coalition-building reside in the new insights and experiences that activists bring back to their home organizations, after participating in cross-border and cross-cultural events. However, their transformative potential depends on *whether*, and *how*, they will use their experiences to strengthen grassroots organizing and alternative projects in their own community, as many activists of global justice movements now advocate. In any case, consensus formation around different models of development among grassroots organizations in various countries cannot be built through cyberspace, or street demos. And it cannot be obtained through a 'fast track' procedure as some governments seem to expect. Such projects require much time and organizing that is extremely difficult to accomplish within the time frames imposed by trade negotiations. The World Social Forum (Porto Alegre) and the Peoples' Summit of the Americas helped social leaders to further diffuse critical analyses and foster grassroots participation. But will these processes be sustained within local communities in different regions?

Notes

*

Thanks to Elaine Coburn, Janet Conway, Gordon Laxer and Marsha Niemeijer for insightful comments. Thanks also to the interviewees – more than 60 activists, academics and government representatives – without whom this study could not have been realized. This chapter is part of my dissertation, covering only some key elements.

- 1 Drainville (1997a, b) Edwards and Gaventa (2001); Friedman, Hochstetler and Clark (2001); Keck and Sikkink (1998a); Knight (1999); Lipschutz and Mayer (1996); Macdonald (2000b); Shamsie (1999); Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco (1997a); Smith and Korzeniewicz (2001).
- 2 Commission on Global Governance (1995); Falk (1995); Frederick (1993); Oliveira and Tandon (1994); Shaw (1993); Wapner (1995); Warkentin and Mingst (2000).
- 3 'Grassroots' refers to activists' social base as opposed to the leaders. 'Progressive' or 'emancipatory' struggles include social justice, sustainable development, and democratic practices.

- 4 On neoliberalism and the 'Washington consensus', see Bond (in Bello *et al.* 2000) and section 1 of Johnston's chapter (Chapter 5) in the present volume.
- 5 See Cox (1999) on the historical meanings of 'civil society'. Most neoliberal theorists use/abuse Hegel's conception to separate civil society from the state. They associate civil society with market forces and see them as progressive. However, left scholars and activists usually separate market from civil society and see the latter as progressive.
- 6 Although they named themselves 'networks/*red*', I use 'coalitions' for more formal organizations. Networks are informal interactions among social groups.
- 7 Among them: Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT), Equipo Pueblo, Fronteras Comunes, Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC), Mujer a Mujer (RMALC 1991). About 50 organizations supporting RMALC are from the independent labour movement.
- 8 On its alternatives, visit: <http://www.rmalc.org.mx/>, <http://www.asc-hsa.org/>
- 9 On TANs, see Johnston, Chapter 5 in the present volume; Keck and Sikkink (1998a); Tarrow (1998a). The HSA is 'transnational' because it crosses national borders without erasing them, but in Laxer's terms (Chapter 9, this volume) it is 'international' since it is comprised of mostly national coalitions. Yet, the Alliance's affiliates comprise many grassroots organizations that do not 'fit' the 'national' label either. Some are located in a limited space, but their activities, sensitivities and analyses often cut across multiple scales.
- 10 Foster, John. Founder of Latin American Working Group and of GATT-fly, later Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (ECEJ, a key actor within the ACN), personal interview, Mexico City, 1 July 2000.
- 11 These four coalitions are members of the HSA Coordinating Committee, along with REBRIP-Brazil, ICIC-Central America, CLOC and ORIT. In 1991, the PCN became the Action Canada Network, which folded in 1995. Common Frontiers now pursues its work. In Quebec, RQIC functions independently but regularly collaborates with Common Frontiers. In the US, ART cohabits with other groups, progressive and not, in the anti-free-trade movement: Campaign for Fair Trade, Public Citizen, and activists linked to Pat Buchanan.
- 12 For example, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the AFL-CIO and CUT-Brazil, are union confederations, active members of the HSA and of the Inter-American Regional Workers Organization (ORIT), which is also actively involved in the HSA. Within the Alliance, labour organizations work with environmentalist, women's, peasant, human rights, international cooperation and religious organizations, generally based in one country and collaborating through national coalitions. Apart from the North American coalitions, there are the Chilean Alliance for Just and Responsible Trade (ACJR), and the Brazilian Network for Peoples' Integration (REBRIP). Regionally, there are: Civil Society Initiative for Central American Integration (ICIC), Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC, affiliated with *Via Campesina*), the Central American Federation of Community Organizations, Friends of the Earth, Latin American Network – Women Transforming the Economy, and the Social

Network for Public Education in the Americas (Red SEPA). Also participating are popular education organizations, research centres, and a Latin American association of micro, small and medium enterprises and the list is growing. Like RMALC, the Alliance's affiliated members are organizations, although individual-activists/researchers are the key players.

- 13 The HSA's list of affiliated organizations and the third version of its proposals, *Alternatives for the Americas*, are available online (see n. 8). For example, the HSA proposes a 'Tobin tax' on foreign exchange transactions, 'to slow down currency speculation and enable national governments to exercise more control over their monetary policies' and to 'give priority to direct and productive investments' (HSA 1999, pp. 64–5).
- 14 In Seattle, for example, some groups sought to abolish the WTO, while the AFL-CIO wanted to stop this particular meeting, hoping that next time they would get a seat at the table to reform the organization (Greenfield 2001).
- 15 Recall Pat Buchanan's campaign, but also the racist discourses of some Teamsters' leaders, arguing that Mexican truck drivers were dangerous (snuggling illegal drugs and immigrant workers), thereby threatening Americans' security. They succeeded in closing the border to Mexican drivers, despite NAFTA provisions and cross-border strategies to protect drivers on both sides (AFL-CIO 1996; *The Economist* 2001: 35).
- 16 P. Bleyer, personal interview with the author, Ottawa, 1996.
- 17 The Canadian anti-free trade movement gained much public support. Both the New Democratic and Liberal parties promised to not ratify CUSFTA during the 1988 federal election campaign. However, with only 43% of the popular vote, the Conservative Government ratified CUSFTA. More revealing of the limits of anti-free-trade – political party linkages was that, after they won the 1993 election, Chrétien's Liberals, who had promised not to ratify NAFTA as it stood, approved it without modification (Ayres 1998).
- 18 Personal interviews with Jaime Serra Puche, ex-trade minister, and an Americas' trade representative of SECOFI (Ministry of Commerce and Industrial Promotion), Mexico City, May 2000.
- 19 Anonymous interviews and informal discussions of the author with grassroots activists and social leaders affiliated to RMALC and/or the HSA. Mexico City 2000, Quebec City, April 2001.
- 20 Early anti-free-trade coalitions were discredited for not offering alternatives. Today those proposing alternatives are discredited for not representing mass movements. Such rhetorical arguments seek to de-legitimize their claims. Yet these coalitions are much more representative than many NGOs consulted by (inter) governmental institutions.
- 21 They come from big cities in Canada, the US, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. More people participate but rather sporadically.
- 22 The HSA uses Portuguese, French, Spanish and English.

7

Lessons from Mexico–US Civil Society Coalitions

Jonathan Fox¹

Introduction

Is globalization producing a transnational civil society? If so, then clear evidence should be emerging from the broadest and deepest example of integration between North and South: the accelerating process of economic, social and political interaction between Mexico and the US. This chapter focuses primarily on society-to-society relationships, reviewing the nature and impact of coalitions and networks that bring together civil society and social movement counterparts in each country. It is important to keep in mind that binational social, civic and political coalitions involve a much broader range of state and social actors. In this context, society-to-society relationships can be framed as one quadrant of a simple two-by-two chart, with the US state and civil society on one dimension, and the Mexican state and civil society on the other, as illustrated in Figure 7.1.

While many civil society actors within the US and Mexico share some degree of commitment to democratization and social change, others *oppose* the extension or consolidation of rights won by other social movements. This chapter focuses mainly on civil society actors that pursue broader social participation and public accountability, focusing on labour, women's rights, migrants' networks, environmental and democracy/human rights organizations.²

Before assessing binational relations among these actors, the terms 'bi-national network', 'coalition', and 'movement' must be disentangled. Binational civil society activity over the past decade often involved exchanges of information, experiences and expressions of solidarity. Sometimes these exchanges generated a *network* of ongoing relationships that, in turn, generated the shared goals, mutual trust and

	US State	Civil Society in US
Mexican State	Treasury ministries National cabinet meetings Border governors conferences Anti-narcotics aid NAFTA trinational institutions Armed forces to armed forces Military sales US support for Mexico from IFIs Exchanges between judicial authorities Migrant education programmes	Policy think-tanks Private lobbyists Universities Latino NGOs Conservation NGOs Elite cultural institutions (e.g. museums) Also Mexican migrant civil society in US: hometown clubs and federations
Mexican Civil Society	USAID (and its US contractors) National Endowment for Democracy Inter-American Foundation	Religious institutions Private foundations Media elites Environmental coalitions Trade union coalitions Democracy networks Human rights networks Women's rights networks Migrant voting rights Advocacy networks Indigenous peoples networks Small farmer networks Border public health coalitions

Figure 7.1 Examples of Mexico–US partnerships

understanding needed to form a *coalition* that could collaborate on specific campaigns. As Keck put it, ‘coalitions are networks in action mode’.³ Neither networks nor coalitions necessarily imply significant horizontal exchange between participants: indeed, many rely on a handful of interlocutors to manage relationships between broad-based social organizations that have relatively little awareness of the nature and actions of their counterparts. The concept of transnational social *movement* organizations, in contrast, implies a much higher degree of density and much more cohesion than networks or coalitions. It suggests a social subject that is present in more than one country, as in the paradigm case of the Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional, and other indigenous organizations that literally cross the border. (See Figure 7.2.)

In practice, these concepts of ‘network’, ‘coalition’ and ‘movement’ are often used interchangeably. Here, they will be treated as analytically distinct. Transnational civil society exchanges *can* produce net-

Shared characteristics:	Transnational networks	Transnational coalitions	Transnational movement organizations
Exchange of information & experiences	Yes	Yes	Yes
Organized social base	Sometimes more, sometimes less or none	Sometimes more, sometimes less or none	Yes
Mutual support	Sometimes, from afar and possibly strictly discursive	Yes	Yes
Joint actions & campaigns	Sometimes loose coordination	Yes, based on mutually agreed minimum goals, often short-term, tactical	Yes, based on shared long-term strategy
Shared ideologies	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Generally yes
Shared political cultures	Often not	Often not	Shared political values, styles and identities

Figure 7.2 Transnational networks, coalitions and movement organizations

Note: Shading illustrates suggested degree of relationship density and cohesion.

works, which *can* produce coalitions, which *can* produce movements.⁴ While many local and national groups see themselves as part of a global movement (for feminism, for human rights, in defence of the environment), this study focuses on *sustained cross-border relationships between organized constituencies* (as distinct from broadly shared goals) and, thus, uses the relatively tangible category of transnational movement *organization* (as distinct from the more amorphous concept of global civil society, for example).⁵

1. Relationships between social/civic counterparts

Labor unions

Mexico–US labour partnerships have been among the most challenging of any sector, for several reasons.⁶ First, the political culture of each

country's labour movement is dominated by powerful nationalist ideological legacies. Second, workers in some sectors have directly conflicting short-term interests, especially in industries characterized by high degrees of North American 'production sharing', such as automobiles, textiles and garments. Third, counterpart productive sectors often have very different union structures. Specific industries may be unionized in one country but not in the other, or unions may be centralized in one country but decentralized in the other – creating asymmetries that make it difficult for finding counterparts (most notably, autos). Fourth, some unions prefer to avoid conflicts by working with politically compatible counterparts, and are unwilling to explore relationships with a broader range of counterparts. This was the dominant pattern of binational relations between union leaders until the early 1990s.⁷

One of the early cross-border efforts to support workers' freedom of association was the Quaker-inspired American Friends Service Committee's Texas-based long-term effort to support discreet community-based maquila worker organizing. This contributed to the emergence of the broad-based *Comité Fronterizo de Obreras*.⁸ After the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, *Mujer a Mujer* led feminist support for the independent Mexico City seamstresses union.⁹ In the first binational US–Mexican union-to-union effort since the Cold War, the midwestern Farm Labor Organizing Committee coordinated in the late 1980s with a ruling party affiliated agricultural worker union in Sinaloa (Nauman 1993; Barger and Razo 1994). The multisectoral Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) was founded in 1989, before NAFTA, bringing together religious, environmental, labour, community and women's rights organizers who had been working on binational integration issues.¹⁰

US and Mexican organizers do not always share the same goals or strategies. According to Martha Ojeda, a former maquiladora worker leader and director of the CJM (Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras), most Mexican maquila organizers concentrate primarily on long-term shop-floor and community-based organizing;¹¹ however, US-focused maquila campaigns often prioritize short-term media impact, especially during key national political moments, such as trade policy debates in congress. The US emphasis on media impact sometimes conflicts with more discreet, long-term shop-floor organizing: Mexican maquila organizers report past cases in which US union delegations televised their factory-gate broadcasts denouncing terrible conditions, only to be followed by firings of the workers who had long been organizing on the inside.¹² More recently, however, foreign maquila worker supporters, bolstered by the growing US student

anti-sweatshop campaign, have been more responsive to the initiatives of Mexican worker organizers, notably in the breakthrough organizing campaign of the Kuk Dong/Nike plant in Atlixco, Puebla.¹³

Until recently, Mexican maquila organizers had been quite isolated from one another. It was only after several years of participation in cross-border coalitions (the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice as well as the CJM) that Mexican maquila organizers called their first two border-wide Mexican networking meetings. By the late 1990s, Mexican organizers began to speak of an incipient *movement* of maquila workers for the first time, as a result of both cross-border and Mexican-side organizing.

One of the most high-profile maquila organizing experiences involved Tijuana's small Han Young truck component factory. The Han Young union worked very closely with the San Diego Workers' Support Committee which, through its influential union and congressional allies, generated widespread concern and reached the highest levels of the US government. Within Mexico, the Han Young union briefly affiliated with the national Authentic Labor Front (FAT) to call a union election. The new local won the support of workers in the plant and some initial legal victories, but these victories were ignored by the National Action Party-led state government authorities (Williams 2000). All the pro-union workers were permanently replaced.

US and Mexican labour unions have held innumerable discussions, exchanges, and conferences, and made many internationalist proclamations. But they have consolidated relatively few partnerships. And, while they have alerted the public to blatant violations of freedom of association, so far they have had few tangible effects.¹⁴ A binational alliance between the United Electrical Workers (UE) and the FAT helped to launch perhaps the most ambitious trilateral union coalition so far, the Dana Workers Alliance to defend freedom of association in a Mexican auto parts plant. However, while wending its way through the extremely slow procedures of the labour side agreement, the two US unions most involved withdrew from leadership of the initiative. In the US, the auto parts factory represented by the UE was closed, and the Teamster's reform leadership lost power.¹⁵ The labour side agreement, known as the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC), has been one of the most tangible arenas for binational post-NAFTA union campaigning. However, after seven years and 23 complaints the agreement has produced very few tangible results in terms of influencing either government policies or private employers, and many more complete defeats than even partial victo-

ries.¹⁶ The right to organize remains tenuous in both countries and cross-national ties have been unable to offset labour's weak bargaining power within each respective set of national political institutions.¹⁷

Environmentalists

As in the case of organized labour, binational environmental networking and advocacy have been marked by significant differences within and between each national movement. Moreover, in both countries, the experiences and priorities of groups working directly on the border have often proved quite distinct from the larger national environmental organizations that have more access to the media and policymakers. The high-profile pre-NAFTA debate was more the exception than the rule for binational environmental politics. By all accounts, the success of the Mexican and US governmental campaigns to win over the main US environmental organizations was the key factor that tipped the balance in the closely divided US congressional NAFTA vote.¹⁸ With few exceptions, however, major US national environmental organizations did not devote serious sustained attention to Mexico–US integration or to potential Mexican partners *after* the NAFTA vote.¹⁹ When Washington's short-term policy agenda moved away from Mexico, so did theirs.²⁰

Greenpeace, which developed one of the few binational partnerships among the large international environmental membership organizations, would appear to be a case of a transnational social movement organization. However, its 'fit' with this concept in practice has been uneven. During its effort in the early 1990s to seek greater internal balance between its Northern and Southern affiliates, Greenpeace's international leadership sided with its Latin American branches on the controversial tuna-dolphin issue.²¹ Southern environmentalists saw this as a blow against 'eco-imperialism'. But it ended up provoking a powerful propaganda backlash by more nationalist US ecological advocacy groups, such as Earth Island Institute – a Greenpeace competitor in the direct mail fundraising market – which seized the opportunity to denounce its rival as anti-dolphin. Binational collaboration withered.

The pace and intensity of binational civil society campaigns on the border increased significantly following NAFTA, and they have had some important, very tangible successes. They have blocked several controversial proposed projects, most notably the Sierra Blanca nuclear waste dump in Texas,²² and the proposed Mitsubishi/Mexican government joint venture to expand an industrial salt works in a Baja California whale sanctuary. Both projects had unusually media-worthy characteristics that significantly increased the leverage of campaigners

– nuclear waste in one case, whales in the other. Binational environmental campaigns focused on less tangible, more decentralized targets, such as improving the terms of trade for shade-grown organic coffee coops, and received less attention and had less impact.²³

The Mexico–US environmental experience shows that advocacy campaigns can influence or block *new*, high-profile, high-risk policy decisions, but one could argue that these cases were relatively ‘winnable’ because they did not challenge the dominant pattern of maquila industrialization. On the issue of toxic industrial waste, in contrast, there were fewer significant victories – in spite of the issue’s high public profile.²⁴ At the end of 2001, however, the Mexican congress passed a law for mandatory reporting and publication of toxic emission data largely in response to environmental NGO campaigning.²⁵ The other NAFTA-related institutional innovation involving civil society is the provision through which claims can be made about the non-enforcement of national environmental laws to the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation. However, though 33 claims have been submitted since 1995, there is no independent confirmation that they have had any impact on actual enforcement activity in Mexico.²⁶

Democracy and human rights

Mexican human rights issues were not high profile during the NAFTA debate (Acosta 2002). The Chiapas rebellion made human rights in Mexico a major priority on the binational civil society agenda for the first time. A wide range of US groups contributed to the international pressure for a political solution. Most US support initiatives drew heavily on the legacy of the movements for peace in Central America in the 1980s, including both faith-based and secular left-wing political cultures and strategies.²⁷ However, while this legacy bolstered Chiapas solidarity work in the short term, it carried medium-term weaknesses, including the strategic limitations associated with interpreting Mexico through Central American lenses. This pattern began to change with the founding of the Mexico Solidarity Network in 1999, which brought together 75 organizations and organized several labour and human rights delegations to Mexico.²⁸

Many observers have pointed to the increased volume and velocity of international information flow from Chiapas to international sympathizers as an indication of the power of international solidarity. This flow has irritated Mexican government officials, who referred disparagingly to the Chiapas conflict as a (mere) ‘war of ink and internet’.

However, the actual contribution of the 'internet war' to the Zapatista cause remains an open question.²⁹ The conflict on the ground remained stalemated for years, despite the information flow and international solidarity. Moreover, though US civil society efforts for peace in Chiapas succeeded in achieving widespread legitimacy in the US, they failed to penetrate and mobilize major US civil society institutions. In contrast, the movement against US intervention in Central America in the 1980s generated broad-based mainstream participation in religious, civic and trade union arenas and led to significant influence in congress.

The Chiapas rebellion focused the attention of US pro-democracy groups on Mexico's 1994 presidential election. This was the high point of US civil society interest in working with Mexican election observers, though some, like Global Exchange and the Washington Office on Latin America, continued to work closely with Mexico's Civic Alliance in its effort to monitor controversial state level elections. The largest single US citizen contingent in 1994 was organized by Global Exchange, an NGO that has made a long-term, sustained political investment in working with Mexican partners and is one of the Mexican democracy movement's most consistent US civil society allies.³⁰ The Global Exchange–Civic Alliance partnership represents the clearest case of a sustained pro-democracy/human rights coalition that addressed issues beyond Chiapas. With this exception, however, one could argue that both US and Mexican pro-democracy actors have lacked a sustained strategy for building partnerships that reach deeply into their respective civil societies.

Women's rights networks

Women's rights activists have carried out extensive binational networking. However, these initiatives have followed a trajectory similar to those in other sectors in terms of its success in achieving mutual learning and exchanges, on the one hand, and its difficulty in sustaining ongoing coalitions and campaigns on the other. Teresa Carrillo notes that 'differences in central focus and agenda' have been important obstacles to binational coalition-building: 'Chicanas and Latinas in the US have focused on questions of race and ethnicity, while Mexicanas have focused on class issues and survival' (1998: 394).

One of the most significant specific cases of binational feminist coalition-building has emerged from the reproductive rights movement. The US and Mexican branches of Catholics for Free Choice (Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir) have a close relationship.³¹ Both

emerged from and are extensively networked with diverse feminist movements in each country. The Mexican branch is also deeply embedded in national movements for human rights, Chiapas solidarity, and liberation theology. The US and Mexican groups share a common mission and values and consider themselves part of a larger pro-choice Catholic movement. Both combine policy advocacy with efforts to influence broader public opinion. They also work together on joint campaigns: the effort to convince the United Nations to withdraw the Vatican's nation-state status, and the effort to infuse pro-choice Catholic perspectives in the international debates following the Cairo UN summit on population and development.

The US and Mexican pro-choice Catholic groups clearly constitute a binational coalition. They also share many of the characteristics of a transnational movement – including, notably, a self-conceptualization as constituting a movement. The most important new process of cross-border feminist convergence responds to the persistent wave of mutilation and murder of hundreds of young women in the border industrial city of Ciudad Juárez.

Migrant civil and political rights

Migrants have historically been excluded from representation in both national political systems, and their campaigns have focused on gaining voice and respect in Mexico as well as in the US. Migrant political loyalties began to be contested for the first time when Mexico's 1988 centre-left electoral challenge spilled over into the US (Dresser 1993).

Historically, campaigns for migrant rights in the US have been led by advocacy groups rather than by organized migrants themselves, and have not involved coordination with counterparts in Mexico. By the late 1990s, both of these trends had changed. The broad-based Mexico–US Advocates Network brought together advocacy and legal rights defenders in both countries (Gzesh 2002). Though often invisible to outsiders, migrant self-organization for hometown community self-help initiatives took off in the early 1990s, with encouragement from Mexican consultates (Goldring, 2002). Increased numbers of naturalized citizens increased migrant political influence, and the US labour movement dramatically shifted its position and sought to organize and defend migrants. Increasingly, Mexican migrants have sought to overcome the classic choice between participation primarily in US or in Mexican arenas, transcending this dichotomy by participating in civic, social and political movements in both countries at once. In

addition to the many binational/bicultural individuals who are playing leadership roles, one of the clearest examples of a mass organization that is following this path is the Oaxaca Indigenous Binational Front, active in Oaxaca, Baja California and California (Rivera 2002).

The first transnational advocacy network organized by migrants to influence a specific Mexican government policy towards them focused on efforts to implement absentee voting rights for Mexican citizens in their 2000 elections. In 1996, the Mexican government had committed itself to granting its citizens abroad the right to vote in principle, without specifying the scope, timing or mechanism for actual enfranchisement (Ross 1998; 1999; Martínez and Ross 2002). The government appeared to prefer that migrants become US citizens. While efforts to implement voting rights for the 2000 elections were unsuccessful, migrant civic leaders gained unprecedented access to Mexico's national media and political leaders (all the major parties were divided on the issue – and none had prioritized sinking roots in the US).

The attempt to gain voting rights in the 2000 elections laid the foundation for the migrant network's most clear-cut success in binational immigrant organizing, so far: its media and legislative lobbying campaign against the car deposit. In late 1999, the Mexican Treasury Ministry, pursuing a policy of protecting the 'national' (US-dominated) auto production industry, cracked down on the widespread practice of migrants returning to Mexico with used cars. The Ministry announced that a large deposit would be required for each car entering Mexico, to begin shortly before the Christmas holiday when millions of migrants return home. After two days of migrant protests in the US and lobbying by migrant leaders, the Mexican Senate passed a resolution rescinding the government programme. As the president of the Concilio Hispano, a Mexican group based in Chicago, put it: 'This is the first time the Mexican community here managed to bring this kind of pressure on Mexico. It shows that we can use our power and make changes' (quoted in Preston 1999). More recently, migrants have organized delegations to put the voting rights issue back on the national agenda.³²

2. Assessing binational network and coalition impact

This section offers a preliminary assessment of binational civil society network and coalition impacts, focusing on the issue areas of the environment, labour rights and human rights. Assessing the impact of social movements and public interest advocacy initiatives involves

three main steps. First, was there some clear change that might be attributed to civil society actors? Second, how important were civil society actors in terms of explaining that change? Third, within the broader set of civil society actions, how important were cross-border networking and coalitions? There are both tangible and intangible impacts. For example, there is an important distinction between changes in the actual behaviour of powerful agents vs changes in official discourse, as the NAFTA side agreements revealed. Assessment of this runs into the problem of ‘counterfactual’ analysis: what would have happened *without* binational campaigning? If human rights violations did not get much better, would they have worsened in the absence of transnational campaigning? Assessments of impact are also complicated by substantive disagreements over the significance of partial concessions – which ones are distracting crumbs, and which ones are wedges that encourage further change? Who decides and based on what criteria? This discussion will focus on impact on the state.

Cross-border civil society activism has had the highest degree of impact on environmental policy, especially in Mexico. The issue became make-or-break for the approval of NAFTA in the US, and in Mexico the state responded by making sustained policy and discursive commitments. This included the creation of Mexico’s first environmental policy ministry, led by a credible, non-partisan expert. The power of US and Mexican environmental NGOs clearly led to the NAFTA side agreement and the border investment institutions. The latter are beginning to increase their modest level of activity (the North American Development Bank and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission), including some degree of room for public participation.³³ Mexico–US NGO partnerships have had notable impacts on biodiversity-related projects and threatening large-scale projects in Mexico, but little impact on more systemic problems such as industrial pollution associated with the maquila industry. In sum, cross-border environmental coalitions have produced both some of the most dramatic breakthroughs in terms of civil society leverage, as well as some of the most clear-cut defeats.

Labour rights issues exhibit a more consistent pattern of defeat. The most significant related examples of US labour’s political leverage were the 1997 defeat of fast track, and President Clinton’s 1999 electorally driven discursive support for labour rights during the Seattle WTO meeting (Shoch 2000). Neither involved significant cross-border partnerships. Mexican labour continues to lose ground, both politically and at the bargaining table, and has yet to win any significant foothold

in the border maquila industry. Even campaigning that reached the highest levels of the US political system was unable to impact Mexican labour law enforcement, as the Han Young campaign made clear.

Labour unions did influence US trade policy after NAFTA. Since NAFTA, the US government has not moved beyond its very limited recognition of the need for trade policy to address environmental and labour standards; but the Clinton government was not able to backtrack very far either. He was unable to renew fast track authority, which greatly slowed the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and Bush paid a huge price to jerry-rig a fragile coalition to restore his negotiating power. The specifically binational dimension of the trade advocacy coalition work peaked with NAFTA. Even in Seattle in 1999, clearly a breakthrough in terms of the influence of US civil society trade critics, there was little evidence of Mexican participation or binational collaboration.

Many analysts assume that international campaigns have had an impact on human rights issues. For example, Keck and Sikkink assert that

from 1988 to 1994, the international network in collaboration with recently formed domestic human rights groups provoked a *relatively rapid and forceful* response from the Mexican government, contributing to a *decline* in human rights violations and a strengthening of democratic institutions. (1998a: 116; emphasis added)

However, the empirical evidence does not clearly show that human rights violations dropped during this period. A lack of consistent baseline data makes systematic analysis of change over time difficult, but it is widely known that, for example, the opposition PRD claims that more than 600 activists were assassinated during this same period.³⁴ Nor can we assume that international factors were primary in the government's (largely symbolic) response. While these factors were significant in the creation of the official National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), the contribution of CNDH to the prevention of human rights abuses in Mexico is widely questioned (Acosta 2002). The clearest way to assess its impact is to review government responses to its official 'recommendations' (the official CNDH findings that government agencies violated human rights). Here, according to one of the new government's top appointees to the CNDH, the dominant trend was for government agencies to nominally 'accept' CNDH recommendations, but do little in practice (Ballinas 2001). Even in the very clear-cut case of the Guerrero 'peasant-ecologist' political prisoners, strong protest from both national

and international human rights campaigns did not prevent the Mexican legal system from sentencing them to long jail terms on trumped-up charges. Even the election of an opposition government in 2000 was not sufficient. They were only released after their human rights lawyer was killed in her office in downtown Mexico City. Meanwhile, their lower-profile colleagues remain either in jail or in hiding.

The Chiapas rebellion is probably the clearest example of the importance of international factors. International human rights protests clearly helped to prevent a full-scale military response to the EZLN in mid-January 1994. However, one could argue that they were effective largely because both the US government and private sector were unenthusiastic about their new NAFTA partner pursuing a televised bloodbath. In addition, national factors were also key. Broad sectors of Mexican civil society mobilized for peace very quickly, and prominent national political elites threatened to break with the president if he pursued a military approach (most notably, then-Foreign Minister and one-time presidential ‘pre-candidate’ Manuel Camacho threatened to resign if the government did not cease fire).³⁵ Disentangling the relative weights of national and international factors is always a challenge, but many analysts simply assume that international (and specifically civil society) factors were primary and fail to weigh them against national factors.

This brief overview suggests that the impact of transnational network and coalition politics must be analysed within the broader context of national actors and dynamics. Some Mexican–US binational coalitions had some degree of impact on official discourse and policy commitments, but so far have had relatively little impact on the actual behaviour of powerful public and private institutions. Some of the most important impacts are discerned through counterfactually reasoning concerning things that did *not* happen because of binational campaigns. This may change. Mexico’s new government has recognized the legitimacy of Mexican NGOs and immigrant civic organizations and has reached out to US NGOs and social organizations as potential allies. However, the new Mexican government continues to deny workers access to the secret ballot at the workplace and to vilify US unions as subversive interlopers, while millions of migrant workers who do not cross the US border remain disenfranchised within Mexico.

Conclusions

Having looked at cases of civil society actors that seek increased participation and public accountability, several propositions can be drawn from them about network and coalition dynamics and their impact.

(1) *Networks often need shared targets to become coalitions.* Mutual sympathy or shared concerns are usually not enough for networks to become coalitions capable of sustaining joint campaigns. Shared political ideologies help, but are not necessary: few ideologies are shared by social actors across borders (perhaps in contrast to NGOs). To explain most cross-border collective action, therefore, one must look elsewhere. It is shared targets which make joint campaigns possible, though not all shared targets are either obvious or predetermined. They involve more than shared problems, or shared, but faraway, diffuse threats (like 'capital mobility' or 'Wall St.'). Explicit coalition-building may not even be involved. Different actors can target the same institution without any coordination, or even necessarily any affinity.

(2) *Some key struggles on the front-lines of globalization lack binational partners.* Mexican and US civil society organizations that have managed to find and sustain cross-border partnerships with social counterparts only overlap partly with the array of actors that are confronting the effects of globalization on the front lines – as in the notable case of Mexico's broad-based coffee co-op movement.

(3) *Broad-based organizations that have sustained cohesive partnerships tend to 'think locally to act binationally'.* Relatively few broad-based social organizations sustain cohesive binational partnerships. Mass-based social organizations are under pressure to be accountable to organized constituencies and, thus, must allocate resources based on perceived tangible benefits for their members (in contrast to the uneven and longer-term payoffs from binational coalition-building – see below). To justify resources invested in binational coalition-building, social organizations usually need to be able to make direct connections to local results. Binational ideological convergence, though rare, can help to sustain such '*thinking locally, acting binationally*' because it allows a longer time horizon for assessing local benefits.

(4) *Binational networks and coalitions have had significant impact on official policy discourse, but have only rarely gained tangible increases in public or private accountability.* Policy-makers and corporations are now concerned with 'incorporating' or 'consulting' the views of the social actors and NGOs involved at the binational/transnational level; this is one indicator of their success and effectiveness. However, the experience of human rights, labour and environmental coalitions suggests that a very large gap exists between their influence on public discourse and more tangible kinds of impact.

(5) *Some civil society critics now have a seat at the table, but partial concessions from powerful institutions can be two-edged swords.* Movements find it difficult to determine whether the concessions made to them by powerful institutions represent important cracks in the system or merely window-dressing or 'green-washing'. Many concessions offer some degree of increased official transparency and this, it is widely assumed, leads to accountability. In practice, however, transparency is necessary but not sufficient for accountability. It may be useful to distinguish, here, between 'clear' and 'fuzzy' transparency. Clear transparency focuses the public spotlight directly on those responsible for failing to meet minimum human rights and environmental standards; fuzzy transparency is less focused, unable to reveal the mechanisms through which basic standards are violated, may be unreliable or biased, fails to serve as a guide to action and may, in fact, divert attention from the need for more serious reform efforts.³⁶

(6) *National and border trends in binational relationships have tended to follow two distinct paths since 1994.* Border and national binational networks and coalitions have followed two different paths. The former have gradually increased their density and cohesion, starting well before NAFTA and continuing after the vote, while the latter have followed less consistent patterns. In several key sectors the pace of off-border binational social and civic relationship-building slowed after 1994, as in the case of many environmental, human rights and labour organizations in both countries. For example, compared to the high point reached in 1994, the 1997 US fast track debate involved significant 'backsliding' in terms of binational coordination. This is perhaps attributable to the fact that groups closer to the border are confronted with the issue of binational integration every day, while groups that are not tend to focus more on the ebbs and flows of national policy agendas in Mexico City or Washington.

Here, the contrast between rapid cavalry strikes and slogging trench warfare embodied in the Gramscian political concepts of 'war of movement' and 'war of position' may be useful. The first concept refers to struggles that involve dramatic waves of mobilization, while the second captures the inherently gradual and costly tactics that other kinds of political strategies involve – especially those that involve changing the ways large numbers of people think. The NAFTA vote and the initial phase of the Chiapas rebellion provoked upsurges of binational political action and a certain sense of 'war of movement', creating the expectation and hope that binational coalition-building

might be broadened and deepened. However, most of the key coalitions that have actually sustained coordinated relationships have pursued more of a 'war of position'. Given the extensive investments in internal and public education that balanced binational coalitions require, this is not surprising

(7) *Binational coalitions are long-term investments with uncertain payoffs.* Coalitions, because of their higher levels of coordination, require more resources to sustain than do networks. While some organizations are well endowed, those that are less so must carefully weigh the tradeoffs involved. Coalitions can also involve certain risks, insofar as one set of partners may or may not consult before making decisions that could be politically costly for the other. On the positive side, investments in networks and coalitions often generate social capital – resources for collective action embodied in horizontal relationships – and social capital can produce often unpredictable multiplier effects. But precisely because the empowering effects are difficult to assess, political investments in coalitions compete with much more pressing demands, and with alternative investments that promise more immediate results.³⁷

(8) *Grassroots struggles can empower their participants even when they lose.* Assessing movement impact is always an analytical challenge, especially when they do not reach their explicit goals. Ricardo Hernández, veteran analyst of grassroots movements on the border, recently chronicled campaigns by the Comité Fronterizo de Obreros (CFO), a grassroots Mexican workers organization, to win back wages for workers in 'Maquilatitlán' (2001). In the end, the corporate owners got away with not paying the back wages, but in the process worker leaders gained a vast amount of political experience.

In fact, it appears that binational civil society networks and coalitions have had much more impact on *themselves* than on the broader processes and targets that provoked their emergence.³⁸ Organized constituencies in each civil society have gotten to know their counterparts better. Greater mutual understanding is very likely to have empowering effects, at least in the long term. Broad-based actors in both civil societies are qualitatively more open to and experienced with binational cooperation than ever before. This accumulated social capital constitutes a potential political resource for the future. Whether and how national civil society actors will choose to draw on it remains to be seen.

Notes

- 1 This chapter summarizes the author's more detailed 'Lessons from Mexico–US Civil Society Coalitions', in David Brooks and Jonathan Fox (eds), *Cross-Border Dialogues: Mexico–US Social Movement Networking*, La Jolla: University of California, San Diego, Center for US-Mexican Studies, 2002. For a Spanish language version, see Fox (2001). This study is indebted to a decade and a half of conversations with David Brooks, Luis Hernández Navarro and many others cited in Brooks and Fox (2002).
- 2 For analysis of Mexico–US trade advocacy coalitions, see Cavanagh, Anderson and Hansen-Kuhn (2002), Hinojosa (2002) and Lujan (2002). On small farmer organizations, see Hernández Navarro (2002) and Lehman (2002).
- 3 Personal email communication, Professor Margaret Keck, March 9, 2000.
- 4 The use of the term transnational rather than binational here is intended to suggest that this framework can be applied more broadly.
- 5 I am grateful to my UCSC colleague, Prof. Sonia Alvarez, for encouraging me to specify this distinction.
- 6 For background on the international politics of US labour unions, see Sims (1992), Shorrock (1999) and McGinn and Moody (1992), among others. On the history of US economic nationalism and unions, see Frank (1999). On US–Mexican union relations, see Alexander and Gilmore (1994; 1998), Armbruster (1998), Babson (2000), Blackwell (2002), Brooks (1992), Cook (1997), Carr (1996; 1998), Dreiling and Robinson (1998); García Urrutia (2002); Hathaway (2000); Kidder and McGinn (1995); La Botz (1992); Williams (1997) and Williams (2000; 2002). See also *Mexican Labor News and Analysis* at www.ueinternational.org/
- 7 For example, in the early 1990s, the United Auto Workers (UAW) did not pursue relationships with rank and file movements for union democracy in Mexico, such as the Ford Cuautitlán movement, which found US support among UAW dissidents (La Botz 1992: 148–59; Armbruster 1998).
- 8 See Kamel and Hoffman (1999); CFO (1999) and Hernández (2001). The CFO reports activity in Ciudad Victoria, Rio Bravo, Piedras Negras, Ciudad Acuña, and Agua Prieta.
- 9 See Carrillo (1990; 1998) on the efforts to build cross-border solidarity with the '19th of September Garment Workers' Union'. On networking among women trade unionists, see also Domínguez (2000).
- 10 See, among others, Bandy (2000), Frundt (2000); Kamel (1988; 1989), Kamel and Hoffman (1999); Peña (1997) and Ruiz and Tiano (1987).
- 11 Discussant's remarks, 'Lessons from Mexico–US Binational Civil Society Coalitions', University of California, Santa Cruz, July 1998.
- 12 Interview, Sept. 1999. Note for example, the case of Custom Trim in Matamoros, where leaders of the visiting delegation reportedly ignored warnings that organizers would likely be fired.
- 13 See the comprehensive Canadian maquila support network's account at: <http://www.maquilasolidarity.org/campaigns/nike/kukdong.htm>
- 14 On union democracy in Mexico, the most comprehensive recent overview is Bouzas Ortiz (2001).

- 15 Personal email communication, Robin Alexander, UE, Sept. 30, 1999. CJM director Martha Ojeda confirms that this campaign lost (personal email communication, 30 July 2001). For background, see Dillon (1998).
- 16 See Human Rights Watch (2001). For a more optimistic assessment, see Compa (2001).
- 17 For example, in Mexico, despite their efforts to acquire independent representation at the huge Duro Bag factory in Tamaulipas, workers were forced by federal labour board officials to declare their votes in front of company foremen and PRI union leaders. This decision by Mexico's new labour minister violated an agreement negotiated between his predecessor, and the former US Labour Secretary (Bacon 2001). Under Mexico's new government, US union support for Mexican unionists continues to be officially considered a threat to national security (Aponete and Perez Silva 2001). Bronfenbrenner reports that US 'managers at 70 per cent of factories involved in organizing drives threaten to close if workers decide to unionize' (Greenhouse 2001: A10).
- 18 On US environmental organizations in the NAFTA debate, see Audley (1997), Dreiling (1997) and Mayer (1988).
- 19 This generalization also holds for the large groups that opposed NAFTA, including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Defenders of Wildlife. Of these, only the Sierra Club pursued a serious Mexico-related initiative, after an interlude of several years. They took up an important environmental human rights case, the 'campesino-ecologistas' anti-logging activists from Guerrero (www.sierraclub.org/human-rights/Mexico; Eaton 1999). This campaign contributed to winning the high-profile Goldman award for environmental activism (Dillon 2000). At the same time, the Sierra Club's 1998 internal referendum over whether to consider immigration to be an environmental problem did not have any immigrant or binational participation. Nevertheless, the proposal was decisively defeated by membership vote.
- 20 Though not involved in policy advocacy, mainstream pro-NAFTA US conservation organizations built on their close ties to both governments with significant involvement in Mexican biodiversity projects. Beginning in the early 1990s, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International received sizeable US government grants to promote the park approach to biodiversity conservation in Mexico. They bolstered their Mexican conservationist NGO counterparts such as Pronatura to create a large national funding organization, the Mexican Nature Conservation Fund, to channel donations from the Global Environment Facility to manage 'Protected Natural Areas'. See: www.fmcn.org. The US conservation NGOs tended to be quite close to the Mexican government. For example, Conservation International presented then-President Salinas with a 'World Conservation Leadership Award' in New York City on 8 Oct 1992, documented in a promotional video. There is little public information available about how these protected areas are managed, but the high-profile case of the Monarch butterfly reserve provides suggestive evidence. According to ecologist Peter Sauer, 'when Mexico established the butterfly preserve in 1986, it took most of the land in

- the preserve from local *ejidatarios*. The *ejidatarios* had been asking the government for compensation for a decade when, in 1996, advocates of the preserve also began pressing for compensation' (2001: 48). This decade-long lag suggests weak binational partnerships. For information on a recent crossborder reforestation partnership, see www.michoacanmonarchs.com.
- 21 For broader context on the political economy of the tuna industry, see Bonnano and Constance (1996). On the Mexican tuna industry's response, see BRIDGES (2000), and Rose (1993), among others. On the transnational efforts to pursue a compromise, see Wright (2000).
 - 22 On the Sierra Blanca campaign, see Abraham and Cone (1999), Blakeslee (1998), LaFranchi (1998), Paterson (1998), Robbins (2000) and Walker (1998).
 - 23 Mexico's densely organized alternative coffee co-op movement is one of the country's most important defenders of rural natural resources. In spite of the high public profile of the biodiversity issue, however, they have few US partnerships. A new coffee network initiative emerged when the Natural Resources Defense Council, together with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Migratory Birds, convened a major conference on sustainable coffee. Since then, however, US promoters of 'bird-friendly' coffee have formed few close partnerships with the 'fair trade' coffee promoters. See Rice *et al.* (1997). For an explanation of 'bird-friendly' coffee certification, see the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center's site at: <http://natzoo.si.edu/smbc/Research/Coffee/criteria.htm>. One important breakthrough was led by Global Exchange, whose threatened street protest campaign (shortly after Seattle, 1999) led Starbucks to sell shade-grown and fair trade coffees for the first time. However, overall, the alternative coffee campaign (fair trade, organic and shade) has produced many meetings and networks, some increases in US purchases, but few sustained binational coalitions. One notable fair trade partnership, Equal Exchange and Cultural Survival, launched a campaign in support of the Majomut organic coffee co-op after it was hard hit by the 1997 Acteal massacre in Chiapas (see www.equalexchange.org and www.cs.org). On Mexican coffee co-ops, see, among others, Bray *et al.* (2002); Ejea and Hernández (1991); Moguel and Toledo (2001); Porter (2001); Rice *et al.* (1997); Rice (2001), and Snyder (2001) and www.fomcafe.org/. For an overview of fair trade coffee issues, see www.transfairusa.org/.
 - 24 See also Bejarano (2002) and Kelly (2002). For an updated, comprehensive overview of border toxic waste issues, for example, see Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio *et al.* (2000), available at <http://www.texas-center.org/pubs/pubs.htm>. The most recent data from Mexico's statistical institute report that, of the estimated 8 million tons of toxic waste generated annually, only 12% receive some kind of treatment (Enciso 2001). For a recent overview, see Varady *et al.* (2001). For additional discussions of border environmental issues, see Liverman *et al.* (1999) and Verdusco (2000), among others. For brief overviews of Mexico's environmental movement and policy in the border context, see Hipple (2001) and Nauman (2002).
 - 25 See Pacheco-Vega (2001) and www.laneta.apc.org/emisiones. The degree to which *binational* civil society collaboration contributed to this potentially important reform remains unclear.

- 26 See the procedures, mandate and list of claims at www.cec.org. For a brief overview, see Mahant (2001).
- 27 See Gosse (1988; 1995); Griffin-Nolan (1991); Nepstad (2001) and Smith (1996).
- 28 See www.mexicosolidarity.org.
- 29 See Stephen (2002) and the related debate between Hellman (2000, 2001), Cleaver (2000) and Paulson (2001).
- 30 See Alvarez (2002) and Lewis (2002). The Civic Alliance was the target of nationalist criticism in Mexico from both left and right for accepting US government funds through the National Endowment for Democracy. See Rodríguez (2001) and Aguayo (2001). A major overview of US foreign policy in the 1980s and 1990s found that democracy promotion in Mexico was never a priority (Mazza 2001). See also Dresser (1996).
- 31 This paragraph is based on an interview with a US Catholic for a Free Choice activist with several years of experience working in Mexico with the Mexican chapter (Kathy Toner, March 9, 2000).
- 32 Historians will also take note of another new migrant campaign, spreading in both countries, by elderly Mexican veterans of the 1942–64 Bracero (guest worker) programme, to claim back wages that had been withheld but never delivered.
- 33 See Hinojosa-Ojeda and Boudreau (1998), Kelly, Reed and Taylor (2001) and Kourous (2000).
- 34 While the attacks on PRD activists appeared to decline in the *late* 1990s, it is not clear whether this was due more to the reduced perception that they were a political threat, to other national factors, or to international pressure. Moreover, serious and systematic human rights violations persisted, most obviously in the ‘low intensity conflict’ situation in Chiapas. On Guerrero, see Gutiérrez (1998). During the 1996–98 (August) period alone, the Human Rights Centre ‘Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez’ documented 115 disappearances (1999).
- 35 Camacho subsequently argued that the EZLN made possible Mexico’s 2000 political transition, since the uprising directly provoked the January 21, 1994 inter-party political accord (Becerril 2001).
- 36 For one example of a partial institutional reform that creates the potential for clear, rather than fuzzy transparency, note the experience of the World Bank Inspection Panel, a relatively autonomous body that receives complaints directly from people directly affected by the World Bank’s non-compliance with its own social and environmental standards. For an assessment of its first five years, see Fox (2000).
- 37 For many organizations, the lower levels of commitment involved in networks may make much more sense than coalitions. Relatively low cost binational networks can exercise leverage at key turning points, as long as they link organizations that have some degree of influence in their respective societies. On the ‘strength of weak ties’, see Granovetter (1973). For an application of this concept to transnational advocacy networks, see Fox and Brown (1998).
- 38 For a related effort to broaden the criteria and scope for assessing social movement impact, see Alvarez (1997).

8

Limits to Global Civil Society: Gaps Between Western Donors and Russian NGOs

*Lisa Sundstrom*¹

Introduction

Over the past decade, transnational assistance organizations based in the West, including foreign state aid agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and Western NGOs, dramatically fuelled the growth of NGOs in developing and democratizing states. Proponents of the concept of a global civil society have often cited growing transnational linkages among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from different areas of the world as evidence of increasing global consensus and community among citizens (Wapner 1995 and 2000; Mathews 1997). Some have argued that foreign aid to local NGOs is a contributing factor in the development of a strong global civil society (Wapner 1995: 335).

In fact, though, the current state of relations among nongovernmental actors around the world is a long way from comprising a global civil society. This chapter challenges common assumptions about global civil society by examining one aspect of transnational relations among nongovernmental actors. Focusing on Russia as a case, I assess the particular ways in which transnational assistance to domestic NGOs – primarily through grant programmes, training sessions, and overseas exchanges – affects the development of global civil society. Assistance to NGOs in democratizing states is a rapidly growing phenomenon, which fundamentally affects the kinds of activities in which NGOs engage, as well as the nature of their transnational interactions. As such, foreign democracy assistance has an important impact on the types of domestic actors involved at the transnational level, as well as on how transnational concepts operate at local levels.

My analysis uses evidence gathered from interviews with representatives from over one hundred NGOs in seven regions around Russia to

highlight aspects of local NGOs' transnational interactions, which render so-called global civil society neither globally inclusive, nor an integrated 'society'.² The research investigated transnational influences specifically upon Russian women's and soldiers' rights organizations. These subsectors of NGOs were chosen because they experience intensive transnational relations, relative to much of Russian civil society. As such, the extent to which these advocacy NGOs are integrated into the realm of 'global civil society' is greater than in many other areas of civil society, such as among cultural or ethnically-based organizations. The NGOs were also selected because of their divergent popularity. Russian women's NGOs have been unsuccessful in rallying public support for their ideas; while soldiers' rights organizations (particularly soldiers' mothers' groups) are extremely popular with average Russian citizens.

Specific domestic and universal norms are an important part of the explanation behind the different outcomes. When transnational assistance supports NGO work on issues framed in ways that complement local norms, the growth of a strong NGO movement is likely to take place and result in social and political change. In Russia, this occurred on issues involving human physical dignity, such as abuse of soldiers and domestic violence. In contrast, no amount of transnational assistance will lead to successful mobilization when the problems that transnational actors focus on, and the approaches they advocate, contradict specific local norms concerning which issues are important and how they should be addressed. This has been a problem with mobilization around many women's issues in Russia, because of historically developed ideas surrounding feminism and gender discrimination.

1. Global civil society?

It is important to attain conceptual clarity concerning the features of NGOs that, if they existed, would provide evidence of a budding global civil society that fulfils the requirements of being 'global' and a 'society'. First, in order to be globally comprehensive, such a society would include a diverse community of networks and organizations. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this volume, many authors assume that we are discussing a democratic form of civil society at the global level; thus, the concept implies involvement of a wide and representative range of 'citizens' from around the world.

Second, those participating in global civil society would share some basic values and concerns that tie them together as a 'society'. In order for a society to exist, there must be basic agreement among actors –

what Tarrow would call 'strong connective tissue' – concerning some uniting fundamental concepts (Tarrow 1998b: 186; Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler 1998: 4). The dynamic of communication among actors would be one of dialogue, rather than unidirectional in nature. The principles that are articulated at the international level would also resonate with the concerns of people at local levels.

In Russia, on a surface level, transnational actors have influenced the activities and language of NGOs, leading to a sector with many professionalized organizations, whose leaders can speak adeptly about concepts such as gender discrimination, advocacy, and civil society. Yet the segment of NGOs that speak this transnationalized language is extremely limited, and often detached from the grassroots concerns of most of domestic society. While transnational assistance organizations in Russia promote largely Western, liberal civil society models of politicized advocacy for citizens' rights, an enormous number of local NGOs with strong societal roots are concerned with more immediate charity and social development problems – and these NGOs are excluded from dialogue with transnational actors. Thus, assistance is typically narrow in its reach, focusing on local NGOs which speak in Western terms.

Even among those Russian organizations which participate in 'global civil society' by interacting with foreigners and adopting transnational concepts on various issues, NGO members sometimes act and speak in ways that dramatically contradict the meanings intended by their transnational interlocutors. There are certain fairly universal issues, such as physical violence against vulnerable individuals, in which a widespread consensus among citizens from all over the world appears to exist, and this has allowed pockets of transnational solidarity to develop. On many other issues, though, when we look closely at how transnational interactions filter through to domestic levels, it becomes clear that apparent superficial agreement on issues at the international level fails to trickle down into effective local action, due to differences in grassroots problems and societal norms that define which issues are important. Western providers of foreign aid to NGOs, or 'foreign donors', as they are often called in development literature, also engage overwhelmingly in a rhetoric of instruction rather than two-way conversation with Russian NGO activists.

2. Neither globally inclusive...

Foreign donors have worked with a limited portion of civil society organizations in Russia. NGOs in major cities such as Moscow and

St. Petersburg, and in selected smaller cities that are experimental targets for transnational assistance, such as Novgorod-the-Great, have been those most closely associated with foreign organizations. Foreign donors have recently made serious attempts to extend their assistance programmes to more remote regions of Russia. Nonetheless, 'the provinces' remain relatively isolated from the transnational realm.

Some figures from my research illustrate this point. For example, as concerns transnational material support to Russian NGOs, 65 per cent of the organizations whose members I interviewed across Russia had received funding from foreign donors at some point, and 41 per cent were frequent recipients of foreign funding. These are impressive overall figures indicating transnational contact, but they hide sharp regional disparities. Sixty-four per cent of the 28 NGOs in Moscow received the majority of their funding from foreign donors, as had 41 per cent (out of 22) in St. Petersburg. However in smaller, more remote cities, far fewer NGOs received most of their funding from transnational sources: in the central Russian city of Izhevsk, only one NGO of 11 interviewed; and in the far eastern city of Khabarovsk, only one NGO in six. These patterns generally extended to other forms of transnational contact. All of the NGO activists interviewed in Moscow had either travelled overseas or received foreign funding at some point, while in contrast, 40 per cent of activists interviewed in Izhevsk and 18 per cent of 11 organizations in the major city of Ekaterinburg had neither travelled overseas, nor received foreign funding.³ The number of NGOs surveyed in the regional cities is small, but they represent nearly the entire population of women's and soldiers' rights NGOs in those smaller cities. In the large cities, St. Petersburg and Moscow, where NGO populations are much greater, I interviewed many leaders from a diversity of NGOs, engaging in activities ranging from traditional charity work to hobbies to feminist advocacy.

Another form of contact that has figured prominently in Keck and Sikkink's (1998a) discussion of transnational advocacy networks is NGOs' use of so-called 'boomerang' techniques. In the classic form of boomerang, domestic NGOs turn to their nongovernmental friends in the transnational community to campaign on their behalf in intergovernmental organizations or other states' national government structures. Alternatively, domestic NGOs may directly submit complaints to intergovernmental institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union, which in turn pressure the national government.

A softer form of boomerang strategy consists of domestic NGOs merely threatening to embarrass or 'shame' their government on the

international stage (Moravcsik 1994; Risse and Sikkink 1999). They may complain to their government that it should comply with particular international conventions it has signed on to, or use the clout of relations with transnational actors to warn that the 'international community is watching'.

However, use of boomerang techniques was relatively rare among those studied. Only 15 per cent of interviewees mentioned employing such techniques, including the softer form of merely *referring* to transnational allies. Those who employed boomerang techniques tended to be the activists who had most often travelled overseas. Only one untravelled activist had attempted to use boomerang techniques. Accounts that hail a brave new world of strong transnational advocacy networks often give us the sense that NGOs are continually bringing national governments and corporations to account by shaming them in the eyes of the world (Wapner 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998a; Risse and Sikkink 1999). However, if the Russian case is any indication, the vast majority of NGOs never think of bringing the attention of the international community to bear upon their local problems.

Disconnect between the transnational and the grassroots

NGOs that depend heavily on transnational support tend to lack close connections with ordinary citizens at local levels. Transnational actors prefer to work with organizations whose leaders already espouse traditionally Western ideals, such as individual rights, citizen activism, and autonomy from the state. In Russia, these NGOs typically have small memberships, and are composed of intellectual, elite activists who speak foreign donors' language (both literally and conceptually).

This pattern of transnational support leads to the division of domestic NGOs into two distinct groups – transnationally integrated and transnationally isolated – with differing ideas about their roles. Thus, for example, foreign donors are far more interested in supporting activities that promote Western-style feminist ideas or the rights of persecuted individuals than they are in funding basic charity activities or projects aimed at retraining unemployed women for new jobs. Organizations that engage in the latter kinds of projects usually have no contacts whatsoever in the international realm, and frequently hold opinions that differ strikingly from the views of transnationalized activists. There is little interaction between these two sets of NGOs, and as a result, transnational ideas concerning appropriate forms of activism and political principles have not diffused broadly in domestic Russian society.

In my study, the differences among these groups of NGOs were visible in the attitudes that their members espoused regarding their role in society and their proper relationship with the state. Non-transnationalized activists often viewed their purpose as one of helping society and the state to resolve socioeconomic problems. Only rarely did foreign-funded or entirely non-foreign-funded NGOs claim that their role was wholly or partially one of 'helping' the population and the state by providing social services. Below are typical examples of the ways in which domestically-funded NGOs perceived their role:

Primorskii International Women's Club: 'We're like an ambulance for emergency individual situations, when the bureaucracy can't help fast enough.'⁴

Novgorod Oblast *Zhensovet* (Women's Council): 'We support the administration in all affairs, and help them to solve problems, because without NGOs, it is very difficult to solve social problems.'⁵

In contrast, strongly transnationalized NGOs usually embraced roles of interest group advocacy and consciousness-raising. They tended to perceive their role as being more adversarial and rights-focused, instead of emphasizing mobilization of citizens to work together and solve social problems. Such perceptions much more closely approximate the Western liberal model of civil society that is promoted by most transnational actors. The idea of the 'taxpayer's' sense of entitlement featured in some respondents' statements. For example, Elena Vilenskaya, co-chair of the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, explained how she began thinking about concepts such as civil society:

The theme developed as the organization did; but, of course, in order to form such an organization, we were already thinking about this ... that the citizens must control their army. We are the boss, we are the taxpayers...and we must control it.⁶

Similarly, Elena Ershova of the NIS-US Women's Consortium in Moscow focused on the need to develop a conscious citizenry that would claim a role in governance:

In order to build civil society, you need not to have people who are passive, who have become used to being subordinate and fulfilling orders from above. Rather, you need to have conscious, responsible citizens, who have become used to making decisions themselves.⁷

Although these statements give the impression that foreign donors may have encouraged Russian NGOs to increase citizen activism, the views of transnationalized NGOs about their roles frequently diverged from the actual activities they conducted. While foreign donors have encouraged these role perceptions, they have simultaneously discouraged Russian NGOs from engaging in outreach activities to ordinary citizens. By funding certain areas of activity and ignoring or refusing to fund others, donors have fundamentally shifted the substantive programmes that transnationalized Russian NGOs pursue. Most donors have preferred to assist Russian NGOs in improving their internal management techniques, holding seminars and conferences, and producing information about the issues they address. They have typically rejected funding NGO work in charity or social services, basic job training in most areas, or cultural programmes (such as sports or arts and crafts).⁸ Sixty-nine per cent of exclusively foreign-funded NGOs in the study engaged in programmes to train other NGOs, compared to only 25 per cent of exclusively domestically-funded NGOs. In contrast, no exclusively foreign-funded NGOs engaged in charity work, while 55 per cent of exclusively domestically-funded NGOs did so.

These characteristics of transnationally integrated Russian NGOs cast considerable doubt on the image of a global civil society in which international NGO networks extend to grassroots mobilization, as suggested by authors like Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999). Certainly such dynamics occur in some cases, where fairly universal transnational norms resonate strongly in domestic society, as we shall see below in the examples of crisis centres for women and soldiers' rights NGOs. Typically, though, foreign-funded NGOs conduct lobbying activities that are unknown to the general public; and although they organize many conferences, training sessions and information distribution projects, their activities are mostly 'preaching to the converted' among members of sympathetic NGOs and a few government officials.

3. ...nor a society

In addition to the fact that only a limited portion of Russian civil society is involved in transnational relations, there is often a lack of agreement between the principles promoted by transnational actors and norms that are widespread in Russia. Although foreign donors may shape the terms of discourse that many Russian domestic activists use, transnational priority issues for NGO mobilization are unlikely to inspire activism at local levels unless they complement norms that are widely espoused at the domestic level.

Problems like sexual harassment and discrimination against women clearly exist on a huge scale from an outsider's perspective and have prompted successful NGO campaigns in Western contexts. Yet they have not resulted in effective Russian mobilization, despite transnational assistance to organizations that pursue them. In other issue areas, such as abuse of soldiers and domestic violence, strong Russian NGO mobilization has developed and been bolstered significantly by transnational support, as proponents of global civil society would expect.

It is important to note, with an eye to potential alternative explanations for the successes and failures of NGO mobilization in women's and soldiers' rights issues, that several other explanations for social movement success and failure cannot explain these outcomes. First, with regard to grievances in the two issue areas, both physical abuse of soldiers and gender discrimination against women are severe and widespread problems in Russia, affecting enormous numbers of people. Second, concerning resource mobilization, there is little basis for arguing that soldiers' rights NGOs possess superior material or organizational resources compared to women's NGOs. Women's NGOs have generally received more organizational management training and funding than soldiers' rights groups, so a lack of material resources or skills cannot explain the relative lack of success of women's organizations. Finally, regarding political obstacles, soldiers' rights organizations faced a more difficult political opportunity structure than women's NGOs, since their aims concern changes in military policies. Military institutions are notoriously resistant to change and closed to public input. Women's NGOs at least managed more often to find allies, albeit ephemeral, in federal and local government structures. Consequently, to explain the different outcomes between the two sets of NGOs, we must look at the issues themselves and the norms involved in the ways domestic NGOs and transnational actors approach them.

Universal concerns with physical dignity in soldiers' rights

In the area of soldiers' rights, we find a fairly smooth success story of transnational collaboration among NGOs. Many of Russians' concerns about mandatory service in the contemporary Russian army result from widespread reports of beatings, torture, and neglect of conscript soldiers, especially under the well-known system of *dedovshchina*, an extreme form of hazing in which elder soldiers abuse first-year conscripts. According to the Union of Committees of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia and other human rights organizations, peacetime deaths among Russian conscripts total between three and five thousand each year

(Obraztsova 1999: 2; Hall 2001). In addition to this, as a result of the two military campaigns in Chechnya during the 1990s, many Russians worry about the high likelihood that their sons will be sent, poorly trained, into heavy fighting in the Caucasus region.

A widely supported norm against violations of physical dignity plays a large role in explaining the success and popularity of soldiers' rights NGOs. Keck and Sikkink posit that this norm is nearly universal: 'Not all cultures have beliefs about human rights (as individualistic, universal, and indivisible), but most value human dignity' (1998a: 205). Case studies on transnational campaigns against anti-personnel landmines, torture and disappearance of political dissidents, violence against women, and rainforest destruction have shown how campaigns frequently succeed when they are framed in terms of physical harm to humans, especially vulnerable individuals.⁹ As I discuss below, the issue of domestic violence against women is another area in which this norm has facilitated strong transnational mobilization. In contrast, campaigns often fail when they are framed in terms of norms that are not accepted as universally as the norm against physical harm to humans, or when the norm against bodily harm competes with strong local norms (Keck 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998a). Among Russian soldiers' rights organizations, mobilization tends to be less successful when framed as pacifist or anti-militarist values, which are much more contested in Russia, rather than as objections to physical abuse and neglect of soldiers.

Soldiers' rights NGOs, especially the soldiers' mothers' organizations, are extremely well respected and popular in Russia. The committees of soldiers' mothers are one of the few kinds of NGOs that most Russians have heard of and can recall by name. They have grown from small, weekly protest gatherings of thirty to forty mothers in Moscow in 1989, into cohesive networks of hundreds of committees, covering nearly every Russian region. These organizations receive tens of thousands of requests for help from Russian citizens every year, and most conduct regular consultation sessions with draftees, soldiers, and their families. They appear often on television news discussion programmes and continually provide interviews and information at the request of Russian journalists.

Soldiers' rights NGOs have also attained concrete public policy victories. Several organizations win court cases regularly, in instances of draftees refusing to serve based on their constitutional right to alternative service. Military draft commissions have begun to recognize medically-based refusal cases more frequently, and no longer dare to bend

the conscription regulations in cases overseen by soldiers' mothers' organizations such as the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg.¹⁰ In 1999, for the first time, Moscow city courts accepted lawsuits filed by soldiers and parents of deceased soldiers against the military in cases of unlawful conscription.¹¹

Transnational actors assisted many soldiers' rights NGOs in defending the rights of Russian army conscripts. At various times, donors such as the European Union, the Ford Foundation, and the Soros Open Society Institute have made such organizations a priority in their granting programmes. Transnational assistance to soldiers' rights NGOs, in the forms of project grants, seminars, and overseas exchanges, has not distracted them from conducting grassroots work with citizens, and nor has it led them to adopt projects outside the scope of their original fundamental aims. In contrast to phenomena that researchers have observed in many other NGO subsectors, such as women's and environmental organizations (Sperling 1999; Henry 2001), foreign grant incentives have not led to the proliferation of new soldiers' rights NGOs that are willing to shift their focus with the changing priorities of foreign donors. Instead, transnational assistance has merely strengthened soldiers' rights organizations by giving them more resources with which to work.

Domestic violence: success through the frame of physical dignity

Another relative success story of transnational collaboration in Russia is that of the movement against domestic violence. Russian women's organizations across the political spectrum have begun to speak out about the problem, although, until very recently, domestic violence was a 'silent problem'. Law enforcement agencies and most of society simply did not consider it a crime (Buckley 1989: 204; Sinelnikov 1998; Vannoy *et al.* 1999: 142–3). This is an area in which funding from transnational actors and transnational assistance in developing techniques to battle the problem have been extremely effective.

The relatively high success of transnational interactions in the area of domestic violence is not peculiar to Russia. Other authors have noted that issues of violence against women have provided a strong basis for genuine transnational mobilization of women's organizations from all over the world, since violence against innocent individuals is something that nearly all cultures abhor (Bunch, 1990; Keck and Sikkink 1998a: 167; Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler 1998: 24–5). However on other major women's issues, transnational mobilization has failed in Russia, just as it has in many campaigns in other parts of

the world. Such mobilizations have broken down between feminists from Western countries who focus on the frame of discrimination, and women from the developing world who stress what they consider to be more urgent issues of development and social justice (Sen and Grown 1987; Basu 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998a). It seems, then, that there are certain areas of civil society mobilization that are amenable to transnational collaboration by activists from a wide range of cultural and ideological perspectives. Nonetheless, there are many areas, like the women's issues described below, in which significant domestic normative barriers hinder effective collaboration among activists from different areas of the world.

Russian rejection of feminism and failed transnational efforts

Despite pervasive instances of discrimination against women in Russia, the issue has not inspired successful NGO mobilization in Russia. Women's NGOs are poorly understood and unpopular in the mass media, in most government circles, and among average citizens (Waters 1989; Ayvazova 1998; Sundstrom 2002).

Reliable documentation exists, even from government sources, detailing frequent discriminatory hiring and firing practices in Russia (Baskakova 1998). A quick perusal of job advertisements in Russian newspapers, specifying the sex, age, and even details of personal appearance desired of applicants, confirms the prevalence of such practices (Bridger, Kay and Pinnick 1996: 80). Studies also show that Russian women do not receive equal pay for performing similar work, and sexual harassment is commonplace (Khotkina 1996; UNICEF 1999: 36; Baskakova 2000: 63). These kinds of issues sparked a powerful feminist movement in most Western countries; yet in Russia, we do not see significant mobilization or popular support for NGO efforts to organize around such problems, in spite of heavy transnational support for women's NGOs.

The most active transnational actor in the area of women's rights in Russia has been the US government, which has devoted considerable foreign policy resources, especially during the tenure of Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State, to 'promoting human rights and, in particular, combating violence and discrimination against women' (Human Rights Watch 1997; USAID 1999). Other transnational actors have also focused especially on women's issues. For example, the German Heinrich Boll Stiftung, and one of its ancestors, the Frauenanstiftung of the German Women's Party, have placed a great deal of emphasis on women's issues. The Canadian Embassy in

Moscow also administers a grant programme specifically for women's NGOs, and nongovernmental foreign foundations such as the American Global Fund for Women and the Dutch organization 'Mama Cash' are devoted solely to funding work on women's issues around the world. The American Bar Association has worked with Russian women's NGOs to tackle issues of gender discrimination, and Human Rights Watch has produced several reports in recent years to publicize violations of women's rights in Russia (Khotkina 1996; Human Rights Watch 1995, 1997).¹²

The ways in which gender issues have been treated historically in Russia have contributed to a general resistance to feminist ideals, including the norms of women's emancipation and equality. Most Russians reject the concept of 'gender' – which holds that many aspects of male and female roles are socially constructed – and instead 'essentialism regarding men and women is widely accepted in Russian political discourse' (Vannoy *et al.* 1999: 5). Essentialist views of men's and women's 'natural' roles include the idea that men are destined to be breadwinners, and women's primary place is in the home. Such ideas contribute to toleration of various forms of workplace discrimination, including sexual harassment, as acceptable phenomena.

Surveys confirm the prevalence of this view of man as breadwinner and woman as responsible for the home. In 1996, Vannoy *et al.* conducted a survey of Muscovites, in which 80 per cent of married interviewees responded that earning money is the husband's role in the family, while fewer than one-fifth of the married women respondents and even fewer married men thought that income earning should be a shared responsibility (1999: 52–3). By comparison, when the same questions were asked of Midwestern Americans thirteen years earlier, 31 per cent of husbands and 47 per cent of wives stated that the responsibility should be shared (Vannoy *et al.* 1999: 53). The 1990–93 World Values Survey, which studied people's values in forty countries around the world, also found the opinion that men should be the primary breadwinners to be much stronger in Russia than in nearly all Western countries. According to the survey, 40 per cent of Russians agreed with the statement that 'When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women' (Inglehart, Basanez and Moreno 1998: V128). In contrast, 24 per cent of Americans, 19 per cent of Canadians, and 8 per cent of Swedes agreed with the statement.¹³

From the perspective of many Russian women, the Soviet state already granted them legal equality with men, and promoted identical images of men and women, particularly in the labour market, with

images of female tractor drivers and crane operators. Yet this 'equality' did not improve women's lives. Observers of Russian gender issues widely acknowledge that the Soviet approach to these issues created a backlash against the idea of equality between the sexes. Scholar and activist Irina Jurna states, 'the hardship that women endured under the Soviet system of "equality" has left a legacy that defines equality with men as an undesirable goal for many Russian women' (Jurna 1995: 477; also Voronina 1993: 223). Women were comrades with men in every occupation, or so official texts proclaimed, despite extreme discrimination and occupational segregation in reality.

These prevalent attitudes in Russian society, rejecting norms of feminism and gender equality as 'sameness', make it exceedingly difficult for Russian NGOs to mobilize successfully by using arguments that have been effective in the West and are promoted by transnational actors. In the United States, for example, women's organizations have tackled the problem of sexual harassment by arguing that women are entitled to equal treatment in the workplace, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is responsible for collecting and pursuing complaints of sexual harassment. In Russia, though, given the history of women's negative experiences with what was called 'equality' under the Soviet regime, strategies that women's NGOs have used in the West to raise public concern about the issue are not successful.

Because of this conflict between domestic and transnationally promoted norms, transnational assistance has tended to increase the detachment of women's NGOs from the larger population, with the exception of work in the area of domestic violence. Western donors have done this by focusing on funding organizations that espouse or are willing to adopt the specific norms that they bring from Western experience, rather than emphasizing work on problems that large constituencies of Russians consider important. They have thus promoted the development of a community of women's NGOs in which intellectuals and professionals building stable careers outnumber passionate activists. In the area of women's labour issues, for example, dominant NGO activities are seminars with scholarly discussions of the issue and gender analyses of government legislation, rather than public protest, media awareness campaigns, or consultations for women who have experienced discrimination. Workplace discrimination is just one area in which these patterns are visible. Other examples include NGO projects on media depiction of women and promoting women in politics. Such projects typically consist of seminars and reports that involve a

small segment of NGO activists, scholars, and bureaucrats, instead of reaching out to ordinary Russians.

Many involved with the women's movement have lamented its detachment from grassroots concerns. Jurna states that 'the women's movement must begin to define the concrete interests of Russian women and then build solid linkages to Russian society as a whole...This can only be achieved by opening up the small, closed circle of women's groups to a much wider audience by using media to break down antiquated stereotypes regarding women's roles and to build a mass movement which can endure' (1995: 477). Other women activists complain that foreign funding has led NGOs to work on priorities that do not originate within Russia.¹⁴ The problem of transnationalized NGOs being detached from local concerns extends beyond Russia, as several authors have argued in reference to other regions, such as Africa and Eastern Europe (Ottaway 2000; Quigley 2000).

4. NGOspeak: language versus content

In addition to clear instances of failure in transnational efforts to develop domestic mobilization around issues, there are more subtle problems with the degree to which apparent similarity in globalized civil society rhetoric extends to the everyday behaviours and deeper beliefs of domestic activists. In some cases, foreign donors have exerted a fundamental impact on the thoughts and deeds of domestic NGOs around the world, including in Russia. But in most cases, the influence of transnational assistance has been very weak in these respects.

A frequent outcome among Russian NGOs is 'decoupling', to use a term borrowed from sociological institutionalists (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer 1994). That is, there is a disjuncture between the statements and behaviour of organizational activists. Many local NGO actors speak a language familiar to Western activists, but at the level of behaviour and deeper attitudes, harbour entirely different assumptions about their roles and core philosophies. In other cases, decoupling occurs, not necessarily because of clear disagreements between the views of Western and Russian activists, but because a hostile local political environment makes it exceedingly difficult for them to act upon the Western ideals that they espouse in principle. Decoupling occurred more often in those cities of the study where NGOs faced hostile local governments – Khabarovsk and Vladivostok – than in cities like Moscow and Novgorod, where local activists encountered both a relatively supportive political environment and heavy transnational assistance.

One example of decoupling is usage of the feminist concept of gender. Although most Russians have never heard of the word 'gender', some women's NGOs are familiar with the term and employ it in discussions. But Russian activists who use the term 'gender' or claim to be feminists do not always believe in the same principles as their counterparts in the West. A member of an NGO for women leaders in Moscow stated in an interview that the organization's members 'understand gender politics, gender research, and equal rights and opportunities'. Then, a few moments later, she stated that 'women who relate to feminism are those who haven't realized themselves in their personal lives, and therefore wish to realize themselves at the social level'. She also stated that women would be a positive influence in politics due to their natural 'ability to compromise, to be less aggressive, [and] to protect children'.¹⁵ Another example is a women's business club in Vladivostok, which had conducted a seminar on women's rights, and whose leader claimed to espouse a feminist philosophy during an interview with this author. Yet in another context, the leader gave an interview to a local newspaper, in which she is cited as stating, 'We are not feminists – we are businesswomen!'¹⁶

In the first case, the Moscow NGO member appears genuinely to have a different understanding of the terms 'gender' and 'feminism' from that of Western women activists. The latter case is more likely to be an instance of an activist being forced by societal circumstances to display one set of attitudes in the transnational arena (or when speaking with foreign scholars) and another in the domestic environment. In both cases, there is a problem of apparent transnational agreement in linguistic terms, but deeper contradictions between Russian and Western NGOs at the level of day-to-day behaviour. Granted, those Russian activists who have been longest and most closely involved in transnational relations tend to understand the term 'gender' in a manner that generally resembles the Western sense of the word, meaning the socialized, non-biological aspects of differences between men and women. But we must be careful not to mistake the use of similar language for the existence of shared understandings.

Decoupling also occurs in activists' assessments of their roles and relations with the state. In my study, even in the few cases where there was evidence that transnational training may have changed NGO activists' views in these areas, such changes tended to be incomplete and contradictory because of opposing pressures that activists meet in their local environment. For example, a woman activist in Vladivostok, who headed the city-level 'women's council' or *zhensovet*, seemed to

have distanced herself ideologically from the government as a result of interactions with transnational actors. *Zhensovet*y are committees linked in a hierarchical network across Russia, which are direct descendants of the Soviet regime's official women's organizations. To this day, they generally remain materially dependent on the government for their operations and office space.

The city *zhensovet* leader in Vladivostok, Natalya Shcherbakova, was a rarity among the leaders of these organizations, in that she had engaged in enthusiastic dialogue with transnational actors, although she had never received foreign funding. She did not articulate a completely subordinate view of her organization's proper relationship with the state. Shcherbakova has spoken with other NGO leaders and in the local media about the need to mobilize and defend one's rights, and to develop an active citizenry.¹⁷ In an appearance on a local television programme, she sounded very Western in explaining the role of NGOs:

NGOs' role is to activate public opinion and the population so that the public itself can unite and try for itself to solve some of its problems. I saw yesterday on TV how women [from a city factory] picketed and voiced their demands. Good for them!¹⁸

Yet despite this adversarial tone, the main activities of the city *zhensovet* reinforced a subordinate view of state–society relations, since its activities consisted mostly of programmes and events that were often paid for and sometimes devised by the city administration. For example, Shcherbakova explained that for the holiday 'Family Day' in May 2000, the *zhensovet* organized a large fair-like celebration, and the city administration paid for food and a discotheque. The event included specialists from all kinds of official agencies that deal with family-related affairs to consult with citizens on topics such as utilities, state benefits, and housing. As such, the event was paid for by government and largely facilitated government services. The divergence of Shcherbakova's opinions from her everyday activities shows that even if transnational actors had altered her views on relations with the state, the changes were not consistent or dramatic.

This decoupling of the language that many activists use from the actual content of their beliefs and activities raises doubts about the extent to which activists from different parts of the world truly understand one another and transform transnational dialogue into local action. A small contingent of activists in Russia have long been heavily involved with transnational actors and actually carry through from

statements into activities that correspond with the meanings intended by Western counterparts. However, transnational actors should not overestimate the impact they have on domestic civil society mobilization simply by influencing the words that activists adopt to describe their work.

5. Silver lining and conclusion

On a positive note, although transnational actors have exerted very little influence upon the beliefs and norms of Russian NGO activists and regular citizens in many issue areas, there is no doubt that they have brought about a great deal of professionalization among domestic NGOs. NGO leaders who work closely with transnational actors have learned Western organizational management techniques and the language of human rights and civil society development that they promote. Foreign donor support has allowed many NGOs to appear and survive in a difficult domestic economic and political environment. Transfer of skills in fundraising and management is extremely useful for enhancing the durability and effectiveness of NGOs, as long as such professionalization processes do not overshadow the importance of working with the wider public.

Transnational actors should emphasize support to NGOs that conduct work on problems that Russian citizens view as important. They can learn about locally inspired ideas by engaging in active dialogue with Russian activists as partners, rather than issuing rigid monologues that presume foreign donors have the right answers. Snow and Benford have argued, in their work on social movement diffusion, that such one-sided diffusion efforts are unlikely to succeed without a realignment of the ideas to be transmitted in accordance with varying sociocultural contexts (1999: 38). If foreign donors would conduct a serious two-way discussion with Russian NGOs in shaping assistance priorities, they would likely succeed in bringing a more representative spectrum of NGO activists into transnational dialogue and enticing more citizens to participate in public affairs and questions of governance. Under the current structures of foreign assistance programmes, it is unlikely that many foreign-supported NGOs that lack connections with local citizens are capable of sustaining themselves in an inhospitable domestic environment, once transnational support ceases.

In the area of women's issues, because support to feminist causes has failed, the reader may suspect that this discussion can only lead to an argument that transnational actors should not support feminist NGOs

in Russia. By no means is this the intended implication. Instead, the recommendation that stems from this research is that foreign donors should fund a far broader variety of NGOs in Russia, including those that do not specifically embrace a Western feminist philosophy. In addition, though, donors should continue to fund domestic NGOs that have identified problems such as sexual harassment and employment discrimination of other sorts, which are undeniably huge but relatively silent in the Russian public space. Foreign assistance in the area of domestic violence is an example of the positive influence that transnational actors can have when they support local activists in amplifying previously silent problems.

I do not preclude the possibility that transnational actors, over a long period of time, can influence domestic norms concerning women and human rights. After all, transnational assistance to Russian NGOs has existed for only ten years at this point, and norms are hardly static. Indeed, a key characteristic of norms is that they are socially constructed, and thus tend to develop and change over time as new events and information affect the ways in which people understand the world around them. Social movement theorists recognize that interpretative cultural frames can be changed through the collective action of social movements themselves over time (Tarrow 1992; Checkel 1998; Della Porta and Diani 1999: 69). Nonetheless, this research shows that when NGO campaigns are framed in ways that complement prevalent norms in society, they are more likely to succeed and will succeed much more quickly than campaigns framed in ways that conflict with reigning local ideas.

This discussion has shown that transnational assistance to democratizing countries, which appears on the surface to be an instrument that contributes to the development of a global civil society, in fact typically only reaches a small segment of domestic civil societies. In addition, assistance efforts often fail to encourage mobilization due to incompatibilities between norms promoted by transnational actors and those that prevail in domestic society. Advocates of the concept of global civil society might counter that it is not important that only a small percentage of domestic NGOs are actually involved transnationally; what matters is the striking impact they have upon global and domestic politics in certain cases, such as landmines, large dam projects, and nuclear testing. This is fair enough; transnational NGO collaboration is indeed a realm of potent and growing activism that can have an important impact on world events. However, this chapter strongly cautions against the temptation among scholars and

transnational activists to imply more generally that the layer of activity dubbed 'global civil society' represents a broad and democratic consensus of global public opinion on issues.

Notes

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- 2 The field research took place in July–August 1998 and March 1999–August 2000, and included interviews with 117 Russian NGOs. The cities examined in the study were Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Izhevsk, Novgorod-the-Great, Vladivostok, and Khabarovsk.
- 3 These figures include only 91 of the 117 Russian NGOs interviewed in the study. These are the 91 organizations for which information on transnational funding and contacts is known with certainty.
- 4 Galina Nazdratenko, President, and Nina Sandomskaya, Member, Primorskii International Women's Club, interview with author, Vladivostok, 14 March 2000.
- 5 Evgenia Ivanova, Responsible Secretary, Novgorod Oblast *Zhensovet*, interview with author, Novgorod, 16 February 2000.
- 6 Elena Vilenskaya, Co-Chair, Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, interview with author, St. Petersburg, 12 August 1999.
- 7 Elena Ershova, Coordinator, NIS-US Women's Consortium, interview with author, Moscow, 24 March 1999.
- 8 Thomas Carothers (1999: 210) has echoed these findings concerning charity, social services, and cultural activities in his recent comparative study of democracy aid around the world. Patrice McMahon (2000: 5) states that Central European women's organizations could obtain funding to publish a directory of women's organizations, but could not find any foreign assistance for their workshops for unemployed women.
- 9 On the landmines campaign, see Rutherford (2000); Price (1998); and Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin (1998). On torture, see Risse and Sikkink (1999) and Keck and Sikkink (1998a). On violence against women and rain-forest destruction, see Keck and Sikkink (1998a).
- 10 Elena Vilenskaya, Co-Chair, Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, interview with author, St. Petersburg, 12 August 1999.
- 11 Discussed by Valeria Pantyukhina, Press Secretary, Mother's Right Foundation, interview with author, 23 March 1999. Also see RFE/RL (1999).
- 12 Also Dianne Post, Specialist on Gender Issues, ABA-CEELI, interview with author, Moscow, 25 March 1999.

- 13 In Italy, 43 per cent of respondents supported the statement; in Austria, 50 per cent. The World Values Survey included 1,961 respondents in Russia.
- 14 Natalya Abubikirova and Marina Regentova, Co-Chairs, FALTA (*Feministskaia Alternativa*), interview with author, Moscow, 25 May 1999.
- 15 Anonymous deputy director of a women's NGO, interview with author, Moscow, 12 May 1999.
- 16 Anonymous leader of a women's NGO, interview with author, Vladivostok, 9 November 1999; also *Vestnik* (Vladivostok), 8–16 March 2000, p. 5.
- 17 Shcherbakova, interviews with author, Vladivostok, 7 March and 28 April 2000; also Shcherbakova, appearance on local television programme *Allo! Studiia*, OTV-Prim television station, Vladivostok, 25 July 2000.
- 18 Shcherbakova, television appearance, 25 July 2000.

Part III

The National as a Site of Anti-Globalism Resistance

9

The Defeat of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment: National Movements Confront Globalism

Gordon Laxer¹

Introduction

Before the 'Battle in Seattle' imprinted the image of young anti-globalization activists confronting riot police and shutting down international trade negotiations, the MAI died in October 1998 when France and then Canada pulled out of the talks. The MAI's defeat was the first time citizens' movements punctured the aura of corporate globalization as the inevitable direction of history. Fresh from unexpected victory, anti-MAI leaders helped organize Seattle, and subsequent 'anti-globalization' confrontations.

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was intended to be a twin to the WTO's 'framework for trade' and was under negotiation at the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) between 1996 and 1998 (May 1998: 43). Initially written by the International Chamber of Commerce, the MAI defined the rules by which signatory governments must standardize policies, treat foreign corporations and capital, and set up a dispute settlement mechanism allowing corporations to directly sue governments before secret international tribunals.

France's Lalumière Report (1998), made a bold claim about global civil society that was widely cited by the media and academics:

For the first time, we are witnessing the emergence of a *global civil society* ... *The development of the Internet* ... allows for the instantaneous distribution of texts ... and for the sharing of knowledge and expertise across borders. On a subject which is very technical, repre-

sentatives of civil society appear to be fully informed, with critiques that are legally well-argued. (p. 2)

Immediately after proclaiming the onset of a global civil society, the Lalumière Report cited the threat to national sovereignty as the main reason France should quit the MAI talks. The MAI became a symbol of 'the frustrations of civil society in the face of globalisation. This is for one main reason: the agreement is perceived as a serious threat to the sovereignty of national states' (Lalumière 1998: 3). Was the Report's main conclusion about national sovereignty largely ignored because it was discordant with the dominant anti-nationalist ideologies of the Right and Left?

This chapter analyses how and why the anti-MAI campaigns were successful. Several questions direct the analysis. Were these campaigns led by new, transnational social movements, by transnational advocacy networks (TANs) or by existing national organizations and networks? Were the campaigns directed mainly at state policies and political parties, or at international institutions? Did they incorporate new repertoires of contention? Was the Internet used to facilitate communication amongst activists, or was its use in some way innovative and generative of new forms of resistance and new forms of community? Together, answers to these questions challenge the dominant interpretations of the MAI's defeat as a victory for global civil society. They show that the MAI was defeated not by new transnational or global movements but by established activist movements working within national and local arenas, which were loosely coordinated by a small number of TAN leaders.

1. The MAI fails at the OECD

Most analyses of social movements and transnationalization were done before recent anti-globalism protests,² and focused largely on human rights, feminist, environmental, peace, and anti-sweatshop movements. Based on these contentions, Rucht (1999: 210, 218) and Tarrow (2001: 3–4) argue that transnational collective action tends toward co-optation and deradicalization. Yet, so far at least, anti-globalism protests, whether nationally or transnationally organized, have shown few signs of compromise on goals.

Anti-globalism protests emerged to confront formidable capitalist expansionism. 'We are writing the constitution of a single global economy', boasted Renato Ruggiero, Director General of the WTO (Ruggiero 1996). Despite setbacks at the WTO in 1996, at the OECD

with the MAI in 1998, and in the 1999 WTO Battle in Seattle, much of Ruggiero's global capitalist constitution has been established; the rest is being negotiated.³ The first major reversal for globalism in the developed North was largely due to popular opposition. However, the strength of this opposition should not be exaggerated. Canada's chief negotiator at the MAI talks, William Dymond, correctly notes that the MAI failed to penetrate public consciousness in Canada in the way that the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) debate had in the 1980s. Thus, it was less the strength of the opposition that defeated the MAI, than the weakness of its defence; for, as a result of the success of previous neoliberal agreements, there were already so few investment barriers among its members that negotiators could not mobilize MAI supporters to combat the barrage of public criticism (Dymond 1999: 26).

With the MAI, corporate rights advocates discarded the popular slogan 'free trade' and started negotiations for the first self-proclaimed 'investment agreement'. Its aim was to create expropriation and compensation rules to empower foreign corporations to challenge most state policies – from taxes, to environmental issues, labour rules, distinct cultural policies and consumer protection – that potentially threatened their profits (Wallach 1998). The Uruguay round of GATT (1986–94), which established the WTO, saw the defeat of proposals to codify investors' rights, as a result of resistance from the South, where corporate rights were widely seen as recolonization. Southern resistance was also decisive when an agreement similar to the MAI was defeated at the WTO First Ministerial Meeting in Singapore in 1996. To circumvent what they saw as Southern obstinacy, US officials insisted on switching to the OECD, the 'rich men's club', hoping that there they could get a 'high standards' agreement and then impose it on the South (Henderson 1999: 23). MAI opponents objected to the idea that property rights should take enforceable precedence over existing international norms on social, environmental, labour, cultural, human and indigenous rights (Goodman 2000).

According to James Goodman, five factors stand out in the MAI's failure: (1) By boldly stepping on so many toes, the proposed MAI provoked broad opposition among often previously unconnected citizens organizations. (2) The OECD was weakly legitimated. (3) NGOs constructed powerful linkages between local and national concerns, by mobilizing sub-national opinion. (4) Presaging the Battle in Seattle, the anti-MAI campaign symbolized a general revolt against globalism as much as against this single agreement (Goodman 2000: 34–5). (5) To defeat the MAI, opponents needed to prevent the South's isolation and to mobilize in the North. These goals were met in ways that contradict

common academic assertions about the eclipse of states and nations. Word on secret MAI talks flowed from Southern governments to Southern activists, who then told Northern activists. The latter then mobilized against their own governments.

The global civil society literature links the emergence of bottom-up globalization to the demise of the state. Thus, it is not surprising that the literature downplayed state diplomacy. But, oblivious to such theorizing, anti-globalization movements target states because they remain central actors in international negotiations (Della Porta 1999: 4). As national anti-MAI campaigns accelerated and surprised and disconcerted political leaders, countries listed exemptions from the MAI. This encouraged citizens to press harder and, in some cases, this pressure led to more exemptions. By the time France quit the talks and Canada followed suit, there were so many exemptions that, for MAI supporters, the whole rationale of the agreement had been undermined (Henderson 1999: 28). The MAI was dead.

We know of no comprehensive account of MAI campaigns in the 17 or 18 OECD countries where popular opposition was significant.⁴ We analyse how citizens affected states' actions. Our account focuses on Canada, where we interviewed key activists. This is supplemented by interviews with non-Canadians and from secondary sources, including Internet sites, for campaigns in France, Australia, the USA, Germany, the European Parliament, the Third World Network and SEATINI.⁵

2. The Internet and the discovery of the secret MAI text

As we saw, France portrayed 'global civil society' and the Internet as heroes of the anti-MAI battle. Media and academics made similar claims. 'How the Internet killed the MAI', read the front-page headline in the Toronto-based *Globe and Mail* (3 April 1997). The story circulated so widely in the anti-MAI network, that John Cavanagh in Washington received it from over 100 sources. It drowned his computer (Barlow 1999). The *Financial Times* (1998) stressed the 'fear and bewilderment [that] have seized governments and industrialised countries' after being 'ambushed' by an (anti-MAI) 'horde' using the Internet as its decisive weapon. Academics also linked the Internet to the MAI's defeat. Writing with greater nuance, Peter J. Smith and Elizabeth Smythe (1999: 84, 93) claim that, first

The flip side of economic globalization is political globalization and mobilisation both made possible by the information revolution. As

Higgot and Reich argue, 'we are not going to have a global information economy without a global civil society'.

Second, through e-mail, listservs and news groups, the Internet is seen to have *created* a network of activists.

Questions about the anti-MAI campaigns remain, however. Did citizens self-organize simultaneously as transnational social movements, TANs and nationally-based movements which were internationally coordinated? Did the main discourse shift from country to country or was there a 'master frame'?⁶ Did citizens groups operate independently of states and political parties? To answer these questions, we explore key events: discovery of the secret text, early opposition at the OECD meetings, and the turn towards country-based campaigns.

Internationally coordinated opposition did not materialize spontaneously. A Joint NGO Statement issued on October 27, 1997 in Paris, where activists met MAI negotiators, built on pre-existing advocacy networks of a transnational or international nature. The most important was the International Forum on Globalization (IFG), which was established in January 1994 – the month which marked the beginning of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Zapatista insurgency, and the end of the Uruguay Round of GATT. The IFG was founded by 65 veterans of nationally-based, anti-free-trade campaigns from around the world. Of its 60 associates and board members, 60 per cent were based in the US, and over 80 per cent in the North (IFG 2000). However, despite its Northern preponderance, the IFG linked leading Northern activists with leaders in the South such as Martin Khor, head of the Malaysian-based Third World Network, and Vandana Shiva, Indian author and ecological activist. The IFG also provided key contacts among country-based MAI campaigns in OECD countries, and coordinated efforts led by Tony Clarke of Canada, and Lori Wallach, of Public Citizen Global Trade Watch in Washington (Clarke 1999). In the US and Canada, the IFG held international Teach-Ins,⁷ activist workshops, coordinated activities, and shared information about impending moves to implement other pieces of the global capitalist constitution. The IFG met often by teleconferencing and closed Internet links to strategize international opposition to the MAI, and helped plan the 1999 battle in Seattle. Key constituent organizations within the IFG include Public Citizen, the organization led by Ralph Nader, and the left-leaning Council of Canadians, the 100,000-strong veteran of economic nationalist battles against the FTA and NAFTA. The memberships and campaigns of both organizations are nationally oriented.

Acting for the IFG, they supplied much of the organizational muscle, leadership and expertise in battling the MAI.

North–South links led to the discovery of the secret text. In the fall of 1996, Khor warned his IFG colleagues about secret talks on the MAI already under way at the OECD. Unlike anti-globalism groups in the North who are distant from their own governments, the Third World Network (TWN) met regularly with sympathetic Southern governments. Prior to the December 1996 WTO meetings, the TWN held a two-day workshop to brief WTO representatives from more than a dozen Southern countries on the WTO investment proposals.⁸ Friendly governments who were parties to international negotiations shared information with the TWN, which then informed Northern activists. It was through this state–TAN exchange that Northern activists discovered what their own governments were secretly negotiating.

How did Canadian activists find the MAI text?⁹ After Khor's warnings, some IFG members decided they could do little until they found the text. Agreeing to lead the Canadian search, Tony Clarke spoke to Canadian anti-FTA/NAFTA veterans, and sent feelers to friendly contacts inside government and parties, particularly the New Democratic Party (NDP, Canada's social democratic party). In late February 1997, Clarke got the draft text through a Canadian Member of Parliament, who accidentally found it at a meeting in Europe (Clarke 1999). Instead of releasing the text immediately, Tony Clarke and Maude Barlow shared it with Public Citizen which, like other US groups and a few European activists, was also looking for the text, and the two groups analysed it separately. Public Citizen held back until Clarke and the Council of Canadians released it (Barlow 1999). Clarke framed the MAI as a 'Corporate Rule Treaty', so activists could make a compelling case, and the public could understand its implications. The strategy worked. Clarke's analysis was front-page news in the *Globe and Mail* on April 3, 1997. Public Citizen and the *Multinational Monitor* in Washington put the draft text on their websites for global distribution a few days later.

3. Why Canadian leadership against the MAI?

If, as some claim, the Internet and global civil society are the primary facilitators of anti-globalism efforts, we would have expected MAI opposition in the OECD to have come mainly from the US and Western Europe. Traditionally most activist initiatives in the North have come from the United States or the major countries in Western Europe. However leadership came most strongly from Canada, led by already established, economic nationalist circles, not new, cosmopoli-

tan ones. This suggests historical continuity, rather than a dramatic break from past mobilizations.

The MAI made a big splash in Canada's media. Only in France, and perhaps Australia, did public consciousness reach anywhere near a comparable level. Although a minor campaign issue, the MAI was raised critically by Alexa McDonough, leader of the NDP in the English-language television debate in Canada's June 1997 federal election. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Radio also did a series on the MAI, and the CBC sent two television crews to cover Barlow and the MAI opponents meetings in Paris in October 1997. No other country sent an international television crew. Barlow attributes media attention in Canada to three factors: *first*, the stir that the MAI protests caused among a politically literate public that had opposed the FTA and NAFTA in the previous 12 years; *second*, CBC concerns about the MAI's threat to culture and public broadcasting; *third*, the Ethyl case, which broke in the summer of 1998 when opposition to the MAI was building, and showed Canadians the sweeping implications of investor-state mechanisms (Barlow 1999).

The case involved the Ethyl Corporation's use of NAFTA's Chapter 11 (the investor-state mechanism¹⁰) to attack Canadian legislation banning MMT – a gasoline additive, that Canada once deemed 'an insidious neurotoxin'. Canada capitulated out-of-court, agreeing to compensate Ethyl for \$19.3 million (Cdn) for 'lost profits' and to lift the ban on MMT, and Prime Minister Chretien publicly repudiated his statement about the 'horrific effects' of MMT (Clark 2000: 6). Before the MMT case, critics had been unsuccessful in convincing Environment Ministers and other potential allies of the threat that Chapter 11 type clauses in a MAI might pose. But when Canadian activists took the MMT case to OECD negotiators, it 'was like a brushfire in Europe'. As Barlow put it, 'They said it can never happen. We said it can and did happen and here is the prototype' (Barlow 1999).

Why were Canadians the most alert about the MAI's implications? Clarke contends that it was because Canadians were the first to experience FTA and NAFTA investor-state mechanisms and knew their devastating effects on the public sector. Canadian activists retold that experience to European activists, who did not believe their strong public sectors could be touched, and did not understand the profound effects of applying American property law internationally (Barlow 1999).

Canadian leadership was shown in domination of Internet sites, and the prominence of Canadian activists in the anti-MAI campaigns. Smith and Smythe (1999) examined the 400 English, French, German and Spanish websites focusing on the MAI. While the OECD had the

most website links, the next four were Canadian. Six of the top 12 sites were Canadian, and all six opposed the MAI. Ralph Nader called it 'another Canadian first' (Barlow 1998). Clarke brought 90 activists from many countries to an International Symposium at Port Elgin, Ontario, one week after the NGO meetings in Paris. These participants were key to organizing country-based campaigns several months later (Clarke 2000a). Clarke and Barlow wrote the first book on the MAI, releasing it at the opponents meetings in Paris in October 1997. They wrote the only American book, changing the sub-title from 'the threat to Canadian sovereignty' to 'the threat to American freedom', sovereignty apparently not being a major concern of activists in a hegemonic power. In contrast to the tendency of TANs to adopt universal frames, theirs was an acknowledgement of national difference.

According to Maria Mies, leader of Germany's 'Resistance Against the MAI', the German and Austrian campaigns were 'practically initiated' by Canadians. In Austria, Claudia Werlhof took Canadian materials, organized a conference at Innsbruck University, and copied the Canadian tactic of asking local governments to declare MAI 'free zones'. German campaigners translated Clarke's analysis, but as in the US, the issue framing did not fit. Raising the national sovereignty issue evoked negative reactions in Left and feminist circles. As Mies explained, 'When you raise the nation-state in Germany, you are put in a right-wing corner' (Wolfwood 1999). Although the loose, internationally coordinated campaign focused on the MAI as a common enemy and corporate rule as a master frame, persistent national identities required that the issues be framed differently.

4. Strategic shift to country-based opposition

In early 1996, prior to the IFG search for the MAI text, moderate international NGOs (INGOs) which had previously worked with official trade negotiators, including the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Friends of the Earth, established an international lobbying network to secure a reformed MAI (Goodman 2000: 37). But the OECD, which had never negotiated a treaty, objected to placing even mild obligations on investors, and so did not engage with the network. However, unions in OECD countries gained formal status in the talks through the Trades Union Advisory Committee, which supported a modified MAI.

In October 1997, six months after the text became public and with MAI activism mounting, the OECD backtracked and invited moderate INGOs to Paris. But it was too late for co-optation. Radical anti-globalism activists from Southern and OECD countries joined the mod-

erates. Everyone at the INGO meetings agreed to act in solidarity no matter which position won among the 70 or so individuals present. A moderate statement advising a revised MAI with an environmental exemption was pitted against Public Citizen's statement which rejected the MAI for proposing to regulate governments not investments. The latter won and formed the basis for a revised 'Joint NGO Statement', which by February had been endorsed in over 70 Southern and OECD countries by over 600 citizens groups, including development, human rights, labour, environment and consumer groups.

Did the Joint NGO campaign represent an emerging transnational civil society movement, a TAN, or nationally-based movements which episodically coordinated inter-nationally? It was mainly the latter. The Joint NGO Statement's (1997) main goal was to pressure governments. All signatory organizations are listed by country, and few organized significantly beyond their borders.¹¹ Citizens groups had self-organized, not globally or even regionally, but by nation and state. Nor was the language of the Joint Statement global or transnational. It states that 'The MAI does not respect the right of countries...to democratically control investment into their economies.' This is hardly a rallying cry for an emerging global civil society. 'Problems with the MAI', the statement adds, 'stem from the broad restrictions it places on national democratic action.'

After the OECD rebuffed the INGO demands for a one-year moratorium, activists promised to return home to organize. Significant opposition emerged in 17 or 18 of the 29 OECD countries, but not without prodding. According to Clarke, several INGOs that organized the Paris counter-MAI meetings 'do not think beyond their own privileged role, had absolutely no relationship to an authentic constituency, nor the ability to mass mobilise. Their leaders play games and make deals, such as the ineffective side agreements in NAFTA on the environment, labour and human rights.' To grow roots, the IFG concentrated on building country campaigns rather than a transnational social movement. Lori Wallach of Public Citizen, and Clarke, both acting for the IFG, visited European and other OECD countries in January 1998 to initiate broad coalitions, country by country. As Clarke (1999) put it:

You could see what had started out to be something organized by international NGOs to begin with, as some form of opposition, was gradually finding itself losing ground to the country-based campaigns. Why? That's where the real strength was. The resistance that was building to the MAI as it went through stage by stage was coming from the countries sitting at the table.

As veterans of NAFTA opposition, Wallach and Clarke knew that multi-sectoral, on-the-ground campaigns were needed in as many OECD countries as possible. They also knew how to throw 'monkey wrenches', such as pitting trade and finance departments against environment, culture and health departments in the same government (Barlow and Clarke 2001: 23). At the start, they thought only Canada and the US had country-based potential. But, as the next section shows, they were mistaken.

5. Country campaigns and divergent discourses

Advocates of global or transnational civil society such as Ulrich Beck argue that globalization produced a shift from traditional politics centred on political parties and 'nation-states', to movement politics focused on global networks opposing transnational corporate power (Beck 2000). If so, we would expect anti-MAI campaigns to have been conducted largely by new transnational social movements rather than by national ones in interaction mainly with governments and political parties. Were these expectations met?

The MAI issue never took off in the US. Unlike the Battle in Seattle a year later, it did not penetrate the media much, or spark much movement politics. No US event focused attention. The action was in faraway Paris. To the extent that there was public consciousness, much of it was due to the work of Canadians, Clarke and Barlow, which included their American published MAI book, Barlow's CNN interview, and some major talk shows. However two major US successes, due as much to governments, legislators and academics as to movements, bolstered the opposition cause. The first came in April 1997, the month the secret text was 'outed'. As Jeffrey Ayres explains more fully in Chapter 2 in this volume, Bill Clinton lost 'fast track' presidential authority to enable him to negotiate international agreements subject only to a yes or no vote by Congress. This hurt his manoeuvrability at the MAI talks. The MAI was a minor factor in the effective lobbying of Congress to deny fast track by a broad anti-NAFTA coalition and environmentalists.¹² The second coup came when governors of western states, mostly Republicans, claimed that the MAI would restrict sub-national governments, including US states. They were influenced by Professor Stumberg's report, a consultant to anti-MAI members of Congress.¹³ The main contributions of US MAI opponents were in organizational, strategic and information transfers to foreign country campaigns.

Things were very different in English-speaking Canada, where there had been very broad anti-FTA and anti-NAFTA coalitions. Elizabeth May (1999), head of the Sierra Club of Canada, described how readily the idea of a corporate rule treaty was grasped:

What was phenomenal about the MAI campaign was that it spread so quickly to the grassroots level. We did a mailing to all our members on the MAI, fairly early on ... Would some of our members think this is too much of a trade campaign? We made all the connections with people and one of the things that astonished me about it was that we got letters back from our members saying that: 'We're so glad you did this. By the way here is a brochure on what my church group has done on the MAI.' It was spreading like wildfire. We couldn't have created that campaign by planning. The key factor for environmental groups was the Ethyl Corporation: their threat to use chapter 11, the investment chapter in NAFTA.

Anti-MAI coalitions included environmentalists, social justice activists in the Catholic and mainstream Protestant Churches, economic nationalists, arts community activists, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), an umbrella group of women's organizations. In contrast to most union federations in other OECD countries, major Canadian unions, including the Canadian Labour Congress, united against the MAI (Jackson 1999).

Canadian actions showed much variety. At the IFG International Teach-In on Global Corporate Rule, jointly organized by the Council of Canadians and the Polaris Institute in November 1997, a youthful crowd of 2,000, 'raised the roof' off the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall. Citizens Inquiries invited public submissions and attracted hundreds in most major cities. There was street theatre and a nearly full-page ad in the *Globe and Mail*. Advocacy groups wrote to their own members about the MAI, and mobilized internally. The Sierra Club of Canada, for instance, briefed the New Democrat federal caucus and met many backbench Members of Parliament in the other parties, organized letter writing campaigns, and their youth wing held a MAI day of action across Canada. Barry Appleton, a top international trade lawyer from Toronto, wrote a legal opinion for the Council of Canadians (Appleton 1997). His list of vulnerable environmental issues under the MAI had a tremendous impact internationally, and influenced France to quit the talks.

In the only major Canadian street protest, Operation 'SalAMI'¹⁴ brought hundreds to barricade the Sheraton Hotel in Montreal in May 1998 where a conference on economic globalization featured Donald Johnston, Director-General of the OECD. Ninety-nine were arrested. The largely francophone demonstration was significant because most anti-MAI organizing was English-Canadian.

Canadian activists targeted sub-national governments, which, although not party to the talks, would have been subject to the MAI. The New Democrat government of the province of British Columbia held a parliamentary inquiry on the MAI and issued a critical report. Three provinces and several municipalities opposed the MAI. The federal House of Commons struck a parliamentary committee on the MAI and took briefs from citizens, most of whom opposed it. The multifaceted campaign shifted Canada from being 'gung-ho, cowboy crazy about getting the MAI through',¹⁵ Clarke observed, to laying out exemptions on health, social and educational services, aboriginals, culture, and agricultural supply management (Dymond 1999: 44).

In France, 'AMI' opponents formed a coalition of 70 associations, which largely worked separately from each other. Opposition came from the arts community, environmentalists, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) union federation and the Communist Party, which was a junior partner in the Socialist government. Jacques Lang, the Culture Minister who coined the phrase 'L'AMI, c'est l'ennemi',¹⁶ took a leading role. Opposition grew and France quit the MAI talks one year after the INGO-OECD meeting. The arts community, which long fought Americanization, provided the strongest resistance. At the Cesar's, France's academy awards, the emcee, who was part of the anti-MAI coalition, read a statement condemning the MAI, to prolonged applause, as millions of television viewers watched (Barlow 1998: 219). A French collective against clones of the MAI, led by Susan George, supported each country's right to subsidize diverse cultural expressions and opposed applying the 'national treatment' clause to other countries' cultures (Collectif 1999).

Beginning in Canada, citizens' opposition lasted from April 1997 to October 1998. Australians started late, in January 1998, but mounted perhaps the third strongest campaign. Significantly, the spark came not from citizens' movements, but from an ABC radio documentary in November 1997. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation is the public broadcaster. Like Canada's CBC, ABC helped popularize the debate. In English-Canada, anti-MAI campaigners could credibly combine left nationalism with international solidarity, because right populists

joined corporate leaders in their willingness to support the MAI and surrender Canadian sovereignty to the US (Laxer 2001). In contrast, the Australian anti-MAI campaign waged an anti-nationalist discourse. This was because, at the start, the national media associated MAI opposition with Pauline Hanson, 'One Nation' and xenophobic nationalism (Capling and Nossal 2000: 12). To counter the portrayal of globalization as the only alternative to xenophobic nationalism and to differentiate itself from One Nation, MAI opponents gained credibility by promoting a 'globalization' that served people rather than corporations (Goodman 2000: 49). Campaigns developed most strongly at Australian state and local levels, with weak national coordination.

Despite its anti-nationalist discourse, Australian movements worked closely with federal and state political institutions and parties. A Green Party Senator first raised the MAI issue, in March 1997, ten months before citizens' campaigns began. As elsewhere, opponents exploited divisions between the Department of Trade, which led Australia in the secretive OECD talks, and other departments that were left in the dark (Goodman 2000: 49). Party divisions also helped. The Democrats and Greens, minor parties with members in federal and state legislatures, sided with MAI opponents. Labour, the main opposition party, was split on the issue,¹⁷ but in March 1998 joined the minor parties in widening the scope of a parliamentary enquiry (Capling and Nossal 2000: 12). The latter gave critics a public forum, and ultimately advised against signing the MAI without thoroughly assessing Australia's interests.

Austrian opponents waged a parliamentary focused campaign and got the Salzburg and Frauburg parliaments to oppose the MAI. The Finance Minister supported the MAI and the Environment Minister opposed it. The Prime Minister broke the deadlock by siding with the Environment Minister (Clarke 1999). German opposition was small, fairly narrowly based, dependent on external information sources, and also had a strong parliamentary focus (Wolfwood 1999: 23). It consisted of WEED (1998) Germanwatch, Maria Mies' 'Committee of Resistance against the MAI', university student groups, and individuals in feminist and environmental movements. Beginning shortly after the October 1997 Paris meetings, German opponents held a media workshop on the MAI with journalists from Germany's major daily newspapers, mailed a survey to 50 Southern NGOs and held a big congress in Bonn in April 1998¹⁸ (Rockstein 2000). They attracted officials from the federal German ministries of the environment and economic cooperation to a seminar, but failed to persuade the Greens, junior partners in the Schroeder government. The German campaign had more success amongst Members of the European

Parliament (MEPs). Although the European Parliament had no vote at the MAI talks, the adoption (by a vote of 437 to 8) of a critical report authored by German Green MEP, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, was an important early victory. The European-wide Green Group of MEPs were leaders in fighting the MAI (Green Group 1998).

In this section we have seen that anti-MAI campaigns were particularly effective when confronting their own governments. The country-based strategy was successful because when hard-pressed, governments may listen to their own citizens. Transnational publics do not elect them. The fact that states make decisions at the OECD increased the salience of national mobilizations. However, the country campaigns were greatly enhanced by the transnational sharing of information and the strategic leadership of individuals like Clarke and Wallach. Their critical role was not as leaders of global civil society, but as key individuals rooted in their respective national constituencies, who operated within TANs which catalysed and supported other nationally based movements.

Master frames, sovereignty and the Internet

Was there a unifying transnational frame using universal language, or did frames remain largely national? What role did the Internet play? As we saw, the IFG and the Joint NGO Statement indicted the MAI for proposing to regulate governments rather than corporations. France opposed the MAI as a threat to 'national sovereignty' and because there was no cultural exemption. US insistence on its exceptionalism – its many exemptions and the extraterritorial application of US laws – sparked national resistance in other OECD states¹⁹ (Dymond 1999: 32). Canadian anti-MAI leadership came largely from the Council of Canadians, a self-proclaimed nationalist organization. Its dominant frames were national sovereignty and opposition to corporate rule. Overall, national themes tended to trump transnational ones.

However, TAN leaders searched for transnational master frames. In workshops with activists in each country, Clarke and Wallach discussed how best to present the issues (Clarke 2001). *Corporate rule* was accepted as a universal theme but *national sovereignty* struck a discordant note in Australia, and some European countries, especially Germany, with its Nazi past. After consulting Maria Mies and others in Germany, Clarke substituted *popular sovereignty* for *national sovereignty* and the former became a general formulation for activists. Clarke explains his view of popular sovereignty:

When we talk about 'sovereignty,' we do not mean 'national sovereignty' per se. Instead, we are talking, first and foremost, about the fundamental democratic rights of people – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – which calls for the recognition of the fundamental rights of all people to food, clothing and shelter, employment, education, and healthcare, clean environment, cultural integrity and quality public services, plus fair wages and working conditions – is really a declaration about 'popular sovereignty.' It is this 'popular sovereignty' that is the foundation stone of democracy itself, which is directly threatened by the MAI as a 'corporate rule' treaty. (Clarke 2001)

According to Barlow, new anti-globalization activists are emerging from human rights, feminist, ecological and labour movements who can no longer be identified by their brand of activist roots. 'We don't even ask each other where you come from any longer. We all have this common analysis.' A new breed of young Europeans, comments Barlow, is searching for an analysis somewhere between a nationalist position and an acceptance of globalization. For Barlow (1999) the Internet was crucial in this development:

The closest thing we have now to an international media is the Internet, and sharing this information with each other. Somebody says something here that we know would be of value to our colleagues in another country, we can get it out instantly. We lived and breathed on that thing.

But activist leaders met face-to-face before using the Internet. 'We learned to care about each other as human beings. We built that trust up and there is nothing to take its place. Once you've got it, then you can use your technology in a very specific way.' Thus Barlow disagrees that the Internet killed the MAI. 'We killed it using the Internet as a tool.' The leaders set up a private listserv to ask tough questions and share information, but instituted control measures to limit all the 'junk' about the MAI on the Internet. Teleconferencing was another indispensable tool. 'There is a core group of people we know, we deeply trust', Barlow (1999) concluded. 'We don't want anybody we don't know and trust' to be part of the internal dialogue. Thus the inner circle that coordinated nationally based campaigns largely used the Internet as a very effective, instantaneous, but internal communications system, contrary to claims about the Internet creating a community of activists.

Conclusion

The MAI's defeat was widely interpreted as a victory for Internet warriors and the emergence of a global or transnational civil society. Are these accurate interpretations? Dieter Rucht (1999: 210, 228) argues that while one element of a campaign may be transnational, other elements remain national. His list includes issues, targets, mobilization and organization. Let's look at each to assess the extent to which they were national or transnational.

IFG advocacy leaders searched for a common frame and partly found it in the concept *corporate rule*, a generalized formulation, not aimed at specific corporate leaders in each country. As we saw, *popular sovereignty* had transnational reach among leading activists, but never gained as wide a following as *national sovereignty* in Canada and France, the countries of strongest opposition and media attention. Thus, issue framing was a transnational/national hybrid.

Targets were much more national. The OECD, the MAI and transnational corporations were common targets, giving transnational foci to the contestations. But as the campaigns evolved, the main adversaries were increasingly national governments, challenged by domestic movements. There were no international or transnational demonstrations. Everywhere national movements did the hard lifting of mobilizing citizens and lobbying government envoys. The premise of the very effective Clarke–Wallach strategy of sparking country campaigns was that mobilizations were almost entirely national.

Organization had both national and transnational elements. The strategizing and information exchanges amongst IFG leaders moved in a transnational direction. The IFG made connections with other networks, such as SEATINI, which helped convince the Organization of African Unity to oppose the MAI (Tandon 2000), but the IFG was the nerve centre of the overall campaign. When issues and information flows are substantially transnational, but mobilizations, organizing and targets are largely or entirely national, it is clear that we are dealing with something that is much less than a transnational social movement, but is more than purely national ones. The TAN concept helps interpret this hybridity.

Ties amongst core MAI activists began more as internationalism-from-below than as truly transnational networks. But as frequent meetings and trust developed, there was a deepening towards elements of transnationality. Although heterogeneity clearly exists, there is a degree of equality and cultural similarity amongst peripatetic activists

in the North, who have the resources to take international flights and bond in face-to-face meetings. After the MAI's defeat, ties amongst core TAN leaders intensified with each subsequent anti-globalism contention waged together. Activist leaders who were originally seen as representatives of national movements became co-protagonists, and nationality receded in importance. Common cause will probably endure for some time as global elites continue efforts to complete a fully-blown constitution for globalism. Rather than mourn the lack of a discernible transnational social movement, I hypothesize that TANs are a defining feature of resistance to globalism.²⁰

Anti-globalism protests currently show few signs of co-optation and compromise. Is their present radicalism due to the newness of their protest, or to the implacability of their critiques? We can speculate that it is the latter, but it is too early to tell. What is clear is that certain transnational issues have emerged as flash-points of solidarity within TANs: resistance to neo-liberalism and corporate rule; support for bottom-up democracy; projects for national/popular sovereignty and self-determination; protecting the diversity of cultural expression; control over economic resources; and protecting nature. The Internet facilitates the sharing of substantive understanding on these issues within advocacy networks. At the same time, the MAI campaigns suggests that it is premature to assume the emergence of transnational social movements where there is sustained mobilization, shared identities, and a common understanding of substantive issues. This should not surprise us. Domestically and globally, activists reflect unjust structures of wealth, which tend to weaken network formation and discourage the emergence of a notion of universal citizenship. And states and nations are still central to citizens' lives. Thus, despite the globalizing drive of capital, a universal movement against global capital does not exist.

Some elements of genuine transnationalism are emerging from these campaigns, but this does not mean that nationally based campaigns will be displaced as the central loci of activity. The anti-MAI campaigns suggest that nationally rooted projects for economic self-determination can make international and transnational solidarity connections with movements in other nations, and co-exist with transnational and sub-national identities. The MAI contestations against the betrayal of historic legacies of economic and cultural nationalism, suggest examining both the nationalist element and the targeting of national governments to determine their part in resisting globalism. The citizens' MAI campaigns confirm Calhoun's (1994: 329) observation that '[t]his cate-

gory of nation may be a helpful mediation between the local and the global'. Furthermore, nationally rooted projects for self-determination can forge strong ties with movements in other nations. These are missing pieces in orthodox globalization narratives.

Why and how did movements seek international support? Strategic considerations and differing political opportunity structures were critical factors. MAI opponents waged a largely independent battle against the Canadian government at home, based on deep pools of resources and support from strong anti-FTA and anti-NAFTA networks. Canadian activist leaders sought external support because Canada was too weak to veto the MAI at the OECD and because there seemed little prospect, at first, of shifting Canada's determined position. In contrast, France's anti-MAI movements appear to have mainly targeted their own state because it was responsive and because France was important enough to derail the MAI by itself. Thus the Canadian and French contexts presented different opportunities and helped structure the nature of contestation in each case.

Popular movements are created not only by domestic forces, but are also conditioned internationally. Victory against the MAI broke the aura of inevitability about globalism's advance and prepared the ground for the breakthrough in Seattle the next year. For the first time, the media and public debate started to take resistance to globalism, capitalism and corporate rule seriously. Seattle began the street politics of 'Summit hopping'. Wherever corporate and government leaders met, they faced huge crowds of anti-globalization protestors. The media focused, as is their wont, on the spectacular and unrepresentative incidents of protestor-police confrontations and the 'black bloc'. The nature of the victory in Seattle changed the emphasis to street politics, to the exclusion of most other kinds of contention. An anarchist mood of opposing all governments was in the air and tended to be anti-nationalist, anti-electoral politics and to see political strength mainly in the numbers of committed activists and the ability to shut down Summits.

However, as Jeffrey Ayres argues in Chapter 2 of this volume, anti-globalization movements have increasingly been on the defensive since Seattle. Rising levels of repression, better intelligence work on the protestors, and state containment strategies have limited the public impact of the protests. Then the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against New York occurred, followed by a wave of state security-repression laws. Naïve talk about a borderless world, with its assumptions about an emerging global civil society, has abated. The authorities and corporate media now tend to lump together legitimate,

non-violent protest with terrorism. In these altered conditions, a change in the strategies of anti-globalism contestations makes sense, not only because publics are now less sympathetic to the theatrics of revolutionary posing, but also because states have reasserted their role as dominant actors in the world. In this atmosphere, it is advisable to dust off the rich array of tactics which defeated the MAI and the underlying assumptions about the importance of politics at national levels. Let's face facts. Nations, nationalisms and states are here to stay. What matters are the kinds of nationalisms that are ascendant and to the extent to which they can become vehicles for popular sovereignty, international solidarity from below and anti-racism.

The neglected side of the anti-MAI story was the interaction between nationally organized citizens groups and their own governments. In conjunction with activists in the South, citizens mobilized in a majority of OECD countries and pushed their governments for exemptions. France's Socialist government, pressed by its Communist ally, quit the MAI talks. It was historical continuity that led Canadian nationalists, who long contested US domination and experienced the first corporate rule treaty in the FTA, to initiate the struggle and find allies in other countries.

The MAI's demise was not a simple civil society story of social movement warriors defeating secretive international negotiators, but of close interactions amongst movements, governments and political parties. It was much closer to traditional politics than the purveyors of global civil society fancifully portray. Bottom-up control over elites will not happen at the level of six billion people. Although a small group of well-off, committed activists can join forces at different sites around the world, most mobilizing occurs at national and sub-national levels. Only a few leaders of Southern movements have the resources to join protestors in Prague or Quebec City. States and nations are still key terrains for self-determination. At the same time, their struggles may be increasingly coordinated by international and transnational advocacy networks that challenge the anti-democratic nature of globalism and US hegemony.

Notes

- 1 Some of the ideas in this chapter are developed further in the article by Josée Johnston and Gordon Laxer, 'Solidarity in the Age of Globalization: Lessons from the Anti-MAI and Zapatista Struggles', which appeared in *Theory & Society*, vol. 32, 2003. I am grateful to Josée Johnston for stretching my mind, inspiring me and co-writing some of this chapter's conclusion. Thanks to Sandra Halperin for her outstanding editing, which she calls 'doodling'.

- 2 A literature is developing on the Seattle and post-Seattle protests. See for example Della Porta and Tarrow, 2002.
- 3 Negotiations on the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), agriculture, the FTAA and other areas were under way when this article was written.
- 4 Henderson's *MAI Affair*, focuses on opposition in Australia and France. Clarke was aware of country-based campaigns in the following OECD countries: Canada, USA, most EU countries: France, Great Britain, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy, Greece, Portugal, plus Norway, Turkey, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Mexico. Clarke was not aware of all anti-MAI activities. They varied greatly by country in intensity and inclusiveness (Clarke 1999). We are aware of a Swiss campaign from a report of police raiding the Peoples Global Action Network.
- 5 Southern & Eastern African Trade, Information & Negotiations Initiative (SEATINI), a United Nations Development Programme, is based in Harare Zimbabwe.
- 6 While frames relate specific events or issues within social movements, master frames 'resonate across movement sectors'; they 'enable heterogeneous groups to be allied in common political struggles, and thus lend coherence to the movement politics of a historical conjuncture, or even an era' (Carroll and Ratner 1996: 411).
- 7 There were teach-ins in New York, Washington and Berkeley (1995 to 1997), to sell-out crowds in each city (Barlow 1998: 200).
- 8 Multilateral Investment Agreement, MIA, not to be confused with the MAI (Clarke 1999).
- 9 Much of the following analysis is based on interviews with Tony Clarke, Maude Barlow and Elizabeth May in Ottawa in July–August 1999.
- 10 These expropriation and compensation protocols were copied in the MAI.
- 11 Even groups like Friends of the Earth are listed by country (eg. Friends of the Earth Macedonia).
- 12 Some environmentalists who supported NAFTA because of its side agreement on the environment, realized their mistake and opposed trade deals and fast track (Korten 1999: 236–7).
- 13 Stumberg is a Georgetown Law Professor (Beinart 1997).
- 14 The last three letters are the French acronym for the MAI. Salami also means dirty friend. Operation SalAMI began with opposition to the MAI and has become a major non-violent, direct action network protesting globalism in Quebec (Nankivell 1998: 23).
- 15 Elizabeth Smythe (1999: 239) argues that Canada was not enthused about negotiating investment rules at the OECD and favoured the WTO as a venue.
- 16 The MAI is the enemy ('ami' in French means friend).
- 17 The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) opposed the MAI (Goodman 2000: 42).
- 18 In an interview Rockstein claims the German anti-MAI campaign was one of the weakest in the EU.
- 19 Dymond argues the real reason was the Socialist Government's appeasement of its Communist and Green allies.
- 20 Josée Johnston helped formulate this and the next two paragraphs.

10

Civic Literacy in Global Civil Society: Excluding the Majority from Democratic Participation

Henry Milner

Introduction

In this chapter I address the potential contradiction between the goals and institutional means associated with global civil society (GCS) and the accomplishments of traditional nation-state-based institutions with regard to what I term civic literacy. The level of civic literacy, simply put, corresponds to the proportion of a society's citizens capable of informed political participation. High civic literacy, I argue, contributes to social improvement especially by empowering those at the bottom. The fundamental question is whether we can imagine global institutions and organizational actors that would reproduce, at the transnational level, outcomes associated with high civic literacy that are still today attained through institutions based on nation-states. I argue that we cannot, and that, in their emphasis on global organizational action, GCS activists and thinkers acutely underestimate, and thus risk helping to undermine, the organizational nexus provided by national political arenas and outcomes associated with them.

1. Global civil society

There is an emerging literature associated with the concept of global civil society. While there is no agreement as to just what constitutes GCS, there is a shared understanding that this phenomenon should be encouraged and promoted. This understanding extends from activists in transnational organizations to academics purporting to take an objective stance toward GCS. For example, in its 2001 Yearbook, the London School of Economics' Global Civil Society Programme Working Group, 'aspires to make a contribution to global civil society

itself. It can give a voice to civil society in the process of globalisation, helping to civilize and democratise this process. It can be a tool for participants in global civil society by shedding light on their strengths and weaknesses, and an aid in agenda-setting' (LSE Global Civil Society 2001: www.lse.ac.uk).

Though much is written about GCS both in academe and in the mainstream and alternative media, it remains very much under-researched, and, indeed, under-defined. This would not be a problem if real world actors were not encouraged to act as if a well-defined body of knowledge existed. Indeed, the notion of GCS is appealing and hard to criticize because it is so vague. But that hardly justifies risking the hard-fought gains attained at the nation-state level. This chapter thus serves as a warning: however commendable the movement's goals, its efforts to mobilize political action toward goals associated with GCS may undermine the very institutions that have served the attainment of these goals heretofore. Indeed, the kind of mobilization it signals could put at risk the very achievements in advanced democratic societies that have made it possible to contemplate and articulate the objectives identified with GCS.

What are these objectives? Since they are nowhere defined, for the purposes of this chapter the programmatic definition of global civil society agreed to by the LSE Working Group on Global Civil Society will serve: 'Global civil society is a set of public interactions which involve but not exclusively self organized groups autonomous from the state, market and family that operate or are linked across state territorial borders' (Keane 2001: 2). It is this notion of GCS as autonomous from the state that is problematic, I contend, especially where the state is linked to a national community.

Let me begin with two typical statements. The first is from a public lecture presented by Mary Kaldor at the London School of Economics on the 20th of October 1999:¹

In the stirrings of thought that developed beneath the structures of the Cold War were the beginnings of some new concepts and practises that can help us to analyse our immensely complex contemporary world. ... I believe we face a stark choice – between a global civil society, by which I do not mean world government but rather a global peace and a global rule of law, underpinned by an active and alert transnational citizenry, and a reversion to some kind of pre modern patterns of violence but even more pervasive than in the pre modern period.

The second is from an article in a recent book on civil society and social capital:

The expansion of transnationally organized citizens' associations in general and of transnational social movements in particular reflects a deepening global society. The transnational social movement sector, moreover, appears to be the most promising source of enhanced democratic participation in the emerging global polity. ... Transnational social movement mobilization promises more than any other contemporary trend to help break down rather than reproduce existing global inequalities. (Smith 2001a: 205–6)

Who can disagree with such words? Yet I find them troublesome – especially the reference to a global citizenry. For global and national citizenship are not easily compatible. If there is a trade-off to be made, does it imply that on the way to global civil society we will have to sacrifice certain realizations of the nation-state? GCS proponents do not consider such an eventuality: the vagueness of the conceptualization allows the making of claims about benefits without ever having to assess costs.

2. Global civil society and democracy

This is at once both a philosophical and empirical debate, based on one's understanding of democracy in theory and practice. Both GCS proponents and their critics are concerned with fostering genuinely democratic forms of political development in a globalizing world. GCS theorists generally maintain that old forms of democracy based on the nation and nation-state are inadequate, and that new ones, based on GCS, are required in this age of globalization. The logic underlying the critique of the GCS conception of democracy is well set out in David Miller's book *Citizenship and National Identity*. Miller's critique starts from what he terms 'the deliberative ideal' of democracy, in which conflicting political preferences will be resolved

through an open and uncoerced discussion of the issue at stake with the aim of arriving at an agreed judgment. ... The need to reach an agreement forces each participant to put forward proposals under the rubric of general principles or policy considerations that others could accept. ... The deliberative view ... relies upon a person's capacity to be swayed by rational arguments and to lay aside

particular interests and opinions in deference to overall fairness and the common interest of the collectivity. (Miller 2000: 9–10)

From this perspective, he turns to the question of nationality:

Nationality answers one of the most pressing needs of the modern world, namely how to maintain solidarity among the populations of states that are large and anonymous, such that their citizens cannot possibly enjoy the kind of community that relies on kinship or face-to-face interaction. ... In societies in which economic markets play a central role, there is a strong tendency towards social atomization, where each person looks out for the interests of herself and her immediate social network. As a result it is potentially difficult to mobilize people to provide collective goods, it is difficult to get them to agree to practices of redistribution from which they are not likely personally to benefit. ... These problems can be avoided only where there exists large-scale solidarity, such that people feel themselves to be members of an overarching community, and to have social duties to act for the common good of that community, to help out other members when they are in need, etc. ...

It is precisely because of the mythical or imaginary elements in national identity that it can be reshaped to meet new challenges and new needs. ... From a political standpoint, this imaginary aspect of nationality may be a source of strength. It allows people of different political persuasions to share a political loyalty, defining themselves against a common background whose outlines are not precise, and which therefore lends itself to competing interpretations. It also shows us why nationality is not a conservative idea. A moment's glance at the historical record shows that nationalist ideas have as often been associated with liberal and socialist programmes as with programmes of the right. (pp. 31–2)

Miller then addresses those who reject the nationalist conceptualization of citizenship in favour of a GCS view, i.e. that of cosmopolitan citizenship, in particular Richard Falk (1995) and David Held (1995). Falk writes of 'citizen pilgrims' who have 'transferred their loyalties to the invisible political community of their hopes and dreams' (Falk 1995: 211–12). Miller responds by showing the notion to be self-contradictory, pointing out that 'citizen' originally referred to a town-dweller, and later more specifically to someone enjoying the rights and privileges of a burgher. It suggests someone firmly rooted in the life of a

particular community, which also exerts a civilizing effect upon him or her. "Pilgrim", in complete contrast, originally meant a stranger or foreigner, a wandering person who might dwell for a time within the city but had no attachment to it' (Miller 2000: 95) This cannot be citizenship of any kind:

In Falk's usage the pilgrim is a person devoted to a cause which she pursues with like-minded others regardless of conventional boundaries: a Green peace activist, for instance ... She is likely to try to convert others to the cause, but one thing she is not is a citizen as I have understood the term here. There is no determinate community with which she identifies politically, and no one, except perhaps other members of her group, with whom she stands in relations of reciprocity. So there is no group of fellow-citizens with whom she is committed to seeking grounds of agreement ...

Citizenship ... represents the best way in which people of diverse beliefs and styles of life can live together under laws and institutions which they can endorse as legitimate. It is a social practice that needs bolstering by institutional change and civic education in the liberal democracies ... International peace, international justice and global environmental protection are very important objectives ... But this cannot be achieved by inventing in theory cosmopolitan forms of citizenship which undercut the basis of citizenship proper. (Miller 2000: 95-6)

3. From citizenship to civic literacy

Miller stresses the solidarity that citizens of nations feel as participants in an overarching community which lead them to accept social duties to act for the common good of that community, and thus to be willing to participate in deliberative forms of democracy. I emphasize another dimension related and even prior to social solidarity, one alluded to in Miller's reference to civic education: it has to do with knowledge. A society's level of civic literacy corresponds to the knowledge and capacity of citizens to make sense of their political world. I argue that the quantitative and qualitative boost to political participation due to civic literacy has had much to do with the socioeconomic outcomes of successful welfare states. The logic is straightforward. Since informed individuals can better identify the effects policy options have upon their own interests and those of others in their community, high-civic-literacy societies are more likely to attain long-term optimal economic

outcomes. Moreover, in low-civic-literacy societies like the United States, the interests of the economically disadvantaged carry less weight since they are more often excluded from informed political participation through lack of civic competence.

It is not difficult to show, from a variety of indicators, that the Nordic and certain other Northern European countries are the high-civic-literacy countries. After briefly setting out what we learn from certain of these indicators, I argue that it is through state or state-supported initiatives built on solidly institutionalized national identities and cultures that high civic literacy and, thus, the socioeconomic outcomes fostered by high civic literacy, have been attained. Moreover, this has not been accomplished at the cost of international solidarity. Quite the contrary: the Nordic countries' generosity regarding foreign aid, especially to the poorest countries, is well known (UNDP 2001). So is their disproportionate support for international organizations like the United Nations. Indeed, it should come as no surprise that they are especially hospitable to organizations linked to GCS networks. As the Introduction to the 2001 Global Civil Society Yearbook cited above points out:

One of the most striking findings of the Yearbook is that global civil society is heavily concentrated in north-western Europe, especially in Scandinavia, the Benelux countries, Austria, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. ... This area is also the most densely globalized, whether we mean the concentration of global capitalism as measured by the presence of transnational corporations and the importance of trade and foreign investment; or growing interconnectedness as measured in terms of Internet usage or outward tourism; or the growth of global consciousness as evidenced by the absence of human rights violations, the values of tolerance and solidarity, or – more concretely – the ratification of treaties. (Anheier *et al.* 2001)

What does it mean to say that global civil society is 'concentrated in the Scandinavian states'? If it means merely greater concern with international peace and justice and global environmental protection, then there need not be a contradiction – we can have it both ways: strong nation-state based welfare states and a strengthening GCS. The problem is that, at some point, we can no longer have it both ways: a key factor making Scandinavia conducive to such GCS ideas and organizations – namely high civic literacy – was the result of policies and

institutions based on strong nation states. The GCS can undermine the political base sustaining those very policies and institutions. I argue further that in Nordic countries there is an understanding of how GCS may threaten nation-state based policies and institutions that underlie the high-civic-literacy welfare state. We can see this in the unusually highly sceptical attitude of the majority in these 'densely globalized' countries toward the EU and the strengthening of its powers.

Below I show how the Swedish labour movement, as it contributed to and became incorporated into what has been called the Swedish model, consciously raised civic literacy. To see the overall results of the various initiatives, I compare OECD countries on a number of civic literacy indicators, showing that Scandinavian and, less so, Northern European, states are consistently at the top. I then look at policy and institutional choices explaining this, stressing the state's role, through specific programmes and subsidies, which set the context for the choices of organizational actors.

4. Swedish labour and civic literacy

In earlier books I have tried to show that successful redistributive welfare states are those able to maintain a high level of civic literacy by organizing institutions, so that for those lacking in resources, as Olof Palme put it (referring specifically to the handicapped), 'their demands and needs be as self-evident for social planning as the needs and interests of other more established citizens' (cited in Tilton 1994: 218). To do so, they rely on institutions directly or indirectly linked to the state and based upon a level of solidarity possible, as Miller explained above, only within a national context. But for it to affect outcomes, that solidarity must be more than abstract. It must be expressed in the kinds of concrete policy choices alluded to by Palme. This is where civic literacy comes in. Citizens low in economic resources must be able to adequately identify the effects that different policy options have upon their own interests and those of others in their community, so as to act accordingly. Below, I briefly summarize the relevant Swedish experience.

Many key components of the policy model underlying the Swedish welfare state were set out by economists Gösta Rehn, Rudolf Meidner and their colleagues at the Swedish Confederation of Labour (LO) in the postwar years. The main components of the Rehn–Meidner Model rest on a complex 'corporatist' relationship based on trade-offs among labour, business and government around fiscal and monetary policies to enhance the demand for, and supply of, appropriately trained

workers. Emphasis was thus placed on active labour market policies to promote the movement of workers from low-paying, declining industries to expanding high-tech ones; their mobility underpinned by universalistic welfare-state guarantees.

These are not abstract formulas. It was the task of union leaders and professionals to explain the facts and analyses underlying the trade-offs in a manner understandable to the rank and file and consistent with their experience: Rehn and Meidner and their LO colleagues spoke endlessly in labour meetings, and defended their ideas in the union and mainstream press. In words and actions they exemplified what I argue to have been fundamental to the Swedish labour movement: policies and practices premised on the expectation that workers and citizens would be able to have the sophisticated historical, geographical and economic knowledge to place into context their wider and long-term interests. Refusing to limit concerns to 'bread and butter issues', the Swedish labour movement chose instead to develop programmes based on aspects of inherited culture that were conducive to civic literacy. Let us look at these briefly.

Sweden entered the modern era among the more, but not most,² literate of societies but also among the more hierarchical. The elitist structure of society – including, especially, institutions disseminating knowledge – came under attack in the nineteenth century in the free-church, temperance and Folk High School movements.³ By around 1900, the mantle of adult education had been picked up by popular educational associations, the most important of which became the ABF, the Workers' Educational Association. The ABF was founded in 1912 by Rickard Sandler, who later became Social Democratic party (SAP) leader and Prime Minister. Affiliated to the LO, the SAP, cooperatives and organizations representing women, retired persons and tenants, the ABF drew inspiration from the early study circles of the temperance lodges in its guiding principles: the equal value of all people and the ability of every person to take responsibility for his or her own life and share in the responsibility for the common concerns of society.

A valuable insight into the approach developed in this period is found in the work of social historian Ronny Ambjörnsson. His 1987 paper entitled *The Honest and Diligent Worker* evocatively recreates the experiences of the predecessors to today's study circles in the coastal town of Holmsund in the northern Västerbotten region around 1900:

The debates become successively more lively ... What shall society that allows good people to live a good life look like? From reading

aloud, the step is not long to a more regular, educational activity and already by the middle of the 1890s the ground has been laid for a library that not only comprises temperance literature but also books of a more general, culture-historical interest ... The diligence that the lodges cultivated finds its expression even in the early enthusiasm of the trade union movement ... One reads aloud articles from the papers ... Ignorance is seen to be as great an enemy as drunkenness ... The discussions... can be seen as exercises in looking at reality from different angles ... Reading has a similar function ... Within the study-circle ... is developed ... the idea that it is a person's duty as an individual to take part in the discussions that, alone, lead to a better world ... Parallel to the courses in ... culture and literature, [are] courses ... in local-government ... Knowledge – or more correctly education – shall guarantee democracy. (pp. 12–22)

The programme of the ABF, the largest of 11 adult education associations organizing study circles and related activities,⁴ commits it 'to educate the members of its affiliated organizations for positions in associations, working life and society, and to create conditions for everyone to participate in freely chosen education and cultural life'. Study circles 'seek to stimulate a critical attitude, to help clarify the difference between facts and opinions on crucial issues of the day'. Courses concerned with civic education are thus given priority.⁵ For example, the ABF's autumn 1999 programme in Umeå (Holmsund is now a suburb of Umeå) offered the usual range of courses in languages, computers, art, music, and nature appreciation, but also courses in organizing groups and cooperatives, public speaking, writing and understanding media, as well as study circles on social and civil rights, the United Nations, war and peace, the future of democracy, feminism, various aspects of history, and important contemporary books. Such courses supplement more specific courses given by the trade unions themselves to enable members to improve organizational skills, interpret financial documents, and understand economic and social policies. Local unions also appoint 'book ombudsmen' (Milner 1989; 1994; Blid 1989).

These are over and above the municipally-run *Komvux* courses for completing compulsory and upper secondary education,⁶ and the various programmes offered annually to some 200,000 Swedish adults in the Folk High Schools,⁷ as well as training courses run by the labour market boards. Moreover, the concern with continuing education

extends beyond the education sector. The charter of SR, the Swedish public broadcasting system, mandates it to promote adult education in cooperation with adult education societies.⁸ It took the lead in producing radio programmes for use by 'listening circles' whose 'foremost common denominator was their role as a school for citizenship' (Nordberg 1998: 377). The content of radio and, later, public service television programming continued to be influenced by this relationship, even after the formal link had been broken.

When the SAP first entered government in the 1920s, and, quasi-permanently, in the 1930s, these principles became government policy. The dominant image, articulated in the favourite metaphor of Per-Albin Hansson, Social-Democratic Prime Minister in the 1930s and 40s, was of Sweden as (building) the 'People's Home,' in which one acts toward others as toward family members, the weakest to be helped, not exploited. Such help, it was clearly understood, was designed to foster intellectual at least as much as material advancement. The conceptualization of the Swedish welfare state as the people's home, a favourite theme over the next 30 years, is firmly grounded on the social solidarity that only national communities can provide.

As noted, the key economic policies of the people's home were developed by Rehn and Meidner and came to be known as the Rehn–Meidner Model. Its designers understood the paradox that only by adapting to changing economic circumstances could social-democratic objectives of high employment and egalitarian outcomes be maintained. This is even truer today under the constraints that globalized markets – and, in particular, European integration – place on policy choices. And it is an informed citizenry that is a crucial, though insufficiently acknowledged, prerequisite to the effectiveness of this process of adaptation.

It is not difficult to find manifestations of this commitment over the years in various policy decisions and orientations. For example, the 1974 Education Act explicitly established 'recurrent education' as a core objective, enabling older Swedes to return to school to catch up on opportunities missed and thus enter the 'educational society for all'. We should not be surprised that such an understanding is restated in the opening section of the Social Democratic party's official position paper on EU membership, which proclaimed as its starting principle: 'that everybody is both desirous and capable of playing a part in the running of society... of acquiring knowledge and insights which will enable him to play a part in the life of the community' (SAP 1993: 6).

Despite assertions by foreign and domestic critics, the severe recession of the 1990s did not kill the Swedish Model. Indeed, by 1997, 'Sweden has been able to retain its position ... as one of the four or five countries with the most equal distributions of annual income ... [with no less] long run equality and ... equality of opportunity' (Björklund 1998: 75–6).

What of those policies and institutions that affect civic literacy, those involved with non-material redistribution? In the next section I show that, overall, in Sweden, as in its Nordic neighbours, the civic-literacy-enhancing institutions and policies continue to foster the capacity of relevant actors to make informed choices to adapt ever more rapidly to changing conditions.

5. Civic literacy in contemporary Scandinavia, and how it was attained

Overall, Scandinavian countries score best on the various indicators linked to civic literacy considered in my recent work (Milner 2002). The most dramatic single such indicator is found in the comparative scores on the OECD International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) test of functional literacy. In it, the four Nordic countries scored highest among the 15 comparable participating countries (OECD 2000), the only countries with 10 per cent of respondents or fewer proving functionally illiterate. The IALS is a highly sophisticated cognitive proficiency test developed by Statistics Canada and administered by the OECD with, now, 20 countries participating. It tested the comprehension of a large sample of the population (aged 16 and over) on three types of written materials: narrative prose; documents, such as train schedules and medication instructions; and problems requiring application of basic arithmetic skills (OECD 1997; 2000).

Figure 10.1 reveals that the main reason for Sweden's placing as a clear first lies in the high levels of functional literacy (those scoring average or better in the IALS) among Swedes who have not finished high school.⁹ Table 10.1 (adapted from Hasan and Tuijnman 1997), shows the close relationship between the prevalence of study circles and other forms of adult education and training in the Nordic countries and their IALS performance. This has something to do with literacy skills training in the early years of compulsory school. It has more to do, my research suggests, with the fact that literacy skills are sharpened and put to use in adulthood.

This is subjective data. We do not have objective comparative data, even as mundane as per capita spending on adult education, but we do

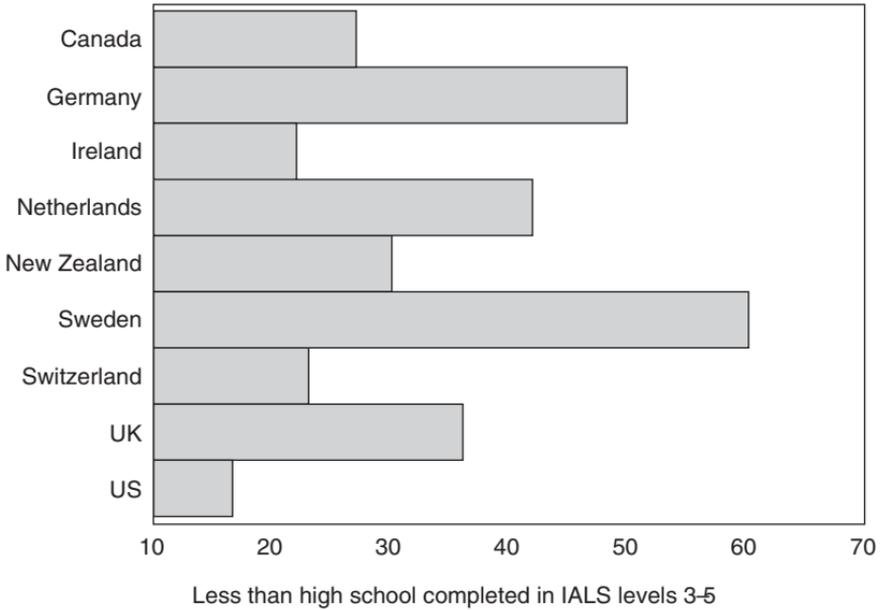


Figure 10.1 Functional literacy levels of respondents with low education

Table 10.1 Rate of participation in adult education and training of general population aged 25–65

	<i>Without completed high school</i>		<i>With some post-secondary education</i>	
Australia	21.6	(0.8)	54.6	(1.1)
Belgium (Flanders)	8.6	(1.3)	41.6	(1.8)
Canada	18.1	(3.2)	53.8	(3.1)
Denmark	35.9	(1.8)	74.1	(2.0)
Finland	31.4	(2.0)	79.1	(2.0)
Ireland	12.6	(2.0)	45.9	(3.6)
Italy	8.7	(1.1)	50.4	(3.0)
Netherlands	23.5	(1.6)	50.5	(2.3)
New Zealand	33.5	(1.8)	62.0	(2.0)
Norway	24.7	(4.3)	64.5	(1.6)
Portugal	7.8	(1.2)	51.1	(2.6)
Sweden	34.7	(1.6)	68.2	(1.6)
Switzerland	16.9	(3.1)	58.0	(2.6)
United Kingdom	29.9	(1.0)	67.2	(1.6)
United States	11.5	(2.1)	59.1	(2.0)

Note: People with fewer than six hours' total training are excluded. Germany is excluded because the survey did not ask about adult education and training in a comparable way. Brackets indicate standard errors.

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994–8.

have detailed data for Sweden. We have already noted the importance of ABF study circles in carrying on the tradition inherited from early trade unions and their forerunners. Has the tradition waned? A Royal Commission sought to find out. In its 1998 report on adult education services, the Commission found that study circles and related activities continue to play a prominent role in the lives of citizens. In a population of nine million, study circles totaled 336,037 in 1997, lasting an average of 35 to 40 hours, with a total of 2,844,356 participants.¹⁰ In addition, adult education societies in that year organized 165,000 miscellaneous popular cultural events and 38,000 non-course pedagogical activities, such as conferences and lectures.

Each Swedish political party is associated with one of the adult educational associations, which, especially during election years, arranges study circles to familiarize party members and sympathizers with party programmes and strategies. Of course, when confronted with a fundamental political decision, as in, for example, referenda over nuclear power or EU membership, the associations organize study circles on a large scale to ensure adequate knowledge about the issue.

The effects of adult education upon civic literacy are complemented by the efforts of public institutions such as libraries to encourage reading among the poorly educated, and those otherwise at the margin. Notable especially are measures to encourage the reading of newspapers and other printed sources of information and to support public-service television and radio. Norway, Finland and Sweden subsidize daily newspapers that are not leaders in their markets, amounting to between 5 and 35 per cent (averaging around 11 per cent) of revenues, while the subsidies traditionally account for 3 to 4 per cent of all newspaper revenues.¹¹ The emphasis on newspaper reading parallels the approach to radio and television, primarily viewing them as media of public service information. Despite recent inroads of commercial broadcasting, public-service channels continue to play a dominant role in the four Nordic countries – if not always in audience share, certainly in setting the standard in news and public affairs.

Not surprisingly, then, among European countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland rank first, second and fourth in daily newspaper titles (Sanchez-Taberner 1993: 40). Despite cutbacks in the 1990s, in several Nordic countries governments unambiguously encourage newspaper reading.¹² With, on average, roughly one newspaper circulating every day for every two persons, compared to one for five in North America, Scandinavia is that corner of world where reading daily newspapers remains an unquestioned part of everyday life. As a rule, 80 to 90 per

cent of people over 16 read at least one reasonably good newspaper daily,¹³ with little variation by gender or even educational background (Hadenius and Weibull 1999: 149).¹⁴

Overall, the situation has not changed significantly, despite a decline in daily newspaper consumption that paralleled the economic recession of the mid-1990s. With the economic upturn, according to the 1999 *Mediebarometer*, average daily newspaper readership actually rose at the end of the decade, including among young people, the solid majority of whom – compared to 21 per cent in the US¹⁵ – still read the newspaper every day. In addition, the proportion of Swedes, including young people, who watch at least one of the public television news broadcasts, remained steady.¹⁶

The effects of the comparatively high-civic-literacy levels attained among people with relatively low levels of formal education is provided in Figure 10.2. Drawn from data in the final report of the IALS (OECD 2000), it dramatically captures the close relationship between income inequality and differences in functional literacy, or what can be called material and non-material redistribution. Its message is undeniable: high-civic-literacy societies, like Sweden and its Nordic neighbours, that more equally distribute intellectual resources, also more equally distribute material resources.

What is the connection? There are two components. The first is related specifically to functional literacy and to labour market-based income dis-

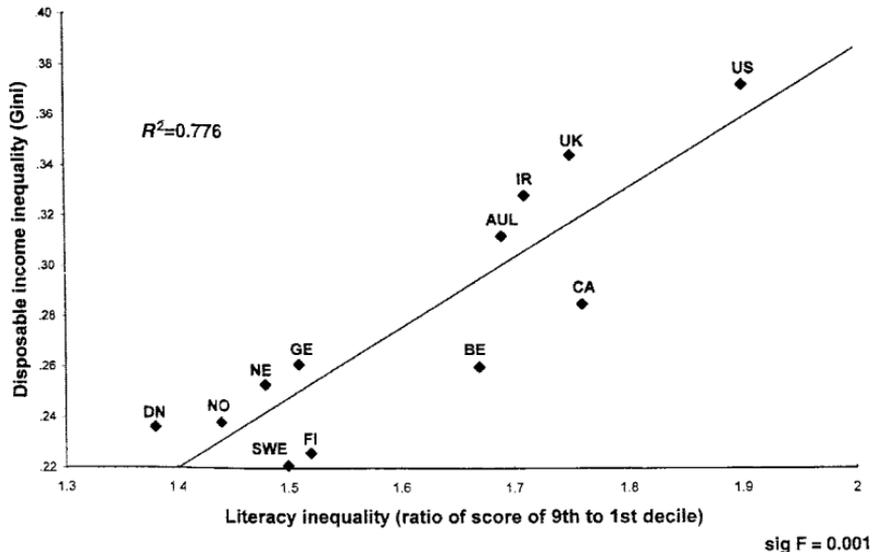


Figure 10.2 Civic engagement and social capital

tribution. Narrow wage dispersion – the wage solidarity aspect of the Swedish model – is possible when manual and service workers have the skills to read manuals and otherwise find employment in high-tech industries. We can see this in earnings differences. OECD data reported in *The Economist* (23 June 2001: 120) shows that earning differentials between those who have not completed secondary school, and those who have a tertiary education are markedly lower in high-civic-literacy Sweden, Finland and Denmark, than in the dozen comparable OECD countries. Negotiated as part of the corporatist trade-offs among labour, business and government, such low pay differentials could be put into effective practice only because of high levels of functional literacy.

But there is another, civic, component, accounting for this relationship. It has to do with redistribution through government policies. Here, what matters is the effect of high civic literacy on political participation. Figure 10.3 shows clearly that democratic societies that more equally distribute intellectual resources in the form of functional literacy are those that attain higher levels of political participation (in this case, in voting in local elections). While causality clearly flows both ways, the key relevant point here is that high-civic-literacy societies promote higher levels of informed political participation among those who most benefit from redistributive policies and trade-offs. And, inevitably, their needs and interests will find their way into government policies more than elsewhere. Hence, societies that more equally

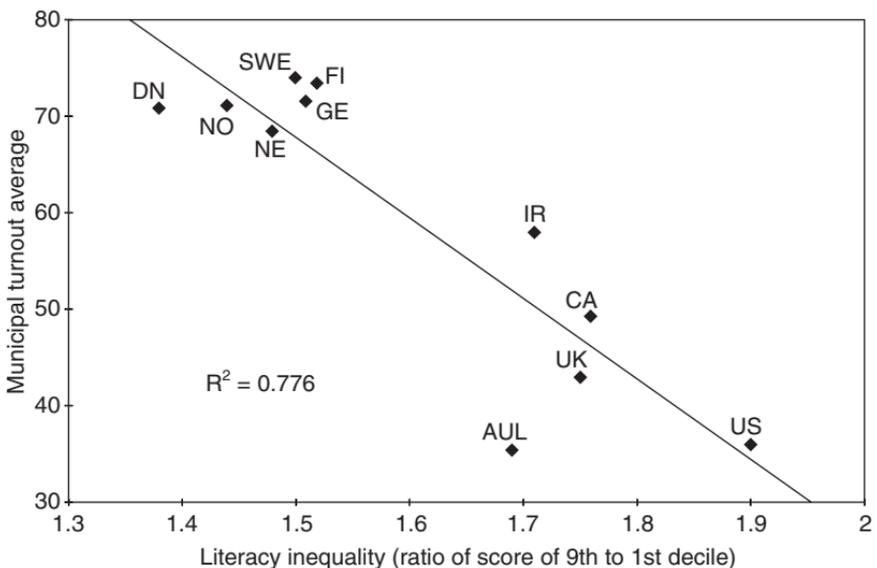


Figure 10.3 Functional literacy and political participation

distribute intellectual resources will also be those that, over the long term, more effectively redistribute material resources.

6. European integration

How do high-civic-literacy countries fare in Global Civil Society? More specifically, how well equipped are those at lower levels of education and economic resources in transferring to the transnational level the outcomes attained through high civic literacy in national contexts? I contend that the knowledge to exercise their citizenship competently is linked to their national political culture, institutional arrangements and language. For Europeans, this question is posed by the prospect of (further) integration into the European Union, the specific form that political globalization takes in Europe. The attitude of the high-civic-literacy Scandinavians toward this process is thus highly instructive.

The *Eurobarometer*, a regular poll of large samples in EU states, regularly shows that people in Sweden, Denmark, the UK, Austria and Finland are more likely to be suspicious of further integration. We can see, for example, this distinction in *Eurobarometer* no. 46, October–November 1995. More or less the same division appeared more recently over the question of whether the respondents identified primarily or exclusively with their nation or with the EU in *Eurobarometer*, no. 50, Autumn 1998. In this, the Swedes were second highest (60 per cent compared to 62 for Britain), followed fairly closely by the Danes and Finns (with 53 and 52 per cent), to identify only with their country. During the years when it was the only Nordic member, polls consistently found greater objection to European political union in Denmark than in any other of the 12 members – even the UK.

But Scandinavians are not like the British in their knowledge of the EU, or their general attitudes toward Europe. For example, in the *Eurobarometer* in Spring 1992, Denmark came a very close second after Luxembourg in correctly answering whether the European Commission, the European Parliament or the Council of Ministers is the most powerful in terms of having the final say on European community legislation (Hofrichter and Klein 1993; Schemeil 2001).¹⁷ Moreover, the Scandinavians rank high in positive attitudes toward people from other European countries, in fluency in major European languages, and in the propensity, when young, to travel and live outside their national boundaries. *Eurobarometer* no. 51 (B12) found 31 per cent of both Swedish and Danish respondents to be ‘very attached’ to Europe (second only to the Luxembourgais).

How are we to explain this Scandinavian particularity? First, these are small countries with relatively highly informed populations. Unlike certain larger European countries with more elitist political cultures, there are far fewer passive, uninformed people who leave it to elites to decide on these matters. Public opinion does not draw as sharp a distinction between European and national identity and, thus, citizenship. Hence, Scandinavian leaders, in contrast to their counterparts in much of the continent, must effectively and forthrightly explain to an informed public why weakening national citizenship in favour of European citizenship would be worthwhile. They have palpably not succeeded in highly nationalistic Norway and Iceland, and, barely more so in Sweden and in Denmark, which has been an EU member for 30 years.

The deep ambivalence about European integration is based on an informed appreciation of possible advantages and dangers presented by EU integration to the way of life Scandinavians have created. The underlying opposition to political union is a perception that political institutions are intricately tied to national identity. Even many who favour greater economic integration reject the supranational project of European political union, which they realize to be more than a convenient or necessary complement to removal of trade barriers. As an economic confederation, the EU leaves more or less intact the roles of national political institutions, even if it increases constraints on their capacity to act independently to generate expected outcomes. Hence, though economic confederation adds new dead-ends to the political roadmap, it need not significantly reduce the capacity to democratically weigh the costs and benefits of alternative routes – and thus make appropriate choices. With long histories of making such adjustments consensually, Scandinavians retain the capacity to act through policy adjustments via existing political (and corporatist labour-market) institutions.

Under confederal arrangements, bodies – like the EU Council – are inter-statal institutions. There is no profound ambiguity about where the primary locus of political deliberation, identity, and accountability is located: at the level of member state governments. In contrast, federalism or political union would entail central institutions with significant powers and responsibilities accountable to the people as a whole, not to member states. The primary relationship would be between ‘European Citizens’ and European institutions, a relationship to which the states would ultimately be interlopers. Under such circumstances, to remain informed, citizens would have to understand not merely relationships between their state’s institutions and those of the supranational bodies, but also the cultural–ideological–institutional

context in which other states' representatives act. The political map of one's own state would be a poor guide, and could lead one astray. The value of experience, skills, and knowledge gained in engagement of local and national political arenas in member states would shrink compared to those acquired from affiliation in multinational networks. Such experience is limited to elites.

Conclusion: why global civil society could threaten Scandinavia's high civic literacy

GCS advocates may not see the EU as embodying their aspirations but generally regard it as, at least, a step in the right direction. It is therefore no wonder that an organization whose very name attempts to embody the GCS delivered a 'warning to governments' (8 June 1996). The *Forum permanent de la société civile*, a coalition of 80 Euro-federalist groups, denounced their governments who 'keep putting forward the archaic conception of "national interests" and called for intensifying ... the legislative role of the European Parliament, the only institution elected by direct universal suffrage, [as] ... the first step towards a real democracy'. For such people, there can be no other acceptable choice. One must embrace European values, and European solidarity. It is the only real democracy, in contrast with a narrow nationalism based on fearing change.

Supporters of progressive change cannot comfortably defend an 'archaic conception' and oppose 'real democracy'? It is thus natural to look for indications of the Scandinavian welfare state evolving toward GCS through European federalism. After all, Scandinavian welfare states spawned a generation of English-speaking, wired, computer literate people¹⁸ who already disproportionately participate in international organizations contributing to human betterment.

Yet this vision is ultimately illusory. For GCS to be compatible with democracy, there must be global democratic discourse. But, concretely, democratic discourse can take place only when most people can meaningfully participate. This ideal is out of reach even for high-civic-literacy Swedes. In practice, genuine democracy is a chimera when people face insecure access to good-quality food, employment, shelter, education, health care, etc. Modern Scandinavian welfare states, built around national states, have best guaranteed such access. Those most dependent on this access have reason to worry that the guarantees linked to national citizenship will be weakened as global citizenship advances.

But the threat is more profound. As noted, active citizens of a federal Europe – and thus, more so, GCS – would need to understand the cultural–ideological–institutional contexts in which others act. Experience in local and national political arenas would be of little value. What would really matter in GCS is experience and contacts acquired from affiliation in multinational networks open only to elites.

In this sense, GCS exponents can be compared to earlier revolutionary groups who proclaimed that progressive historical change could be brought about only through the actions of a vanguard, and who, accordingly, denounced the chosen standard bearers of working people as regressive. Proponents of GCS are seldom as unidimensional or shrill; nevertheless, by rejecting the politics of nationally organized parties, trade unions, and other such ‘archaic’ organizations in the name of global concerns like environmentalism and feminism, they are doing something similar. They are relegating most people, who operate within the language, vocabulary, and identity of the nation, and who understand and work for change through the institutions of the nation-state, to the sidelines of history.

Notes

- 1 Part of the Ideas of 1989 Public Lecture Series. (Source: LSE Global Civil Society Programme of its Centre for Civil Society) (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/ccs/>)
- 2 Crafts (1997: 306) cites statistics from 1870, indicating literacy in Sweden to be 75 per cent, placing it even with the US, and behind Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and the UK, though well ahead of Norway, at 55 per cent, with Finland, at only 10 per cent.
- 3 The Folk High School movement provided secondary-level education to talented and ambitious young workers and peasants.
- 4 The ABF annually organizes about 100,000 study circles for over a million participants (roughly 30 per cent of all study circles in Sweden).
- 5 Over 50,000 people participated in ABF study circles on EU membership before the 1994 referendum.
- 6 In 1999, more than 200,000 adults took such *komvux* courses at the upper-secondary level (*Swedish Budget Statement*, 1999: 18).
- 7 These are approximately 140 popular institutes of adult education that provide specialized courses in many areas of knowledge usually tailored to the regional economic needs where they are situated – including distance education in the remote regions.
- 8 In 1931 Yngve Hugo of the ABF was appointed head of the educational division of SR.
- 9 This is data from the IALS’ first round, in which Sweden was the only participating Nordic country. A related IALS question asked subjects about

their parents' educational attainment, income and occupation. For each of these categories, differentials in IALS scores were smaller for Sweden than for all other countries.

- 10 While it was down from the decade's high of 343,732 in 1990–91, it was higher than most years since. Music appreciation was the most popular subject, followed by international affairs and media studies. Overall, about one-third of study circles centred on political-social issues, the number rising and declining according to the proximity of elections and referenda, and the salience of issues in public debate at the national or local levels.
- 11 See Sanchez-Tabernero (1993); Hadenius and Weibull (1999); and Salokangas (1999). In 1990 there were roughly 275 daily newspapers in the three countries plus Denmark (Hoest 1991), which have a combined population slightly lower than that of Canada – where there were 106 dailies in 1995. To this should be added the large number of weekly newspapers and magazines. In the early 1990s in Sweden there were 85 and 46 respectively. Austria is the only other country known to this writer with direct subsidy programmes.
- 12 I have written on the importance of such policies on the development of the contemporary welfare state in the Nordic countries (Milner 1989; 1994).
- 13 Overall, a daily morning paper is read by 72 per cent of Swedes (aged 9–79) but only 60 per cent of those aged 15–24 (*Mediebarometer* 1997, p. 54). Those not reading at least one morning or (less weighty) afternoon paper in Sweden make up 19 per cent of those aged 9–79 (*Mediebarometer* 1997: 52). (In 1995, for Norway it was 16 per cent, for Finland 3 per cent (aged 12+), and for Denmark (age 13+) 28 per cent: Carlsson and Harrie 1997: 156).
- 14 Concerted efforts are also made to encourage the reading of books, through both subsidies to publishing and distribution, and programmes offered by local public libraries. Libraries in Sweden, for example, provide free home delivery for shut-ins and services to hospitals and homes for the elderly. Another policy with a very pronounced positive effect on reading bears mentioning: all foreign language television programmes, films and videos are subtitled.
- 15 Only 21 per cent of Americans aged 18–29 (down from 49 per cent in the early 1970s) say they read a daily newspaper (Putnam 2000: 219).
- 16 A Gothenburg University study shows that even with increased private station viewership, the feared 'race to the bottom' has not materialized. SVT1 and SVT2 – and (terrestrial, commercial) TV4 – actually increased the information programme content since 1993 when commercial TV became readily available in Sweden.
- 17 Despite being new to the EU, Swedes and Finns are also generally comparatively well-informed. Respondents to a 1996 questionnaire answered ten items concerning the EU, and Finland was placed second in average number of correct answers after Denmark, with Sweden seventh (*Eurobarometer* no. 45). To a 1999 question on the single largest expenditure item of the EU, respondents from the three Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands were most able to correctly identify the Common Agricultural Policy (*Eurobarometer* no. 51).
- 18 The highest levels of interest in – and willingness to pay for – on-line/interactive training in 1999, was among Swedes, 52.9 per cent, followed by

Finns, 47.3 per cent, Danes, 44.5 per cent, and Netherlanders, 44 per cent (a special *Eurobarometer* study, 50.1, entitled 'Measuring Information Society', was prepared by INRA Europe, March 1999.) Another question asked about interest in and willingness to pay for access to electronic information on products such as videos, music, CDs, books, computer software or hardware. Again, Northern European states had the highest levels of interest: Sweden (49.5%), the Netherlands (48.2), Finland (44.7), and Denmark (39.2) – as well as Ireland (41.9).

11

'Globalization' and Labour Strategy: Towards a Social Movement Unionism

İsmet Akça

One of the principal tasks of the capitalist state is to locate power in the spaces which the bourgeoisie controls, and disempower those spaces which the oppositional movements have the greatest potential to command. (Harvey 1991: 237)

It is self-evident that, to be capable of struggle at all, the working class must organize itself at home *as a class* and that its own country must be the immediate arena for struggle. To that extent, the class struggle is national, not in content, but, as *The Communist Manifesto* says, 'in form'. (Marx 1996 [1875]: 217)

Introduction

Globalization has become today the key word for understanding recent developments in the capitalist world economy. While it is a highly contested concept, conventional accounts of globalization have come to constitute a kind of 'globalization orthodoxy' (Harman 1996), based on arguments that are widely accepted both in (left and right) popular and academic milieux.¹ Globalization orthodoxy generally characterizes working classes as passive vis-à-vis the challenges generated by the alleged process of globalization unless they develop globally organized forms of resistance.

Those who accept the argument that globalization undermines the importance of the national site in favour of the global (or transnational)² level are led, logically, to the conclusion that, as capital is global so must be resistance to it. Charles Tilly points to the need for 'new strategies at the scale of international' (1995: 21); Andreas Breitenfellner argues that

'if business and capital go global, then government and labor should follow suit' (1997: 1); as do Deborah Levenson-Estrada and Henry Frundt (1995: 2) 'if production and ownership are global, workers' organization must be as well'.³ Such views are often elaborated with reference to arguments concerning global civil society and global citizenship. According to these arguments, under the globalization of civil society democracy has become a transnational affair and global civil society and its peculiar organizations have become essential in all democratic struggle.⁴

This emphasis on the global at the expense of the national site is based on an understanding of globalization as the 'de-territorialization of economic and political affairs' (Weiss 1999: 59). According to globalization orthodoxy, there are three pre-eminent challenges to labour unions today: (1) the globalization of production and of productive capital; (2) the transnationalization of class relations; and (3) the erosion of state power with respect to social and economic issues and, consequently, the declining importance of national states.

According to globalization orthodoxy, the high mobility of capital extends beyond money capital to include productive capital as well. As David M. Gordon (1988: 26–30) has shown, arguments concerning the new (or changing) international division of labour and the globalization of production⁵ have helped to establish that notion. The massive flow of capital from the advanced countries to the Third World where labour costs are low, the increasing decentralization of production units, and the increasingly centralized control of these units by transnational corporations have worked to increase the leverage of transnational corporations over national governments and domestic unions. Thus, the power of an all-encompassing global capital transcends and transcends national and regional barriers throughout the world, paralyzing national governments and domestic unions.

As to the second challenge, it has been argued that the process of class formation is no longer tied to nation-states, but is now realized within a transnational space. According to William I. Robinson and Jerry Harris (2000), the globalization of production and supranational integration of national productive structures, the spread of transnational corporations, and the expansion of foreign direct investment (FDI) provide the basis for the transnationalization of classes and the rise of a transnational capitalist class. This class is a global ruling class by virtue of its capacity to control an emergent transnational state apparatus and global decision-making. Not only class formation, but also class relations and struggles are transnationalized. Thus, the argument goes, by virtue of the fact that it now confronts a transnationally

organized capitalist class, the working class must also organize itself within a supranational space.⁶

The last ring in the chain of arguments concerning the challenges facing trade unions relates to the demise of the national state.⁷ Globalization orthodoxy forcefully propounds the notion that the national state is no longer the locus of power since not only financial but also productive capital together now operate independently of state power and undermine the latter. Consistent with this view of globalization, Kenichi Ohmae (1990) has argued that global market forces and stateless transnational companies have become the main actors in a 'borderless world economy'. More extreme versions of the view see power as totally diffused, as 'no longer concentrated in institutions (the state), organizations (capitalist firms) or symbolic controllers (corporate media, churches) (Castells 1996: 359).

Arguments concerning the demise of national states are based on assumptions about the alleged shift from government by national states to governance by supranational institutions. It is argued that the emerging global mode of regulation, an aspect of the global accumulation regime, takes the form either of a 'transnational state apparatus' (Robinson and Harris 2000) or of a 'globalized state' (Shaw 2000: 239–40). This supranational state 'deregulates the conditions of accumulation on a worldwide basis by removing the national regulation of accumulation'.⁸ The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Union are seen as the main institutions of this emerging supranational state.

There are more moderate interpretations of globalization that do not assume a total demise of the national state. For instance, Bob Jessop (1999a; 1999c) argues that, while the national scale has lost its taken-for-granted primacy even in the case of the most powerful states, no other scale of economic and political organization has acquired primacy. The trends responsible for the loss of primacy of the national site – the denationalization of the state, the de-statization of politics, and the internationalization of policy regimes – represent a 'mix of interscalar strategies' and 'a growing unstructured complexity'. The national state continues to play a primary role in mediating between supra- and sub-national sites, dealing with social conflicts and pursuing redistributive policies, thus ensuring social cohesion. Hugo Radice also develops a midway position. He argues that the nation-state and national models of capitalism have not been wholly undermined, but that 'the deeper transnational economic integration is leading to a growing transnationalization of the institutions and practices of capitalism' and 'the transna-

tional dimension of the state has become more salient' (2000: 736–7). The erosion of the national site is evident in some spheres, such as those related to money and capital; it is less visible in employment relations, labour markets, and political practices. But, in general, the regulatory rights of national governments have become restricted to a large extent, and even in the case of the less affected areas the 'transnational counterpart institutions' have become more dominant. Consequently, he argues the necessity of 'building an effective transnational labor unionism' (2000: 735–6). These more moderate interpretations of globalization and the national state leave undisturbed the notion that states are no longer able to effectively make key decisions and that there has been a shift from national to transnational governance.

By arguing that power is located in the global site, globalization orthodoxy undermines the importance of the national site, state and internal class struggles as the loci of both power and resistance. Within the narrative of conventional globalization accounts, the line demarcating myth and reality gets blurred and globalization becomes a 'teleology' (Amoore *et al.* 1997). It is important to recognize this ideological aspect of 'globalization' and to treat it, therefore, as a contested concept. As Kayatekin and Ruccio point out, 'If alternative subjectivities imply alternative readings, constructions of history... [Then] globalization too, *in part*, is constituted discursively and it is one among alternative readings of history...which gives us the *relative autonomy* of the social constitution of subjectivity' (1998: 85, 87; my emphasis). I do not deny the importance of changes in the capitalist world economy, but only some interpretations of them that undermine the ability to respond.

The next section argues that current trends of change have brought about a strong internationalization rather than globalization. Secondly, it argues that so-called global capital is embedded in national capitalist economies, capital still needs the national state, class politics still matters, and class relations and struggles still take place primarily within the national site. Thirdly, it will argue for an alternative type of unionism organized in the national site as more important than searching for global unionism. It will then inquire into this possibility by looking into a new type of unionism emerging in some countries, namely social movement unionism.

1. Globalization: myth or reality?

There is no doubt that in the last decades there have been important changes in the world capitalist economy. Interconnectedness through trade has increased: from 1960 to 1990 the ratio of exports to GDP in

OECD countries rose from 9.5 per cent to 20.5 per cent and world trade grew at an average of one and a half times the rate of growth of world GDP. FDI grew three times faster than trade flows and four times faster than output, from approximately \$500 billion in the early 1980s to nearly \$2.0 trillion by the early 1990s (Doremus *et al.* 1999: 74). Multinational corporations (MNCs) flourished in an unprecedented way: according to a 1999 report (UNCTAD 1999: 5), there were 59,902 MNCs. No doubt globalization has been deepest in the financial sector. In the OECD countries, the stock of international bank lending between 1980 and 1990 rose from 4 to 44 per cent of GDP (Wade 1996: 64).

Deepening internationalization

Though at first sight data on the pace of growth of trade, FDI, and MNCs points to the strong globalization thesis, when these data are evaluated within the total structure, they appear to contradict it. In fact, the globalization thesis appears to be based on no more than the absolutization of a trend.

First, there is strong evidence to suggest that the international character of capitalism is *not new*. Hirst and Thompson have shown that we are, today, only approaching the levels of openness achieved between 1870 and 1914. In 1913, the trade of the UK – an 'over-internationalized economy in an under-globalized world' (2000: 335) – represented 44.7 per cent of its GDP, while in 1994 it was still only 42.6 per cent. In the 1990s, FDI as a percent of world output had still not surpassed the level reached in 1913 (9 per cent). For the G6 economies (USA, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Italy), average net capital flows as a percentage of GDP was 3.3 between 1890 and 1914, and 2.3 between 1990 and 1996 (Hirst and Thompson 1999: 37–8; 2000: 339–40).

Secondly, when evaluated within the total structure, international trade and FDI constitute *only a small proportion* of trade and investment; thus, their growth alone is not evidence of strong globalization. The share of trade in GDP is still very small, accounting for 12 per cent or less for the US, Japan and EU and less than 10 per cent for the Asian and Latin American countries. Outgoing and incoming FDI's share in net domestic business investment is still very small: between 5 and 15 per cent (outgoing) and between 0.5 and 14 per cent (ingoing) in Japan and the US, respectively (Wade 1996: 66, 70). What is treated as a massive flight of capital from the advanced nations to newly industrializing countries represents only 3 per cent of the investment of the rich triad countries and 0.2 per cent of their capital stock (Hirst and Thompson 1999: 40). On the other hand, contrary to arguments about

the high level of global capital flows, correlation between rates of national savings and national investment are still strongly correlated. In 1990, the percent of private domestic savings was high in Japan (98), the USA (96) and the UK (83) (Boyer 1996: 50; Moran 1998: 60).

Moreover, world trade and FDI are massively *concentrated* in a few countries. In 1992 the Triad represented 60 per cent of world trade; adding inter-EU trade to this figure brings it to 70 per cent (Wade 1996: 66; Hirst and Thompson 1999: 41). As to FDI flows, between 1975 and 1995 the twenty developed economies accounted for at least 60 per cent of capital inflows and 84 per cent of capital outflows (Rasiah 2000: 944). In 1998, the developed countries accounted for 71.5 and 91.6 per cent of capital inflows and outflows respectively (UNCTAD 1999: 20).

As to the MNCs, according to data for 1992–93, a high percent of the manufacturing sales, service sales, manufacturing assets, and service assets of MNCs are concentrated in their home countries: the percentages for the US are 64, 75, 70, 74; for Japan, 75, 77, 97, 92; for France, 45, 69, 54, 50; and for the UK, 36, 61, 39, 61.⁹ Between 70 and 75 per cent of the value added was produced on the home territory (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 91–5). MNCs' production outside their home countries represented only about 7 per cent of world output in 1990.¹⁰ Hence we can say that the home countries of MNCs are still the centre of their economic activities and that increased MNC activity represents, in Ankie Hoogvelt's words, 'an implosion rather than expansion' (1997, chapter 4). Qualitative evidence also contradicts the notion that MNCs are footloose and that the national site has decreased relevance in the capitalist world economy. Studies of MNCs show that they are deeply embedded and historically rooted in their national structures and institutions in terms of their internal governance and long-term financing operations, their research and development (R&D) programmes, and their direct investment and intra-firm trading strategies.¹¹

There is often confusion about different sorts of capital when analyzing the mobility of capital. Unlike financial capital, moving productive capital is subject to restrictions and is costly.¹² Claims about the globalization of production and the high mobility of productive capital are to a large extent exaggerated. While it is true that falling rates of profit and the recession of the mid-1970s led to a restructuring of industry in ways that cut across national boundaries, most multinationals have not established globally integrated production processes. This has been one response (decisive only in the most labour-intensive sectors such as textiles) among many, and not the most common one (Harman 1996: 5). The main responses by the capitalist class to decreased rates

of profits and recession have been the attempt to increase the rate of surplus-value extraction by introducing new technology and, using the ideology of globalization, threatening to move production abroad. 'Rationalization' is responsible for job losses in advanced countries – not the movement of productive capital.¹³

To sum up, we can say that we live, with the partial exception of money markets, in a more internationalized rather than globalized world. It is a 'patterned internationalization' (Moran 1998: 75), a patchwork of national economies or, in Boyer's words, 'a series of national oligopolistic markets', rather than a unified world market (Boyer 1996: 50). Every global process is carried out only in and through specific and concrete places. While firms seek out the most profitable sites internationally for production, this does not mean they are footloose: they remain subject to national laws and locally embedded. In the main developed countries, approximately 90 per cent of production is still for the domestic market; 90 per cent of consumption is produced at home. In addition, about 80 per cent of investment is by domestic investors (Wade 1996: 86, 61). Hence we can argue that multinational corporations cannot ignore their home markets since it is there that the biggest percentage of their operations takes place, and they are not beyond the scope of national regulation. Capital is neither infinitely mobile nor absolutely immobile.

Contrary to the globalization thesis, the national site still preserves its central place in the organization of the international world economy. Clearly there has been increasing internationalization of the world capitalist economy, of production processes, and of capitalist classes. However, because international capital maintains substantial ties to its home base 'it seeks favorable national class relations. National spaces of class conflict are still important dynamic factors in the operations of multinational capital' (Moran 1998: 66). Capital still needs both its domestic spaces and its domestic state.

State and classes: the ongoing importance of the national site

Central to globalization orthodoxy is the argument that, because the scope of state autonomy has been reduced by economic globalization, the state no longer initiates action but only reacts to global economic forces. A critique of this view has been developed from a state-centred perspective. Such approaches emphasized the adaptability of states, their differential capacity, and the enhanced importance of state power in the new international environment.¹⁴ Though state-centred approaches have helped to show that the national state and national

economies still matter, their exclusive focus on state structures misconceives the nature of the state by treating the state and capital 'as two independent spheres rather than as parts of totality' (Panitch 1996: 84–5). They do not take into account how capitalist states are structured by the accumulation models and so ignore the structural character of the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state. Thus, the political prescriptions that they offer focus, narrowly, on strategies of 'progressive competitiveness' or 'progressive nationalism'.¹⁵

An alternative to state-centred approaches is to understand the state and its relative autonomy with reference to accumulation process and social relations/struggles. Such a perspective allows us to recognize that the so-called 'global capitalist class' is embedded in internal class relations and struggles within specific social formations, and that these relations and struggles have a crucial impact on the nature and use of political power. Nicos Poulantzas' analyses of the relationship between the internationalization of capitalist relations and the nation-state are still relevant.¹⁶ The main questions he posed were: 'Is it still possible today to speak of a *national state* in the imperialist metropolises? What connections are there between these states and the internationalization of capital or the multinational firms?' (1979: 38).

Poulantzas' analysis of state and class challenges a number of key elements of globalization orthodoxy. First it challenges the notion that class formations and class relations now occur within a transnational space disembedded from the national site. Poulantzas argued that the so-called global capitalist class is represented in each social formation by a specific fraction of the internal bourgeoisie. In his words,

these 'foreign' capitals do not directly participate as such, i.e. as relatively autonomous social forces, in each of the power blocs involved... Their 'presence' in the French power bloc is rather ensured by certain fractions of the French bourgeoisie ... [and] by their internalization and representation within the French bourgeoisie itself. (1979: 75)

In addition to conceptualizing 'global' capital as a fraction within the internal/national class structure, Poulantzas emphasized the ongoing significance of national site with respect to class struggles:

It is still the national form that prevails in these struggles, however international they are in their essence. This is due for one thing to uneven development and the concrete specificity of each social

formation; these features are of the very essence of capitalism contrary to the belief upheld by various ideologies of globalization. (1979: 78)

These insights into the primacy of class struggles within national states are also helpful in understanding the timing and course of neoliberal restructuring and internationalization processes. Jonathan Moran (1998) shows how national class configurations and class politics had a crucial impact on processes of internationalization. In Australia, through a strategy of progressive competitiveness, the Labour government was able to incorporate and neutralize organized labour in the internationalization process. In Sweden, globalization was used ideologically as a response by big capital to the growing threat of state policies and a strong organized labour movement, and as a means of restructuring relations between labour and capital by using the threat to move abroad. In the UK, the deregulation of finance and the massive privatization of the public sector could not have been achieved without dismantling employment laws; and this required the neutralization of union power between the late 1970s and the early 1980s: steelworkers' unions in 1980, rail unions in 1982, print unions in 1983 and, finally, the miners in 1984–5. What these examples show is that national class politics, with their particularities in each social formation, have been influential in the process of neoliberal internationalization, and are still pre-eminent both in the preservation of the new order and in ongoing challenges to it.

Poulantzas' second challenge is his insistence on the pre-eminent role of the nation-state in the extended reproduction of capitalist social relations. While he recognizes that the internationalization of capital affects the politics and institutional forms of national states, he argues that it neither surpasses nor bypasses the nation-states. No peaceful integration of capitals takes place 'above' the state level, since every process of internationalization takes place under the dominance of the capital of a definite country; nor are nation-states made extinct by a super-state (Poulantzas 1979: 73). The internationalized fractions of the capitalist class of each social formation need their respective states in their competition among themselves. For Poulantzas, 'the inability of national states to control world markets would have far less to do with any alleged inherent "ungovernability" of footloose capital than with real class contradictions within national power blocs' (in Jessop 1999b: 11).

What is changing is not the role of the state but the nature of state intervention. The state is adopting an increasingly active role in restructuring the economy while, at the same time, retreating from its welfare role. There has undoubtedly been a shift from the Keynesian welfare state that, unless the new accumulation regime is challenged, will make it impossible to regain welfare rights. Meanwhile the autonomy of the capitalist state is still limited by capital accumulation, at the most abstract level and, at a more concrete one, by the mode of accumulation and the related configuration of social classes. The national state is still the site wherein accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects are developed, struggled and implemented.¹⁷ The state has been the main actor in deregulation, the preliminary condition of economic globalization. Deregulation, as Leo Panitch points out (2000: 6), increased the scope for intervention by central banks and finance ministries. The change in the accumulation regime heralds a shift of power within the hierarchy of state apparatus, rather than a loss of power.

Indeed, states retain not only the strictly political and ideological functions accepted by more moderate theses on globalization, but also most of their economic functions. Capital needs the state to play a role in providing direct subsidies and rescue operations at taxpayers' expense, to provide fiscal incentives to enterprises, and to redistribute wealth between classes and regions. States may conditionally delegate their economic functions to inter-state organizations in order to improve coordination among different states (Poulantzas 1979: 81). But so-called 'supranational' organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO, NAFTA, and the GATT are really inter-state organizations or treaties. They represent governments and derive their powers of enforcement from nation-states. As Leo Panitch puts it, 'capitalist globalization takes place in, through, and under the aegis of states; it is encoded by them and in important respects even authored by them' (1996: 86).

Those who argue the necessity for a globally organized working class and for the development of a global civil society fail to recognize that capitalism has not escaped the national state and that, on the contrary, the establishment of international neoliberalism has taken place through the agency of states. Thus, they fail to recognize that any alternative prospect in the struggle with domestic and global fractions of capitalist class must focus on the radical transformation of the state.

If power is still located in the state and if so-called global capital remains nationally embedded, then the national site must be the main

focus of labour struggles.¹⁸ This does not mean that the internationalization of production, the existence of global commodity chains, and the emergence of MNCs are unimportant. Nor does it mean that cross-border labour actions are futile.¹⁹ However, if capital is not global, a labour movement that focuses exclusively on either the international or the sub-national level cannot effectively challenge the power of capital. International and sub-national struggles must be embedded in the national level. As one trade unionist observes, the national plane is still

where workers live, work and fight... Engaging in battles with capital and the state at the national level has a transformative power [since] it is in these kinds of struggle that people and their consciousness change, whether it is a mass demonstration or a more limited fight around workplace issues. (Moody 1997b: 57)

The fragmentation of the labour force as a result of the casualization of work, the emergence of new forms of work, and the corporatist unionism – these are the real challenges facing labour. Thus, the crucial question is what sort of organization is needed to meet these challenges. The next section addresses this question.

2. Social movement unionism

The restructuring of capitalism is a contradictory process that has opened up new possibilities of struggle. Both the social conditions of working classes, and increasing internal contradictions of capitalism as a result of competition among capitalists, offer possibilities for forging a class-based anti-capitalist struggle. Workers, confronted by the challenges of globalization and of the restructuring of capitalism, are not passive, but are developing new forms of struggle. The recent crisis of unionism is not a crisis of the labour movement in and of itself, but rather a crisis of 'a specific, narrowly based type of trade unionism' (Munck 1999: 12). In fact, one of the influential responses of the working class to the current crisis of unionism, has been the development of a different *kind* of unionism, conceptualized as social movement unionism.

The concept of 'social movement unionism' has emerged from the new trade union experiences in several countries, including South Africa, the Philippines, Brazil, Canada, and the US.²⁰ Workers in these diverse environments have created a dynamic and powerful alter-

native approach to unionism. Labour movements in South Africa, the Philippines, and Brazil have represented the clearest examples of this new unionism. South Africa's Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), founded in 1985, is the largest of the country's six union federations. In 1998, COSATU had more than two million members organized in 33 industrial unions. The federation is considered to be the *de facto* leader of South Africa's internal democratic opposition (COSATU 1998). In Brazil, the Unified Workers Confederation (CUT) was founded in 1983, following the founding of the Worker's Party in 1980 after effective strikes in the year before. The Philippines' Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, May First Movement) was founded in 1980 during the Marcos dictatorship to organize workers against the domination of foreign capital and the internationalized fraction of capital.

Struggle within the national site

The struggle against the global agenda has been one of the main concerns of social movement unionism (see, for example, Madisha 2000; also Vavi 1999). Aligning itself with other social groups, such as neighbourhood organizations, COSATU developed a creative challenge to neoliberalism's global agenda by formulating its own policy with respect to 'workers' disinvestment rights'. It insisted that 'departing companies have a moral obligation to return profits accumulated under apartheid so that the property of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all', and launched campaigns for responsible disinvestments. Two examples of successful resistance to MNCs' unilateral decision-making were the campaigns by the metalworkers' union against General Motors in 1986 and against Goodyear in 1989, both of which had had a long-standing presence in South Africa (since 1926 and 1946, respectively; Adler 1996: 131–2).

Social movement unionism engages in struggles, not only for better wages and conditions, but also for increased worker and union control over labour processes and investments; and relocation, subcontracting, training and education policies. It recognizes that the struggles of workers to control their daily work life and pay are intimately connected with the national socio-political and economic situation and, thus, with struggle against the state. It therefore engages in national campaigns of resistance against the state. The president of South Africa's COSATU, Willie Madisha, has argued that

Local struggles are as important as international struggles. In fact they are a precondition to international battles because we cannot

win on the international terrain what we failed to achieve at a national level. (2000: 2)

He also challenges the notion of the powerless state:

Another important dimension in the understanding of globalization is the myth of the powerless state. The reality is that the importance of state action in enabling the capitalist system of industrialized world to function is increased, not reduced as that system spreads internationally. If states do not control the movement of capital or of goods, it is not because they cannot but because they will not – it is an abdication of state power, not a lack of that power. In fact, globalization is driven by a powerful coalition of strong states, transnational companies and international financial institutions. Moreover, what we are seeing is a relentless campaign by capital, both international and domestic to force its agenda on the state. (2000: 2)

South Africa's COSATU engaged in 389 'political strikes or stay-aways' in 1985, and 948 of them in 1990. The 'people's strike' used by the KMU in the Philippines, a far more powerful weapon than the 'general strike' used in advanced industrialized countries, closes down all public transportation, shops, and stores. KMU's first 'people's strike,' launched in 1984 in response to the increase in military operations and brutality on Mindanao, succeeded in bringing most of the country's significant economic activity to a halt. Two more people's strikes were launched during 1985: one in response to the continuing 'militarization' of the island, the other in opposition to the Westinghouse-built Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. This second strike, which shut down all banks, shops, schools, public transport, private businesses and government offices for three days, is widely seen as an example of a successful action against multinational corporations in the national site. KMU launched its first nation-wide strike in 1987 in response to an oil price hike by the government (Scipes 1992: 91–2).

Alliances with other social movements and non-unionizable workers

Social movement unionism is distinct from the unionism imprisoned in narrow corporatist structures in its efforts to establish links with society and to develop a more conflict-based approach. These new labour movements do more than organize workers. Along with a range

of allied social movements, they are the major actors in the struggle for democracy, human rights and social justice in their countries. In Brazil, the CUT's campaign against the military regime; in the Philippines, the KMU's opposition to the Marcos dictatorship; and in South Africa, the activities of COSATU; have all been important to the process of democratization in those countries.²¹

Social movement unionism challenges the classical definition of work based essentially upon the factory worker in the formal, industrial sector by including, among others, housewives and the unemployed in its definition of workers. It does not limit itself to the particular economic problems of workers, but concerns itself with all spheres of life affecting workers.

Social movement unionism engages in dialogue and common action with broad communities and interests; with other democratic movements, such as women's, ecological, human rights and peace movements; and with political forces (parties, fronts) who recognize the autonomy of social forces (Waterman 1993: 267). For instance, South Africa's COSATU was able to play an important role in the anti-apartheid movement by forging alliances with other human rights movements. Its struggle to end racist industrial relations and discrimination against black workers with respect to wages and working conditions led not only to the organization of black workers, but to the creation of new forms of worker organization, founded on a non-racial class basis, stressing democratic grassroots practices, and merging shop-floor and broader political commitments (Adler 1996: 126; Adler and Webster 1999:137).

Labour unions have developed links with other civil society organizations and social movements, and these links have served to highlight different forms of work as, for instance, those associated with community life and with aspects of social reproduction not traditionally included within the factory-oriented perspective (Ramalho 1999: 172). Unions in Brazil and South Africa established alliances with working-class women involved in a variety of neighbourhood organizations (Seidman 1994: ch. 5; Moody 1997a: 208–9). In South Africa the organization of domestic service was realized through 'the growth and strength of community organizations, access to and support from the union' (Chhachhi and Pittin 1999: 74). The strategy of alliances has helped to overcome divisions between private and the public work, factory and household work, and wage work and domestic labour. These experiences have provided fertile ground for links between a gender-specific consciousness and social/class consciousness.

As some analysts have pointed out, social movement unionism in South Africa and Brazil developed a solid class outlook. 'Instead of seeing the new neighborhood or women's organizations as non-class new social movements, the CUT and the COSATU saw them as part of a broader, class-based movement' (Seidman 1994; Moody 1997a: 210). For these new movements of factory and neighbourhood were rooted in the same process of industrialization, urbanization, and class formation particular to several Third World countries in the past two or three decades.

Social movement unionism forged alliances not only with other social movements but also with other classes and with 'non-unionized or non-union working classes or categories such as workers in the petty-commodity sector, home workers, peasants, housewives etc.' (Waterman 1993: 267). It uses 'the strongest of society's oppressed and exploited, generally organized workers, to mobilize those who are less able to sustain self-mobilization: the poor, the unemployed, the casualized workers, the neighborhood organizations' (Moody 1997b: 59). For example the KMW established relations with peasants, fisher folk and the urban poor, and joined with different sectoral organizations to fight for demands that would benefit the entire working people of the Philippines. Hence it has extended the scope of trade unionism beyond mere relations in the workplace and has extended its struggle to encompass the whole of the national political economy and its internal social relations.

Internal democracy

Democratization is a unifying theme for social movement unionism. Rejecting hierarchical, authoritarian and technocratic working methods and relations, social movement unionism encourages direct horizontal relations in every realm of life. To achieve this larger goal, it seeks, first, to realize democracy within the union.

Union democracy is realized through forums of discussion in which direct participation can be realized, and the development of a cadre of shop stewards integrally linked into the constitutional and decision-making structure of the unions. Shop stewards are directly elected by floor workers by means of secret ballot, and are subject to recall. In 1994 there were 25,000 shop stewards in the COSATU. By 1998 there were only two full-time officials, the general secretary and deputy general secretary. Shop stewards are subject to regular elections, and work side by side with workers in their constituency. Moreover, in distinction from its European counterparts, stewards are involved in issues reaching beyond the shop floor (Maller 1994; COSATU 1998; Adler and Webster 1999: 137).

South Africa's labour movement had, for a long time, been committed to militant abstentionism from participation in state and management structures. In the late 1980s, it shifted its policy and sought to resist neoliberal regulations through participation in the process of economic restructuring. COSATU was the primary force behind the creation of a National Economic Forum to address issues of raising productivity, creating employment, reviving investment and improving trade performance. The union was influential in getting the Council to pass a new labour law granting the same rights of organization to all workers, including farm labourers, domestic servants, and civil servants. It also participated in negotiating forums related to education, housing, and local government policy (Adler 1996:134–5; COSATU 1998).

COSATU initially was successful in retaining its social movement character while participating in state and management structures (Maller 1994: 242–3). Ultimately, however, COSATU was put under increasing pressure to subordinate its interests to the goals of national development. At the same time, the participation of some of its leaders in electoral politics and their adoption of a more conservative and corporatist outlook widened the gap between the leadership and the base (Adler and Webster 1999: 139, 144).

But the tradition of direct participatory democracy among rank and file has asserted itself. COSATU's announcement that if the government fails to realize industrial democracy it will resort to ongoing mass action, shows that the union has not lost its capacity to act independently, and in 1996 and 1997 COSATU once again staged successful general strikes (Moody 1997a: 211–12). However, the threat of corporatism to social movement unionism remains, both in South Africa and elsewhere.

Conclusion: what kind of internationalism?

Defining the site of power and resistance is itself subject to power relations. In their struggle with the working class, capitalist classes have used globalization discourse as an ideological tool to obscure the continuing importance of the national site wherein working class is better organized and from where it draws its strength.

Contrary to conventional accounts of globalization, national economies are still important and 'global' capital is still embedded in the national site. A highly internationalized world economy rather than a globalized one is a more appropriate term to define the current

state of world capitalist economy. Class relations and struggles continue to be realized mainly in the internal/national site, and so-called 'global capital' is nothing but the more internationalized fraction of capital in each social formation. By virtue of its embeddedness in national class relations, even the internationalized fraction of capital still needs the national state to regulate the accumulation regime and to facilitate the formation of hegemonic projects. Class power is still condensed within the state and states are still the main targets of class politics.

Despite arguments underlying the necessity to form a global unionism, the real challenge to working-class movements comes from the need to forge an alternative form of unionism. Social movement unionism can provide the working-class with the form of organization it needs in the national site. This type of unionism, based on internal democracy, shop-floor activism, coalitions with the other social movements, and the organization of the non-organized workers, defines the national site as its domain of organization and the national state as the main target of its struggle. Its emphasis on the priority of the national site in class struggle does not imply a kind of nationalism in which class alliance with national bourgeoisie can be at issue. Working class organizations need to be national *in form*; but their broader perspective must not be limited by any kind of nationalism and class compromise.

As neither production nor capital is, to a large extent, globalized in ways that would require a global unionism, organization and struggle in the national site remains primordial. However, insofar as it is not emphasized at the expense of the national site there can be cases where truly global (trans-border) working-class actions offer feasible opportunities for resistance, especially in dealing with multinational corporations or in cases where production processes are organized through global chains. Social movement unionism, instead of totally denying the international and local levels, accepts that the international and local levels are embedded in the national site and that this latter is the articulating element. Hence it accepts the need to combine national and international struggle.

So what kind of working-class internationalism is needed in this current phase of capitalism? An internationalism in the sense of solidarity among national working-class movements seems to be more appropriate. 'International advocacy networks'²² are useful vehicles for exchanging information and analysis and mobilizing acts of solidarity and support. The particular working-class organizations and movements in different national sites can give information and inspiration

to each other. Meanwhile strategic international coordination is dependent on the strength of national movements. Hence the key to international solidarity is not globally organized institutions but 'internationalizing the struggle, carrying on the fight in each country' (Gindin 1998: 202). A strategy against capitalism must focus on the radical democratization of the state through 'non-reformist reforms' such as shortening working hours for an equitable distribution of work with a guaranteed social income (Gorz 1999); democratic control of investment through job development and economic planning boards (Panitch 2001: 381); democratic control of production processes, socialization of such things as education, health care, child care, and transportation (Yates 2001); and the cancellation of third world debts. An effective internationalism can only be based on solid worker organizations in national sites raising similar anti-capitalist demands.

Notes

- 1 In using the term 'globalization orthodoxy', I refer to generally accepted themes and not to specific theoretical currents.
- 2 For the elaboration of the difference between international and transnational, see Chapter 1, this volume.
- 3 See also O'Brien (2001), Ramsay (1997), Radice (2000: 736).
- 4 See, for example, Held (1998) and Waterman (1998a).
- 5 See, for instance, Southall (1988) and Gereffi (1995).
- 6 For similar arguments, see, also, Sklair (1997), and Overbeek (2000). For a more moderate interpretation, see Embong (2000).
- 7 I use the term 'national state' instead of nation-state. According to Jessop, regardless of the nature of their corresponding form of nationhood (ethnic, civic, cultural/civilizational), modern states can all be described as national states in the sense of their being formally sovereign territorial states presiding over 'national' territories (1999a: 4).
- 8 Yaghmaian (1998: 254). For another view that argues that theories of regulation have to pay more attention to 'scales beyond those of the mosaic of nation-states', see Dunford (2000).
- 9 If the EU is treated as a home region, the degree of concentration is similar to other countries. This might be considered evidence of regionalization, rather than globalization.
- 10 The development of this share is as follows: in 1970 4.5 per cent, in 1982 5.7 per cent, in 1988 6.6 per cent, and in 1990 6.8 per cent (Hirst and Thompson 1999: 45).
- 11 See Doremus *et al.* (1999) and Berger and Dore (1996).
- 12 The difficulty of moving large-scale and long-term investments is due to the specific composition of productive capital (factories and machinery, mines, docks, offices, etc.), the necessity of industrial complexes, initial start-up costs and the costs of learning over time about a particular environment.

- Firms do not usually move plants but build or buy new facilities and close old ones; when they do shift the location of plants, they prefer doing it gradually (Harman 1996: 7; Wade 1996: 80; and Moody 1997a: 79).
- 13 For the minor impact on unemployment of moving capital and importing from low wage countries, see Harman (1996: 8), Gordon (1988: 40), and Hirst and Thompson (1999: 41).
 - 14 See, for instance, Weiss (1997 and 1999) and Wade (1990).
 - 15 For a critique of this strategy, see Panitch (1996: 103–8) and Radice (2000).
 - 16 Most recently Panitch (1996; 2000) and Jessop (1999b) have drawn on the legacy of Poulantzas. Panitch adopts Poulantzas' arguments concerning the continuing significance of the national site and endeavours to develop Poulantzas' theory of imperialism. Jessop is somewhat more critical of Poulantzas, rejecting his emphasis on the primacy of the national site.
 - 17 On the relative autonomy of the state, see Güralp (1987), and for the concepts of 'accumulation strategies' and 'hegemonic projects', see Jessop (1990: 181, 198–9, 207–8).
 - 18 For similar arguments, see also Wood (1998b; 1999), Panitch (2001) and Kiely (2000).
 - 19 On the contrary, there have been, and can still be, cases where such labour actions are really influential (for a discussion, see Breitenfellner 1997).
 - 20 See, for South Africa, Waterman (1993), and Seidman (1994); for the Philippines, Scipes (1992); for Brazil, Seidman (1994); for Canada, Gindin (1998); for the US, Moody (1997a) and Johnston (1994). My analysis of social movement unionism endeavours to delineate its general traits but lacks specific analysis of the particular socio-historical formations from within which these movements emerged. Although this presents a problem for understanding them, general characteristics of social movement unionism can offer some important insights for our problematic here.
 - 21 This is not always given sufficient emphasis in discussions of democratization. For example, Cheru (1996) focuses attention on new social movements in the democratization process, but completely neglects the role of labour movements.
 - 22 See Chapter 1, this volume.

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