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## CHAPTER TWO

# IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH SUBJECT: THE 'MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS' AS CYCLE OF CONTENTION

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes contemporary protest against globalisation and war as a cycle of contention that has included three phases: the alternative globalisation movement, the anti-war movement, and the social forum movement. The latter two, in particular, have a great degree of overlap in time, in participants, and in the ideas they promote. They are also both strongly rooted, organisationally and ideationally, in the preceding movement. Globalisation and its alternatives therefore form a part of the political context required in order to understand the later phases of the cycle, which are detailed from the perspective of their local instantiations in Part III of the thesis.

The alternative globalisation movement was most publicly visible in a series of globally interconnected protests against international financial and political institutions from mid-1999 until late-2001. The diversity of participants, in terms of their economic and social backgrounds, their political ambitions and their modes of action resulted in the 'anti-globalisation movement' being re-described from a variety of perspectives. Latterly, use of the label 'movement of movements' signals the importance that many participants place on the interconnections of social movements across geographical boundaries and issue-areas. The movements within current cycle of contention do not lend themselves to neat boundary-drawing and thereby throw down a conceptual challenge to social movement researchers more accustomed to the investigation of dynamics within discrete social movements. To clarify the conception of movements and cycles utilised in this thesis it is first necessary to return to the theoretical literature around new social movements, briefly foreshadowed in chapter one. This discussion will also add further justification to the orientational frames approach utilised in the rest of this thesis and offer some broad political context relevant to the developing 'movement of movements'. It will then be possible to detail the early development of alternative globalisation movements and trace continuities from that phase through the anti-war and social forum movements.

## 2. OLD AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

### ***New Social Movements and the Post-X Society***

In an extensive review of new social movement theories, Steven Buechler usefully highlights a number of prevalent themes. Such theories utilise a model of contemporary society which provides the structural context for understanding collective action. Theorists use labels such as ‘post-industrial’ and ‘post-material’ and ‘postmodern’ to imply a radical break from industrial capitalism. Others more cautiously refer to ‘advanced’, ‘accelerated’ or ‘late’ capitalism. Still others may use a term that sums up what appears to be the fundamental feature of the new society, such as the ‘network’, ‘programmed’ or ‘information’ society. Either way, collective action is understood as a response to large scale social dynamics and the study of social movements is thereby elevated as an examination of the signifiers of sweeping social changes.<sup>145</sup> The claimed novelty of the post-1960 social movements hinges on a distinction from the ‘old social movements’ of labour against capital, understood in Marxian terms. Thus, a new broader social base encompassing the middle classes was highlighted, with the creation of new collective identities around ethnicity, religion and lifestyle as particularly distinctive. Culture is distinguished from either politics or economics as the field of struggle and symbolic forms of action thus become more prevalent. A preference for decentralised, egalitarian, participatory organisational forms was considered to mark the importance of the moral message of movements that sought to embody their social goals for the future in their present action. Finally, such movements were considered to have a new set of values and organisational methods that made them less susceptible to traditional forms of cooptation and social control since material interests became less important.<sup>146</sup> The novelty claim has been widely disputed and, in any case, the ‘new’ label could only ever be temporary.<sup>147</sup> Certainly, the forms of organisation highlighted by these theories are ones that had long been associated with some forms of anarchism.<sup>148</sup> However, such theories clearly offer some useful insight, given the importance of social, political and cultural context in the hermeneutic methodology

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<sup>145</sup> See especially, Touraine, A., 1988, *Return of the Actor. Social Theory in the Postindustrial Society*, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis), esp. ch. 1.

<sup>146</sup> Buechler, S.M., 2000, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism. The Political Economy and cultural Construction of Social Activism*, (OUP, Oxford), pp. 45-8.

<sup>147</sup> Pichardo, N.A., 1997, “New Social Movements: A Critical Review” in *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, pp. 411-430; Melucci, A., 1995, “The New Social Movements Revisited: Reflections on a Sociological Misunderstanding” in Maheu, L., ed., *Social Movements and Social Class*, pp. 107-119.

<sup>148</sup> These will be briefly described in chapter four.

described in chapter one. In the following paragraphs, I select some of the most relevant details from the influential works of Habermas, Touraine and Melucci.

Habermas brings the examination of communicative contexts to the fore of social theory generally, and social movement theory in particular. Several interweaving threads are required to picture the relationship between an advanced form of capitalism and the potential for new forms of social movements. First, the logic of capitalist accumulation has created strong oligopolistic tendencies in the economy, aided by massive investments in mass marketing.<sup>149</sup> The rise of the multinational corporation and the multinational brand are clear indicators of this trend. Second, Habermas reinterpreted Weber's work on rationalisation and bureaucratisation as colonisation of the 'lifeworld' of everyday experience. Habermas uses the concept of the *lebenswelt* to refer to "a totality of meaning relations and referential connections with a zero point in the coordinate system shaped by historical time, social space and semantic field."<sup>150</sup> In other words the *lebenswelt* is a context specific cultural construct that allows individuals to understand the society in which they find themselves. This construct arises out of, or is reproduced by, communicative interaction between individuals and the concept is used to contrast informal, everyday lived experience from the systems of market and administration.<sup>151</sup> Theoretical similitude between the *lebenswelt* and the understanding of frames presented within this thesis suggests that the examination of frames may offer substantial insight into the 'reality' of the *lebenswelt* for actors in the contemporary social context. Colonisation proceeds from both the state and the economy. The state has tended to expand its control over the individual within the private domain, imposing in matters of, for example, health, education, sexual relations, and old age, in which it defines categories and claims expertise. These interventions increase dependency and surveillance of the individual and thus reduce autonomy. The economy increasingly impinges on the *lebenswelt* through the commodification of culture and its use of public space for the promotion of brands and product.<sup>152</sup> The latter processes fit closely with the substantive critique of the corporation presented in Klein's iconic *No Logo*.<sup>153</sup> The third important claim is that pervasive rationalisation has left the state little grounds for legitimacy. Habermas

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<sup>149</sup> Habermas, J., 1973, "What Does a Crisis Mean Today? Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism" in *Social Research* 40, pp. 645-9.

<sup>150</sup> Habermas, 1985, cited in Outhwaite, W., ed., 1996 *The Habermas Reader* (Polity, Cambridge), p. 358.

<sup>151</sup> Outhwaite, W., ed., 1996, *The Habermas Reader*, (Polity, Cambridge), p. 369.

<sup>152</sup> White, S.K., 1988, *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas. Reason, Justice and Morality*, (CUP, Cambridge), pp. 109-13.

<sup>153</sup> Klein, N., 2000, *No Logo. No Space, No Jobs, No Choice*, (Flamingo, London).

describes the state's output as administrative decision-making and the technical expertise for implementation. This requires an input of "mass loyalty that is as unspecific as possible" since there is little substantive normative content with which citizens may identify.<sup>154</sup> Increasing state involvement in the *lebenswelt* produces an increasing need for legitimacy. Furthermore, legitimacy is dependent on cultural norms and meaning: a state is perceived to be legitimate only through the communicative action of its subjects defining it as conforming to a widely accepted set of norms. As the state rationally justifies its increasing intervention, it transforms cultural, moral or political values into technical debate, but by doing so it risks a crisis of legitimacy.

Bringing these threads together provides a context of social change that explains a shift in the focus of social movement activity as legitimation crises begets 'motivational crisis'. As Giddens explains: "the motivational commitment of the mass of the population to the normative order of advanced capitalism is tenuous anyway, as the old moral values are stripped away. Technocratic legitimation provides little in the way of meaningful moral commitment ... the threat of widespread anomie, Habermas says, is endemic in late capitalism."<sup>155</sup> Because class conflict has been diffused through compromises made to the individual as client of the welfare state and as private consumer, conflict is displaced into other areas of life. And, given that Habermas' analysis says that the sources of conflict become encroachment of the sub-systems of economy and state onto the *lebenswelt* we can expect that it is here, in the realm of communicative creation of culture, where contention will be played out. Social movements emerge wherein, "the question is not one of compensations that the welfare state can provide. Rather, the question is how to defend or reinstate endangered life styles, or how to put reformed life styles into practice."<sup>156</sup>

Touraine's work offers some additional understanding of this form of conflict. Because both political and economic institutions present their own ability to manage and intervene in societal development, "society appears, at all its functional levels, as the product of an action exercised by the society itself, and not as the outcome of natural laws or cultural specificities."<sup>157</sup> Actors in the 'programmed society' experience massively increased flows of information and the social production of not just means, but also the 'objectives of social life'. The experience of a reproduced role in such a society, a position not of one's own choosing, becomes an injustice requiring

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<sup>154</sup> Habermas, "What Does a Crisis Mean Today?...", p. 655.

<sup>155</sup> Giddens, A., 1977, "Review Essay: Habermas' Social and Political Theory" in *American Journal of Sociology* 83(1), pp. 209-10.

<sup>156</sup> Habermas, J., 1981, "New Social Movements" in *Telos* 49, p. 33.

<sup>157</sup> Touraine, *Return of the Actor...*, p. 104.

emancipation.<sup>158</sup> In Touraine's work, like Habermas', we see the struggle over culture as one of the main characteristics of the social movement.<sup>159</sup> The stakes for social movements are considered to be higher than the old social movements' material goals, including the fundamental relations of the contemporary societal type. The 'totality' (or the ideology) of a social movement is inextricably linked with its self-conceived identity, and its identification of its opponents.<sup>160</sup> Touraine's work thus adds a sensitivity to the interlocking belief structures present within social movements.

Referring to 'complex society' (indicating structuration) and the 'information society' (indicating the core resource), Melucci similarly suggests that new forms of inequality arise from the increased potential for the *individual* to choose their own identity. Higher levels of education and the extension of citizenship enhance this potential; both result from the compromises that Habermas considers as a consequence of the attempt to contain class conflict.<sup>161</sup> Melucci sees culture, conceived in terms similar to the *lebenswelt*, as the field in which the highest forms of social conflict take place. While struggle is possible at a range of 'system levels' (including the economy and the polity) the struggle within interactive and communicative systems questions the basic requirements of social life. The status quo is dependent on a relatively stable transmission of beliefs and values in the cultural sphere.<sup>162</sup> The primary activity of new social movements is, therefore, challenge to dominant cultural codes rather than struggle over material resources. Importantly, this conception raises the status of social movement activities taking place in less public forums. Submerged (or latent) networks of resistance constantly recreate cultural codes. These only become obvious, however, at a certain stage of conflict where activities become publicly visible.<sup>163</sup> This insight challenges us to look beyond the public face of social movements, and in doing so, enables us to begin to understand where the claims that social movements make come from. Where social movements present apparently novel interpretative frames, these are never created entirely anew but take in many elements of the surrounding

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<sup>158</sup> Touraine, *Return of the Actor...*, p. 106.

<sup>159</sup> Touraine, A., 1985, "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements" in *Social Research* 52, pp. 751-7.

<sup>160</sup> Touraine, A., 1981, *The Voice and the Eye. An Analysis of Social Movements*, (CUP, Cambridge), pp. 77-82.

<sup>161</sup> Melucci, A., 1996, *Challenging Codes. Collective Action in the Information Age*, (CUP, Cambridge), pp. 89-93.

<sup>162</sup> Melucci, *Challenging Codes...*, p. 27.

<sup>163</sup> Melucci, A., "The New Social Movements Revisited...", p. 113.

political culture. The latter is itself, in part, dependent on the historical claims of previous social movements.<sup>164</sup>

There are three clarifications of this material required before explaining its utility for the present study. First, because such work highlights the novel features of social movements oriented to culture it creates an impression of a radical break from the past. Yet it is empirically demonstrable that the struggle over material resources, especially through trade union movements, continues. Indeed, the presence of large trade unions at the demonstrations against international financial institutions, and among the leadership of both the anti-war and social forum movements, demonstrates their continuing relevance. It will become clear that “the radical division between the old and the new social movements, as it was perceived in the 1970s, appears less evident in times of globalization.”<sup>165</sup> Second, the distinctions between political, economic and cultural fields of action should not be oversimplified. The promotion of solidarity by socialists, for instance, may often be justified in the language of collective economic and political strength, but nevertheless has a strong cultural component. Alternatively, the promotion of gay pride through *mardi gras* is an obvious candidate for an identity-focused, cultural conflict. However, contesting discrimination almost always relates to treatment in the workplace and by the state as well. Within the current cycle of contention, as I shall explain shortly, the distinctions between these fields of action is even more difficult to maintain. Third, claims describing ‘new social movements’ are often highly euro-centric. To the extent that the alternative globalisation movement has brought movements of the global north together with those of the global south, it has also highlighted significant differences in their claims and their social contexts. The carnivaleque anti-roads protests of Reclaim the Streets are clearly very different in nature to the physical occupation of uncultivated land by Brazil’s *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST, the Landless Workers’ Movement).<sup>166</sup> Yet both groups are connected within the current cycle of contention through, for example, their participation in People’s Global Action (PGA).

Despite these difficulties, there are two principal ways in which the new social movement literature is valuable to the current project. First, it highlights the

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<sup>164</sup> Tarrow, S., 1992, “Mentalities, Political Cultures and Collective Action Frames. Constructing Meanings through Action” in Morris & Mueller, ed., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (Yale University Press, New Haven), pp. 174-202.

<sup>165</sup> Vargas, V., 2003, “Feminism, Globalization and the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement” in *Cultural Studies* 17(6), p. 908.

<sup>166</sup> Compare, for instance, Jordan, J., 1998, “The Art of Necessity: The Subversive Imagination of Anti-Road Protest and Reclaim the Streets” in McKay, ed., *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain*, pp. 129-152, with Petras, J., 1999, *The Left Strikes Back. Class Conflict in Latin America in the Age of Neoliberalism*, (Westview Press, Colorado), pp. 19-21.

importance of the structural context conceived at the broadest possible level. The notion of 'political opportunity structures' has been operationalised in a number of ways, but always seeking the particular features of either a national polity (for instance, asking whether it is authoritarian or democratic) or of more immediate political concerns (for instance, if there is a forthcoming election).<sup>167</sup> New social movements go beyond the national-level and are therefore highly relevant for the transnational nature of the current cycle. In the northern context it is certainly the case that non-material concerns have become of increased import to social movement organisations; in particular, the students' movements, women's movements, ethnic identity-based movements and environmental movements that are the major empirical subjects of new social movement theory. It is true that the social base has changed, and that increasing affluence appears to have increased the scope for non-material contention.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, when we take globalisation itself as an important feature of the context of social movement activity, we can understand why it is that many of the social movement activities within the alternative globalisation movement are targeted at ostensibly non-state actors. All theories of globalisation admit some level of power-shift from the nation-state to higher level structures; activists' perceptions of this process makes sense of the international and transnational character of their targets. The second utility of new social movement theory is that by raising the status of cultural challenge it increases the researcher's sensitivity to the variety of beliefs, values and practices of which a movement may be comprised. It becomes obvious that we cannot simply assume that a social movement acts on a rational calculation of the best way to achieve a different distributive outcome from the political-economic arena. To be sure, many of the claims heard within the movement of movements are distributive in nature, but often in an apparently altruistic sense. It is difficult to make sense of such aims without recognising that values are promoted for other than instrumental reasons. Values such as power equality may be promoted because it is only through the universalisation of such values that positive outcomes are expected. The promotion of values can therefore become an end in itself. To the extent that this is true, such social movements are indeed challenging cultural codes that are perceived to be a dominant value-set in wider society. It is the creation of alternative values that Melucci describes

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<sup>167</sup> One notable recent exception examines the regional political opportunity structures created by the EU: Hellferich, B. & Kolb, F., 2001, "Multilevel Action Coordination in European Contentious Politics: The Case of the European Women's Lobby" in Imig, D. & Tarrow, S., eds., *Contentious Europeans. Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity*, pp. 143-161.

<sup>168</sup> Inglehart, R., 1977, *The Silent Revolution. Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton); Inglehart, R., 1990, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton).

as the process of collective identity construction understood as taking place within submerged networks; collective identity therefore deserves some further consideration.

### ***Collective Identity and Collective Action***

The most frequently discussed element of Melucci's work is his description of collective identity. He suggests that analysis of social movements must establish:

“the capacity of the actor to (a) maintain a unity and a consistency that enable him to compare expectations and rewards at different times; (b) relate his deprivation to an identifiable agent of the environment toward which the protest or mobilization can be directed; and (c) can recognize the expected benefit as not only desirable but due.”<sup>169</sup>

This defines the function of the concept of collective identity, which is understood as a process involving the “construction of an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which [collective] action takes place.”<sup>170</sup> Importantly, the process of construction is never finalised. The first of Melucci's questions is most obviously grounded in the psychological conception of identity which must be supposed as the basis of this view: the ability of the individual to recognise themselves in the future and in the past is precisely what identity refers to.<sup>171</sup> The second question, referring to the definition of an opposition, also has an obvious identity component: the definition of the self implicitly includes the definition of the other. However, there is no necessary reason for the individual or collective to define the other antagonistically. An oppositional collective identity, or oppositional consciousness, therefore, implies the third question, that of injustice.<sup>172</sup> In addition, collective identity contains an empowering understanding of one's capacity to change that injustice. The conception of the self as in some sense a consistent being through time is therefore necessary, but not sufficient, for the creation of a belief in the power of one's agency and a desire for change.<sup>173</sup>

There is clearly a large degree of conceptual overlap between interpretive frames and collective identity. Some of the same insights have appeared from both bodies of literature and Snow and McAdam claim, almost tautologically, that, “framing processes

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<sup>169</sup> Melucci, 1988, “Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements” in Klandermans, Kriesi & Tarrow, *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Research Across Cultures*, pp. 341-42.

<sup>170</sup> Melucci, “Getting Involved...”, p. 342.

<sup>171</sup> Baron & Byrne, 2003, *Social Psychology*, (Allyn & Bacon, Boston), pp. 164-5.

<sup>172</sup> Morris, A.D., 1992, “Political Consciousness and Collective Action” in Morris & Mueller, *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, pp. 351-373.

<sup>173</sup> Gamson, W.A., 1992, *Talking Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), ch. 4.

that occur within the context of social movements constitute perhaps the most important mechanism facilitating identity construction processes, largely because identity constructions are an inherent feature of framing activities.”<sup>174</sup> At the individual level, the term ‘social identity’ is used to refer to elements of the individual’s self-understanding that are inherited from their membership of numerous groups that may have a more or less open character. Individuals therefore continually negotiate among multiple self-identities. Additionally, group membership may lead to different understandings for different individuals.<sup>175</sup> While criticising the notion of ‘collective identity’ for being too vague to be operationalisable, Klandermans and de Weerd explain that “collective identity is a collective belief; social identity, an individual belief.”<sup>176</sup> As such, collective identity operates on the same level of analysis as the collective action frame described in chapter one: it refers to sets of beliefs that all members of a group appear to share, however temporarily that is defined. Furthermore, it has an analogous relationship to the individuals’ identity as do collective action frames to schemata. Since I have already highlighted philosophical and methodological problems with the identification of such constructs at the collective level, there is no need to rehearse them here. Furthermore, as the chapters in parts two and three of this thesis make clear, activists are quite capable of working together, albeit temporarily, even where a shared identity is difficult to perceive. This notion supports McDonald’s description of a shift from solidarity to ‘fluidarity’.<sup>177</sup> For the present purposes it is enough to use the concept of collective identity to offer additional sensitivity to our understanding of activists’ belief structures. Because analyses often lack a focus on understanding of the self, interpretive frames may appear as purely cognitive and instrumental constructions. The identity component of the frame demonstrates that there is more at stake in belief structures than either rational argumentation or the persuasion of others to the cause. Individuals are attached to particular sets of beliefs because they offer an understanding of their past actions and future plans; they are, therefore, more difficult to change than the purely strategic view of frames implies. Empirical investigations into individuals’ experience of membership of social

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<sup>174</sup> Snow, D.A. & McAdam, D., 2000, “Identity Work Processes in the Context of Social Movements: Clarifying the Identity/Movement Nexus” in Stryker Owens, & White, *Self, Identity and Social Movements*, p. 53.

<sup>175</sup> Drury, J. & Reicher, S., 2005, “Explaining Enduring Empowerment: A Comparative Study of Collective Action and Psychological Outcomes” in *European Journal of Social Psychology* 35, pp. 35-58.

<sup>176</sup> Klandermans, B., & de Weerd, M., 2000, “Group Identification and Political Protest” in Stryker Owens, & White, *Self, Identity and Social Movements*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>177</sup> McDonald, K., 2002, “From Solidarity to Fluidarity: Social Movements Beyond ‘Collective Identity’ - The Case of Globalization Conflicts” in *Social Movement Studies* 1(2), pp. 109-128.

movement groups suggests the importance they attach to their group activities, which provide meaning and purpose to their life projects.<sup>178</sup>

### ***The Meluccian Challenge and the Cycle of Contention***

Melucci's focus on collective identity as a process taking place within submerged networks adds one further element of value for the present study. More than most theorists, Melucci is sensitive to the identification of social movements as a process dependent on the worldview of the observer; that what we call a social movement "in reality embodies a whole range of social processes, actors and forms of action. The problem, for politics as well as theory, is to understand how and why these different processes hold together."<sup>179</sup> This begins from the "discovery that identical things can be given different names, and that each name conveys a different meaning ... [this] ambivalence encourages us to acknowledge different points of view."<sup>180</sup> When the researcher defines a social movement as an object of study they necessarily reify what is, in fact, a set of events and processes that may have competing interpretations. Reification gives the aggregation of individual and collective behaviours an undeserved "ontological weight and qualitative homogeneity; collective reality, as it were, exists as a unified thing."<sup>181</sup> As a result, "the *collective dimension* of social behaviour is taken as a given, as a datum obvious enough to require no further analysis."<sup>182</sup> In sum, reification hides the capacity for a group of individuals to act collectively which, for Melucci, should be the central problematic of social movement research.

It should be noted that reification is quite pervasive in social movement research, appearing in two forms. The first, which is associated more often with US scholarship, is to treat the social movement as a real rather than analytical category with natural boundaries in time and space. It takes its place in reductive theories as if such theories could be applied to all social movements, implying a commonality of form that exists independently of analysis. The 'social movement' concept exhibits, however, the classic signs of being essentially contested. There is no set of its distinctive features that may satisfyingly be described as necessary and sufficient to qualify some phenomenon to the name social movement. The second form of reification is more often found in European scholarship and is to perceive the social movement as an historical actor, subject to

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<sup>178</sup> Della Porta, D. & Diani, M., 1999, *Social Movements. An Introduction*, (Blackwell, Oxford), pp. 83-5.

<sup>179</sup> Melucci, "The New Social Movements Revisited..." , p. 111.

<sup>180</sup> Melucci, A., 1989, *Nomads of the Present. Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, (Century Hutchinson, Victoria), pp. 13-4.

<sup>181</sup> Melucci, *Challenging Codes...*, p. 15.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

social forces and sometimes responsible for historical change. This problem may be perceived in, for instance, Eyerman and Jamison's cognitive approach to social movements. Their concept of 'cognitive praxis' is not dissimilar to the 'orientational frame' utilised in this thesis since it stresses the formation of action-oriented ideas in social movements. They are certainly sensitive both to the interplay of multiple social movements and the internal differentiation that problematized the drawing of boundaries around the phenomenon being studied.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, despite criticising the reification inherent in others' theories they conceptualise social movements as 'cognitive actors'. Their historical approach seeks to:

“limit the number of social movements to those especially ‘significant’ movements which redefine history, which carry the historical ‘projects’ that have normally been attributed to social classes. A movement conceptualizes fundamental contradictions or tensions in society ... Not until the theme has been articulated, not until the tensions have been formulated in a new conceptual space can a social movement come into being”<sup>184</sup>

Yet the ascription of agency to a collective can only be an analytical shorthand for a myriad of processes instituted by the (constrained) actions of individuals constraining or enabling individual agency.<sup>185</sup> The authors consequently place the social movement back into a generalised explanatory schema, arguing that “much if not all new knowledge emanates from the cognitive praxis of social movements, that new ideas both in and out of science are the often unconscious results of new knowledge interests of social movements.”<sup>186</sup> Thus the two forms of reification can both lead to the same problematic location of the social movement in a generalised causal process that obscures the features of particular social movements.

What I refer to as the 'Meluccian challenge' is therefore to analyse social movements without starting from an assumption of unity. Answering the challenge opens analysis up to understanding how that unity is constructed within social movement activities. This is a particularly important ambition with respect to the present research subject because the 'movement of movements' is highly internally differentiated. Taking the orientational frame as a unit of analysis is helpful in this regard, since we begin with individuals' interpretations of their action and the world on which they are acting, seeking to abstract to a level at which some generalised description is possible. The practical difficulty for the researcher is to define a research

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<sup>183</sup> Eyerman, R. & Jamison, A., 1991, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, (Polity, Cambridge), p. 57.

<sup>184</sup> Eyerman & Jamison, *Social Movements...*, pp. 55-6.

<sup>185</sup> Sztompka, P., 1993, *The Sociology of Social Change*, (Blackwell, Oxford), p. 22.

<sup>186</sup> Eyerman & Jamison, *Social Movements...*, pp. 59.

subject from which to begin analysis. Without setting boundaries practical research decisions regarding, for instance, which groups to participate in, or which individuals to interview, become problematic. This study starts from a loosely defined cycle of contention, described below. Answering the Meluccian challenge reaffirms the value of the hermeneutic approach, since we begin with a temporary understanding of the ‘whole’, which will be modified in connection with subsequent analysis of the ‘parts’.

The notion of cycles of contention (also referred to as ‘cycles of protest’) comes from historical social movement research that tends to take a long-term view, and a quantitative mode of analysis.<sup>187</sup> Tarrow describes the cycle as a measurable period of increase and decline, in the total activity apparent in the ‘social movement sector’ (i.e. all participants active in social protest within a society at any given time).<sup>188</sup> The body of theory attached to cycles of protest was developed by analogy with economic trends, and tends to massive generalisations. For instance, Tarrow argues that,

“as at the peak of a business cycle people will continue to invest and to form new companies, even as demand declines, so at some stage in a protest cycle movement organisations continue to form as participation declines and more movement organisations are competing for the loyalty of a few supporters. They do this by using ever more radical forms of collective action. The result is violence, which leads many people to desert movement activity and, hence, to the close of the cycle.”<sup>189</sup>

Similar broad claims are made with relation to interpretive frames and repertoires of contention, the creation of which (by ‘early riser’ organisations) may be understood as aiding uptake in a new cycle.<sup>190</sup> Neither the contemporary focus, nor the ethnographic methodology of this thesis is suited to confirmation or denial of such generalisations. I avoid the teleological supposition that cycles always take the same route through violence and dissipation to disappearance.<sup>191</sup> Rather, I borrow the terminology simply to highlight the fact that since the mid-1990s there has been a perceptible rise in certain forms of protest activity, oriented to a particular range of targets. This ‘weak’ notion of the cycle of contention directs analysis in two promising ways. First, it points to the fact that there are multiple, interacting social movements operating

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<sup>187</sup> Tilly, C., Tilly, L. & Tilly, R., 1975, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930*, (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts), ch 1.

<sup>188</sup> Tarrow, S., 1989, *Democracy and Disorder. Protest and Politics in Italy*, (OUP, Oxford).

<sup>189</sup> Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder...*, p. 27.

<sup>190</sup> Snow, D.A. & Benford, R.D., 1992, “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest” in Morris & Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory...*, 133-155; Tarrow, S., 1998, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), pp. 145-6.

<sup>191</sup> Tarrow’s later work, in any case, shows much less certainty about the nature of the decline of protest cycles; Tarrow, *Power in Movement...*, p. 160.

simultaneously and on overlapping fields of action. The following section of this chapter will examine the alternative globalisation movement in this way. Second, it assumes that either endogenous or exogenous events and trends may substantively effect the nature of active social movements. Section four will offer a broad indication of important continuities and changes within the current cycle.

### 3. WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE GLOBALISATION MOVEMENT?

In the following paragraphs I will briefly describe globalisation as seen from the point of view of more critical scholars of political economy and international relations. These views serve both to introduce globalisation as a phenomenon, and indicate some issues on which the alternative globalisation movement has made claims.

At the most basic level, globalisation refers to a set of processes operating in economics, politics and culture that increase the extensity and intensity of connections across national boundaries.<sup>192</sup> Clearly, globalisation is uneven, economically concentrated in Western Europe, the USA and Japan and politically clustered around distinct regions. Globalisation is usually considered to be rooted in the increasing scale and scope of economic relationships, especially since the collapse of the USSR. Indeed, for Radice, “what is abundantly clear is that globalisation is intrinsically a capitalist process” and Scholte argues that “the pursuit of surplus accumulation has provided a principal and powerful spur to globalization.”<sup>193</sup> The rise of the multinational corporation is consistently linked with globalisation processes as finance flows across borders, both within and between corporations, increases. Large scale mergers and acquisitions reduce the number of corporations in a range of sectors including telecommunication, transport, electrical equipment, film, music and banking.<sup>194</sup> Fear of homogenisation results, as the same, commodified cultural products and services are made available everywhere and some mourn the loss of cultural diversity.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Held, D. & McGrew, A., 1999, *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics, Culture*, (Polity, Cambridge), p. 55.

<sup>193</sup> Radice, H., 1999, “Taking Globalisation Seriously” in *The Socialist Register. Global Capitalism Versus Democracy*, p. 13; Scholte, J.A., 1997, “Global Capitalism and the State” in *International Affairs* 73(3), pp. 433.

<sup>194</sup> Scholte, “Global Capitalism...”.

<sup>195</sup> Stevenson, N., 2000, “Globalization and the Cultural Political Economy” in Germanin, R.D., *Globalization and its Critics. Perspectives from Political Economy*, (MacMillan, Basingstoke).

Furthermore, for academic as well as activist critics, globalisation may be characterised as a neoliberal project related to increasing the sphere of free trade.<sup>196</sup> Since the mid-1970s neoliberalism has developed as the belief that markets are the dominant social form in capitalist society and that the practice of politics should be focused on making them work more efficiently. Neoliberalism therefore contains policy prescriptions of: a more open world economy; embedding financial orthodoxy (referring to controlled inflation, low taxation and balanced budgets) within the neoliberal state; a focus on *ex-post* regulation rather than intervention in order to provide a loose framework in which markets can operate; and “the privatisation of many public and social services and experimentation with mixed public-private productive and distributive goods... [it] involves the semi-fragmentation of government into cross-cutting and overlapping institutions and processes.”<sup>197</sup> The neoliberal project is based on the separation of politics from economics and “subjects people to social power relations of transnational scope even as its relentlessly individualist discourse implicitly denies the existence of structured dominance relations rooted in the capitalist organization of production (or anything else, for that matter).”<sup>198</sup> For this reason, it is often claimed that neoliberalism is justified on the simple basis that ‘there is no alternative’.<sup>199</sup>

For Rupert it is the reconnection of politics and economics that has allowed the emergence of transformative potential among the forces opposed to neoliberal globalisation.<sup>200</sup> Globalisation is seen as reducing the scope of democracy at the national level since it produces a strong downward pressure on welfare.<sup>201</sup> Simultaneously, globalisation has seen the increasing activity and authority of international legal and political bodies which has, for some, offered hopes for a liberal political order that may protect universal human rights.<sup>202</sup> Such processes have undoubtedly given NGOs increased access to international decision-making forums.<sup>203</sup> However, such hopes

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<sup>196</sup> Gill, S., 1995, “Globalisation, Market Civilisation and Disciplinary Neoliberalism” in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24(3), pp. 399-423.

<sup>197</sup> Cerny, P.G., 2004, “Mapping Varieties of Neoliberalism” a *Conference Paper for the International Studies Association Annual Convention*, Montreal, March 2004. Available at: [www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2004/cerny.pdf](http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2004/cerny.pdf); last accessed: 30/04/03.

<sup>198</sup> Rupert, M., 2000, *Ideologies of Globalization. Contending Visions of A New World Order*, (Routledge, London), pp. 48-9.

<sup>199</sup> Gill, S., “Globalisation, Market Civilisation...”, p. 402.

<sup>200</sup> Rupert, *Ideologies of Globalization...*, p. 67.

<sup>201</sup> Scholte, “Global Capitalism...”.

<sup>202</sup> Held, D., 2002, “Violence, Law, and Justice in a Global Age” in *Constellations* 9(1), p. 75.

<sup>203</sup> Clark, A.M. & Friedman, E.J., 1998, “The Sovereign Limits of Global Civil Society. A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women” in *World Politics* 51, pp. 1-35.

appear less justified in the post-9/11 context wherein US foreign policy has been characterised as ‘regressive globalisation’; that is, actors support only those aspects of the globalisation agenda that offer significant gains for themselves.<sup>204</sup>

### ***The Public Face of Alternative Globalisation***

The most obvious reference point for discussions of the alternative globalisation movement is the ‘Battle of Seattle’, which took place at the end of 1999. Attention was focused on the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where 50-70,000 people gathered to demonstrate over five days, during which there were over 570 arrests. Simultaneously, there were connected demonstrations in over seventy cities worldwide.<sup>205</sup> Klein described Seattle as the “coming out party for global activism”, rightly implying a preceding, less visible process of growth.<sup>206</sup> There had certainly been a growing focus by protesters on international financial institutions, and massive protests against the an IMF-World Bank meeting as early as 1988.<sup>207</sup>

In the UK, protests included in the earliest phase of the alternative globalisation movement are those against, firstly, the G8 meeting in Birmingham, in May 1998 where a claimed 70,000 demonstrators encircled the summit venue in a human chain while simultaneous protests occurred in thirty-seven cities worldwide.<sup>208</sup> The following week rioting occurred in Geneva where protesters targeted a meeting of the WTO, “rejecting the whole process of globalisation and corporate power that is the new world government”.<sup>209</sup> Second, the June 1999 ‘Carnival Against Capitalism’ in London was timed to coincide with the first day of a G8 Summit in Germany. The original proposals for action had been worked out in London and networked through PGA internationally, and a range of organisations across the UK. On the day small affinity groups took actions to disrupt the transport infrastructure; a number of fights broke out between police and protesters and thousands of people joined a carnival which made its way via

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<sup>204</sup> Anheier, H., Glasius, M. & Kaldor, M., 2003, “Global Civil Society in an Era of Regressive Globalisation” in *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2003*, (London School of Economics), pp. 3-33.

<sup>205</sup> Lichbach, M.I. & Almeida, P., 2005, *Global Order and Local Resistance: The Neoliberal Institutional Trilemma and the Battle of Seattle*, unpublished paper for the University of California Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation, available at: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lichbach/GlobalPaper-01b.doc>; last accessed 20/12/05; Dodson, 2001, “The History of Anti-Capitalism Protests” in the *Guardian*, 01/05/2001.

<sup>206</sup> Klein, N., cited in Kaldor, M., 2000, “‘Civilising’ Globalisation? The Implications of the ‘Battle in Seattle’” in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29(1), p. 105.

<sup>207</sup> Gerhards, J. & Rucht, D., 1992, “Mesomobilization: Organizing and Framing in Two Protest Campaigns in West Germany” in *American Journal of Sociology* 98(3), pp. 555-95.

<sup>208</sup> CAFOD, undated, “The Story of CAFOD” on Catholic Fund for Overseas Development Website, available at: [http://www.cafod.org.uk/about\\_cafod/history/timeline](http://www.cafod.org.uk/about_cafod/history/timeline); last accessed: 10/10/05.

<sup>209</sup> Schnews, 1998, “Global Street Parties Roundup” in *Schnews* 168.

a number of routes to begin a street party outside the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange building, where the windows were smashed and protesters attempted to shut down the trading floor. With the confrontational nature of the protesters, and the clear targeting of the financial heart of London, the movement was generally referred to as 'anti-capitalist' at this point; however, the failure to present a coherent critique of capitalism was criticised within the movement.<sup>210</sup> The scale and militancy of the protests was understood as an increase in the level and intensity of struggle and the carnival style of organising - using Samba drumming bands and sound systems, huge puppets and costume – served as an inspiration to organisers of future protests.

During the eighteen months following the Battle in Seattle, dozens of mobilisations attracted tens or hundreds of thousands. High profile demonstrations targeted: the IMF (Washington DC, April 2000; Okinawa, July 2000; Prague, September 2000); World Economic Forum (Davos, Switzerland, February 2000, February 2001; Melbourne, September 2000); the Global Forum (Naples, March 2001); the Free Trade Area of the Americas (Quebec, April 2001); the EU (Gothenburg, June 2000; Nice, December 2000); and the G8 (Genoa, July 2001).<sup>211</sup> These events formed the public face of the 'anti-globalisation movement'; a period that Prime Minister Tony Blair described as “an anarchists’ travelling circus that goes from summit to summit with the sole purpose of causing as much mayhem as possible.”<sup>212</sup>

For the present purposes, it is important to delineate what was common across these various mobilisations. There are four noteworthy elements: targets; repertoires of contention; mobilising networks; and political range of participation. In relation to the first, the list in the preceding paragraph clearly indicates the targeting of institutions of global governance. While economic institutions saw the most protests, political institutions were also included and generally accused of pursuing a neoliberal agenda. Additionally, the offices or shop fronts of notable multinational corporations were also targeted at the demonstrations. Thus, the alternative globalisation movement clearly located power beyond the individual nation-state and solidly linked the political and economic spheres. In relation to repertoires of contention, a similar set of activities

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<sup>210</sup> Schnews, 2004, *Schnews at Ten, A Decade of Party and Protest*, (Calvert Press, London), pp. 152-8.

<sup>211</sup> For more extensive chronologies see: Dodson, “The History of Anti-Capitalism...”; Notes from Nowhere, 2003, *We Are Everywhere, The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, (Verso, London). Documentation of some of these demonstrations from within social movement research can be found in Brookes, D.C., 2004, “Faction in Movement: the Impact of Inclusivity on the Anti-Globalization Movement” in *Social Science Quarterly* 85(3), pp. 559-577.

<sup>212</sup> Quoted in Schnews, *Schnews at Ten...*, p. 192.

were found across these events, including: educational events before and during the main days of action; demonstrations and marches, often including imaginative theatrics and carnival themes; blockades, sometimes including 'lockdown' techniques aimed to make arrest extremely difficult; property destruction targeted primarily at banks and high profile multinational corporations; and movement-produced media coverage. The third and fourth elements, mobilising networks and range of participation, are clearly related. Established in 1998, People's Global Action (PGA) has been among the most influential mobilising networks, having a role in setting dates for almost all the protest events listed above, and many others besides. Its international conferences provide a planning forum, in which activists inform each other of upcoming events and conceive of new ones. The organisation has a minimal structure related to pre-existing regional and national organisations and networks (such as Reclaim the Streets in the UK). PGA attempts to work with a principle of subsidiarity, i.e. that decisions be taken at the lowest appropriate level, as far as is commensurate with their goal to "make resistance as transnational as capital".<sup>213</sup> The 1999 'Carnival against Capitalism' had demonstrated the efficacy of a loose network structure in enabling autonomous, self-organised groups to come together for spectacular protests. This form of organising thereby encourages an anarchic feel to events. The continuing existence of PGA (and similar networks such as the Direct Action Network from the west of the US, and the Genoa Social Forum in Italy) implies a continuity of protagonists at the series of events listed above. Furthermore, innumerable groups were present at several of the major protest events performing various functions: from civil disobedience training (Ruckus Society) to samba bands (Rhythms of Resistance, Infernal Noise Brigade) to theatrics and carnival (Reclaim the Streets, Tactical Frivolity) and news production (Indymedia). Such groups were not necessarily made up of the same individuals at each demonstration, but rather continuity was found through inspiration and lesson learning as new groups took on the tactics, style and even names of previously existing groups.<sup>214</sup> These groups represent an autonomist strand of the movement, generally oriented to direct action. I have focused on PGA because it appears as one of the most novel elements of the alternative globalisation movement, and because it is the network form of organising that is most frequently celebrated within movement produced literature. Nevertheless, participation from

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<sup>213</sup> PGA, 1998, *Organising Principles* available at <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/cocha/principles.htm>; last accessed: 12/12/05; PGA, 2000, *Bulletin 5 – UK Edition, February 2002*; widely circulated by email.

<sup>214</sup> Chesters, G. & Welsh, I., 2001, "The Rebel colours of S26: Social Movement 'Framework' during the Prague IMF/WB Protests" in *Cardiff University Social Sciences Working Paper Series*.

other political perspectives, connected to different forms of organisation was also of importance. The revolutionary socialist left was increasingly present after Seattle, organised through the various socialist internationals (discussed in chapter three). In addition, a range of highly professional development and environmental NGOs were responsible for mobilising their members and supporters to participation (discussed in chapter five).

### ***The Globalisation of Protest?***

The selected targets and the critique of neoliberalism from within the alternative globalisation movement gave rise to the ‘anti-globalisation’ label. Certainly, the language of ‘globalisation’ had become increasingly used within movement discourse. Vandana Shiva, for instance, wrote that “the failure of the WTO Ministerial meeting in Seattle was a historic watershed ... it has demonstrated that globalisation is not an inevitable phenomena which must be accepted at all costs but a political project which can be responded to politically.”<sup>215</sup> Similarly, Griffin describes it as marking a “turning point in the ‘imperial overstretch’ in neo-liberal globalisation.”<sup>216</sup> However, at another level the movement was clearly intertwined with globalisation itself. Groups are networked internationally, take aim at multinational corporations and international financial and political institutions, utilise cheap global transportation routes, are heavily dependent on the internet and other new communication technologies, and contain appeals to global solidarity. Like globalisation itself, the movement has always been unevenly spread. Yet, contrary to some critiques of the movement, the phenomenon has never been limited to the global north. Research from the World Development Movement highlights seven countries in South America and three in Africa in which protest activity over the previous year is interpreted as a direct response to IMF policies, usually in the form of Structural Adjustment Plans on which loans are conditional. The report argues that the “‘new movement’, portrayed by the media as students and anarchists from the rich and prosperous global north, is just the tip of the iceberg.”<sup>217</sup> Dwyer & Seddon argue that “the trade union movement in sub-Saharan Africa demonstrated greater independence and militancy during [the late 1990s] ...

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<sup>215</sup> Shiva, V., 1999, “The Historic Significance of Seattle”, a message circulated by the Amazon Coalition and available at: <http://flag.blackened.net/global/1299arshiva.htm>; last accessed: 03/12/03.

<sup>216</sup> Griffin, M., 2002, “Globalization and its Critics. An Examination of the ‘Anti-Globalization’ Movement” available on *Global Policy*, available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/protest/general/2003/0104exam.pdf>; last accessed: 05/11/05.

<sup>217</sup> Woodroffe, J. & Ellis-Jones, M., 2000, *States of Unrest: Resistance to IMF Policies in Poor Countries*, (World Development Movement), available at: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/cambriefs/debt>; last accessed: 08/12/03.

arguably, than at any time in its history” and document protest in North Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe.<sup>218</sup> We should be careful, however, not to conflate what may be distinct movements since much protest in the global south appear as responses to immediate economic problems.<sup>219</sup> Nevertheless, there are concrete connections between movements of the north and the south. Notably, PGA developed out of international meetings in the Chiapas region of Mexico, before moving to Spain, Switzerland and India. Their meetings attracted farmers’ trade unionists from South Korea, landless peasants’ organisers from Brazil and Zapatistas from Mexico as well as anarchists and autonomists from the global north.<sup>220</sup> The Seattle demonstrations were notable because they did, in fact, include protesters from a range of different movements in the global south. The ability to network these different constituencies, and to organise simultaneous mobilisations in cities across the world gives the movement the transnational character that the strongest definitions of globalisation demand.<sup>221</sup>

These characteristics of a global movement should not be considered as an inconsistent parasitism, simply making use of the products of globalisation while criticising the process itself, but as suggesting a different vision for globalisation. Hence the description of a movement of ‘globalisation from below’, for instance, as arguments for the democratisation of global governance restate the case for collective self-determination but on a global scale.<sup>222</sup> In very practical ways too, we can see the affirmation of globalisation. The spread of Indymedia (websites created by locally based Independent Media Collectives, or IMCs) is an illustrative example. The first Independent Media Collective was created in anticipation of the demonstrations at Seattle. They set up a website that anybody with an internet connection would be able to update instantly with their own news stories. This feature displays an attachment to autonomy and empowerment, and is discussed further in chapter four. What is relevant here is that the purpose was to increase communication across borders, allowing those involved in protests to instantly transmit messages globally, without the intervention of mainstream media. The Indymedia model has been a huge success, with IMCs emerging at most of the major international demonstrations, utilising and developing

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<sup>218</sup> Dwyer, P. & Seddon, D., 2002, “The New Wave? A Global Perspective on Popular Protest”, a paper for the *Eight International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002), pp. 5, 8-13.

<sup>219</sup> Dwyer & Seddon, “The New Wave?...”, p. 6.

<sup>220</sup> News from Nowhere, “We Are Everywhere...”.

<sup>221</sup> Scholte, “Global Capitalism...”.

<sup>222</sup> Brecher, J., Costello, T. & Smith, B., 2000, *Globalization from Below. The Power of Solidarity*, (South End Press, Massachusetts).

the software created for Seattle, and arranging for space at the demonstrations where protesters could get free access to the internet in order to update the websites. This demonstrates the desire for the connection of struggles across borders that is at the heart of the alternative globalisation movement.

In the context of globalisation, the relation of the local level to the global is not obvious. During the 'alternative globalisation' phase, some criticised the movement for ignoring local struggle. Klein explains,

“On the one hand, there are the international anti-globalization activists who may be enjoying a triumphant mood, but seem to be fighting far-away issues, unconnected to people's day to day struggles. They are often seen as elitist... On the other hand, there are community activists fighting daily struggles for survival, or for the preservation of the most elementary public services, who are often feeling burnt-out and demoralized. They are saying: what in the hell are you guys so excited about?”<sup>223</sup>

One of the claims of the movement of movements is, however, that the forces of neoliberal globalisation affect everybody. To the extent that Klein's statement is true, therefore, this local-global divide is a serious problem for the claims of the movements and their chances for success. On the contrary, however, some claim that in some summit venues “the build up to the demonstration meant creating networks that have long outlasted the original event, but have been the catalyst for the rise of new communities of resistance and even political movements.”<sup>224</sup> The source of this quotation recognises that such effects are dependent on the pre-existing political structures in the locality, suggesting that making general claims about the local-global relationship is difficult. Furthermore, in the UK at least it seems that the development of the cycle of contention has involved changes in the relation of local struggles to global, that might in part signal recognition by activists of the dangers of focusing solely on global mobilisations. This theme is developed in chapters seven and eight of this thesis, where we see two particular dynamics of local-global connections.

### ***The Politics of Names and Dates***

The recognition that significant sections of the movement of movements positively value a certain form of globalisation has led to a search for a more accurate label than 'anti-globalisation movement'. The selection of particular labels is clearly imbued with

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<sup>223</sup> Klein, N., 2001, “Reclaiming the Commons” in *New Left Review* 9, pp. 84.

<sup>224</sup> Schneus, *Schneus at Ten...*, p. 192.

political assumptions.<sup>225</sup> For instance, counterpoising ‘alternative’ to ‘anti’ may suggest the radical-reform debate often found within movement discourse. At its simplest, the radical position is taken to refer to the dismantling of global institutions, considered to be inherently unjust while the reformist position is one in which ameliorative steps are envisaged in order to ensure justice through global institutions.<sup>226</sup> Describing the movements as ‘anti-capitalist’ clearly contains a stronger political claim, but one that is made by anarchists and revolutionary socialists alike, despite their many other differences.<sup>227</sup> It is undoubtedly the case, however, that significant sections of the movement of movements reject anti-capitalism. It may be feasible to label some types of action as ‘objectively anti-capitalist’ if they strongly counter any economic policy that could be consistent with capitalist society.<sup>228</sup> However, showing that to be the case is an incredibly stringent condition, and if it were achieved might potentially make some protagonists change their mind about carrying a proposed action out. In any case, a number of different groups “may, objectively, be involved in a common collective construction, but this does not mean that, subjectively, they share the same ideas about what they are doing, why they are doing it or how they should do it.”<sup>229</sup> Because the latter is precisely what this thesis attempts to understand, any label that groups many movements by their ‘objective’ features is likely to obscure the research subject and fail the Meluccian challenge. I use the ‘movement of movements’ as a general label for the phenomenon under study because to my mind it is the least politically loaded label. Used in the activist context it may well be understood as a valorisation of diversity, which would be criticised from some perspectives. However, the existence of political diversity within the current cycle of contention is undeniable, and it is the exploration of diversity that this thesis is principally concerned with.

In addition to the labelling of the movement, the histories that are offered are also coloured by the political perspective of the author. The Zapatista uprising against the Mexican government is perhaps the earliest frequently cited beginning point of the

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<sup>225</sup> Caygill, M., 2002, “Do the Labels Matter? Contested Categories and the ‘Movement’”, from *Eight International Social Movements Conference, Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002), p. 1.

<sup>226</sup> Teivainen, T., 2002, “The World Social Forum and Global Democratisation: Learning from Porto Alegre” in *Third World Quarterly* 23(4), p. 628; the radical-reform debate is considered in detail in chapter six of this thesis.

<sup>227</sup> Compare, for instance, Notes from Nowhere, *We Are Everywhere...*, with Bircham, E., & Charlton, J., 2001, *Anti-Capitalism. A Guide to the Movement* (Bookmarks, London).

<sup>228</sup> Dwyer & Seddon, “The New Wave?...”.

<sup>229</sup> Crossley, N., 2001, “The Global Anti-Corporate Movement: A Preliminary Analysis”, a paper for the *Seventh International Social Movements Conference, Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2001), p. 4.

broader movements.<sup>230</sup> There are a number of general features that point forward to the concerns described in parts II and III of the thesis. First, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) launched their uprising on the day that the Free-Trade Area of the Americas came into effect, consciously linking their own struggle to broader political-economic trends. Second, they explicitly criticised neoliberalism as an ideology; a target that became increasingly familiar over succeeding years. Third, they embodied the link between local struggles and global consciousness that other participants have sought to emulate, making use of new communication technologies in order to spread information about their struggle and garner international support and attracting over 4,000 activists to international ‘*encuentro* against neo-liberalism’ in the summer of 1996.<sup>231</sup> They are therefore connected to the ‘network logic’ displayed by later debates within the social forum movement.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, the second *encuentro*, attracted 3,000 participants to Spain from sixty countries and sowed the seeds for the creation of PGA, influential in the organisation of many of the demonstrations against various international financial and political institutions.<sup>233</sup> The EZLN are, however, an armed guerrilla group. While they have renounced the use of violence, this nevertheless divides them sharply from the methods of protest at demonstrations normally associated with the broader movements. It is certainly the case that they became, “in effect a beacon for movements in the rest of the world.”<sup>234</sup> It is particularly among those participants in the ‘movement of movements’ for whom notions of autonomy from any form of authority are central that the Zapatistas have most provided inspiration.<sup>235</sup> *Zapatismo* is understood as the search for political autonomy, creating social change without taking state power.<sup>236</sup> In the UK, those who emphasise autonomy might also refer to the 1999 Carnival Against Capitalism as the beginning of the movement, since, as described above, it was an anarchic event based on affinity-group direct action and confrontation. Based on a longer tradition of direct action utilised for peace and environmental campaigns these demonstrations signalled a broadening in the focus of groups like Reclaim the Streets (RTS) who began to

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<sup>230</sup> See, for instance, the timeline in Notes from Nowhere, *We Are Everywhere*.

<sup>231</sup> Petras, *The Left Strikes Back...*, pp.39-41.

<sup>232</sup> Escobar, A., 2004, “Other Worlds are (Already) Possible. Self-Organisation, Complexity, and Post-Capitalist Culture” in Sen, Anand, Escobar & Waterman, *Challenging Empires. The World Social Forum*, pp. 349-358.

<sup>233</sup> Schnews, 1997, “Close Encuentro” in *Schnews 128, 01/08/1997*.

<sup>234</sup> Wallerstein, I., 2004, “The Dilemmas of Open Space: The Future of the WSF” in *International Social Science Journal 56(4)*, pp. 632.

<sup>235</sup> See, for instance, Graeber, D, 2002, “The New Anarchists” in *New Left Review 13*, p. 68; Notes from Nowhere, *We Are Everywhere...*

<sup>236</sup> Holloway, J., 2002, *Change the World Without Taking Power. The Meaning of Revolution Today*, (Pluto, London).

develop a more comprehensive critique of capitalism. This development is central to the direct action frame, detailed in chapter four.

A quite different campaign, that against the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), is also often cited as a starting point for the current cycle of contention. After three years of negotiation within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) plans for instituting the MAI were cancelled. In fact, the first use of the word 'anti-globalisation' that I can find in the UK mainstream press relates to this development. This piece explains the "anti-globalisation backlash" among politicians and lobby groups as a reaction to the Asian financial crisis of 1997. In retrospect the author's argument is ironic when he claims that "lobby groups should be fighting for the right kind of MAI rather than opposing it tooth and nail. A deal brokered by the World Trade Organisation ... might be a sensible alternative."<sup>237</sup> The MAI campaign was waged at multiple levels of governance with NGOs such as the World Development Movement (WDM) lobbying at local and national levels of government as well as directly at the OECD itself. After the MAI was dropped, groups involved in the campaign warned that the same developments would have to be battled in other institutions; as the Economist put it, "flush from that victory, the WTO was the next obvious target."<sup>238</sup> The MAI campaign clearly linked trade liberalisation to corporate power and concern for democracy, since it argued the MAI would "allow multi-nationals to ride roughshod over democratically-elected governments, preventing politicians from refusing access to multinationals, giving corporations the right to sue administrations ... and threatening any attempts to introduce workplace or environmental legislation."<sup>239</sup> The understanding of the MAI as a major starting point for the alternative globalisation movement comes most obviously from the larger NGOs that are often described as comprising 'global civil society'.<sup>240</sup> The action-orientation is to the mobilisation of popular pressure on those who have power within the relevant institutions; a sharp difference from the confrontational action of the EZLN. Many of the same campaigning groups were involved in the protests at the meeting of the heads of state of the G8 countries in Birmingham in the same year, where a claimed 70,000

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<sup>237</sup> Anon., 1998, "Talks Failure is Bad for the World's Poor" in *The Independent*, 28/04/1998.

<sup>238</sup> Anon., 1999, "The New Trade War" in *The Economist*, 04/12/1999; WDM, 1998, "Rights and Responsibilities: Lessons from the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)" available on *WDM Campaigns Website* at: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/cambriefs/wto/MAI.htm>; last accessed: 16/08/05

<sup>239</sup> Elliott, L., 1998, "Move to Revive World Pact" in *The Guardian*, 10/09/1998.

<sup>240</sup> See, for instance, Griffin, "Globalization and its Critics...".

demonstrators encircled the summit venue, and in Seattle the following year.<sup>241</sup> This coming together of civil society organisations with social movement activity is one of the central dynamics described as at the root of the radical liberal frame, detailed in chapter five.

Attention on the movement by politicians and mainstream media increased massively after the Seattle demonstrations later in the same year, not least because the disruption caused by the protests was understood as one cause of the failure of the talks to complete the launch of a new trade round. It became clear that the various lobby groups involved in campaigns around MAI and the protests in Birmingham and the direct action groups and networks involved in the Carnival Against Capitalism could work together. It thus became obvious that multiple tactics and understandings were being utilised by groups with the divide commonly being described as one between reformist NGOs and radical street groups.<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, at Seattle there was also a much greater involvement of revolutionary socialist organisations than either at Birmingham or London. Highlighting the involvement of large trade unions in the demonstrations, the SWP's history of the movement begins at Seattle.<sup>243</sup> Since that point traditional far left organisations formed a significant bloc in the alternative globalisation movement; their ideas are identified as a revolutionary socialist frame in chapter three.

I describe the early phase of the current cycle of contention as an 'alternative globalisation movement' to indicate the primary orientation of social movement activities. I used 'alternative', not to indicate reformism but to indicate that all these movement strands were themselves engaged in globalisation processes that, to a greater or lesser extent, were dependent on the same technologies that are often seen as enabling economic globalisation. Rejecting the 'anti-globalisation' label has the additional effect of excluding some globalisation critiques that other analysts have sought to include among the broader movements, such as the protectionism of small business. Starr's attempt to include this strand along with 'anarchy' and 'sustainable development' as expressing discourses of delinking or relocalization is somewhat strained. Even if activists arguing in the language of sustainable development are rightly categorised as aiming for 'relocalization' (although the stress on global solutions

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<sup>241</sup> CAFOD, undated, "The Story of CAFOD" on *CAFOD Website*, available at: [http://www.cafod.org.uk/about\\_cafod/history/timeline](http://www.cafod.org.uk/about_cafod/history/timeline); last accessed: 10/10/05.

<sup>242</sup> Wall, M.A., 2003, "Press Conferences or Puppets. NGOs' vs. Street Groups' Communication in the Battle of Seattle" in *Javnost 10(1)*, pp. 33-48.

<sup>243</sup> Bircham, E. & Charlton, J., eds., 2001, *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement*, (Bookmarks, London).

to global problems makes this problematic), there is clearly a different set of broader understandings involved that sharply differentiate them from small business protectionism.<sup>244</sup> In any case, with the benefit of a longer view, this thesis demonstrates that that section of the movement is no longer, if it ever was, allied to the more significant strands detailed above.

#### 4. THE 'MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS' AS CYCLE OF CONTENTION

Over the period of summit-hopping demonstrations that formed the public face of the alternative globalisation movement, the level of violence and tensions this caused within the movement, increased. This potentially offers some backing to Tarrow's prediction of the course of the cycle of protest. To be sure, a significant number of participants were intent on disruption or destruction. Seattle had been interpreted as successful partly because by blocking roads around the conference centre it had a real impact on delaying the WTO meeting. This led to police and security services creating larger and larger no-protest zones around summit venues. The shop fronts of multinational corporations such as McDonalds and Starbucks had been targeted, and so they were advised to close and board up windows during the summit. Tensions with police increased progressively and tear gas, truncheons and water cannons used by heavily armoured police were a constant feature. Genoa was undoubtedly the peak of violence, with one protester killed by police and many more injured. In one particular incident police performed a violent early morning raid on the convergence centre where protesters were sleeping, hospitalising many. The evidence used against the protesters, that the centre contained materials for making 'Molotov cocktails', was later admitted to have been planted by police as a pretext for action.

The debate over property damage and violence against police was hard fought within the alternative globalisation movement. However, as the cycle has continued into the social forum and anti-war movements this debate has sunk further into the background as the general level of violence in movement activities has declined. Anheier *et al.* suggest three causes which serve well to introduce shifting dynamics as the cycle progressed.

“there was a mounting sense of frustration which culminated in Genoa, where the possibly police-infiltrated black blocs formed the excuse to crack down on peaceful activists. Second, while violence may seem appropriate in direct confrontation with the power-holders... it has no similar logic in a civil society only forum... Third... many anti-capitalist

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<sup>244</sup> Starr, A., 2000, *Naming the Enemy. Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization*, (Zed Books, New York), p. 149.

protestors have focused in recent months on anti-war activities and these have mobilised very large, often non-political, sections of the population who would be deterred by violence.”<sup>245</sup>

A perceptible increase in violence, combined with dissatisfaction at portrayals of the movements (suggesting they could offer only opposition without alternatives) had led some activists and organisations to seek a different form of gathering. As noted above, each of the big international demonstrations was accompanied by teach-ins and workshops that covered both techniques and tactics of protest and also concrete debates on the processes that protesters opposed and the various alternatives that might be possible. In 2000 the idea of holding a ‘world social forum’ was developed in order to accentuate the positive elements of these gatherings. It is certainly the case that the “birth of social forums has changed the aim of the alternative globalisation movement on an international scale. The culture of pure protest has given way to a multicultural, multidimensional system of debate.”<sup>246</sup>

More immediately obvious, however, were the effects of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (9/11). The mainstream media reported with disgust the cheers of crowds protesting on that day at the Defence Systems Exposition International (DSEi) exhibition in London’s docklands as the news filtered through the crowd. Naturally, that reaction can mostly be explained by misunderstanding the nature of the events given the word of mouth reportage available during the demonstration. However, it does underline that the targets chosen by Al Qaida were ones which participants of the alternative globalisation movement had superficially shared. In the anger against 9/11, the alternative globalisation movement was conflated with anti-capitalism and anti-Americanism and located on the wrong side of the war on terror.<sup>247</sup> For reasons of moral clarity and because of perceptions of the likely increase in state repression it became all the more necessary to distinguish sharply between the activities of the movement of movements and those of terrorists. While admitting that the movements contained “some extremists who are intent on violence”, therefore, Noreena Hertz argued “there is a need for the whole movement to do what it can to keep them out... they are not part of the mainstream, nor do they represent its underlying ethos. Non-violence is a guiding principle of the movement,

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<sup>245</sup> Anheier et al., “Global Civil Society...”, p. 24.

<sup>246</sup> Baykan, B.G. & Lelandais, G.E., 2004, “Cross-Readings of the Anti-Globalisation Movement in Turkey and Beyond. Political Culture in the Making” in *International Social Science Journal* 56(4), pp. 520.

<sup>247</sup> Applebaum, A., 2001, “Anti-Americanism Creates Some Strange Bedfellows” in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 16/09/2001; Appleyard, B., 2001, “Why do they Hate America?” in *The Sunday Times*, 23/09/2001.

and the prevention of unnecessary deaths is exactly what they are fighting for ... the millions whose life expectancy has fallen in a world of growing inequality.”<sup>248</sup>

While the effects of 9/11, and the internal dynamics produced by those within the movement of movements, was to create a shift in both the foci and modes of action among protest groups, there are a number of continuities that ground the claim that both the anti-war and social forum movements should be understood as part of a cycle of contention rooted on the alternative globalisation protests. Briefly introducing these two movements highlights some of the more obvious continuities. Furthermore, one of the themes of the rest of the thesis is that particular orientational frames, which developed in understanding and contesting globalisation, ground both the critique of the war on terror and the various social forum projects.

### ***The Anti-War Movement***

The peak of the anti-war movement is identifiable as 15<sup>th</sup> February 2003 when approximately 10-12 million world-wide marched against the coming US-led invasion of Iraq. The sheer size of the movement against war in Iraq, together with its apparent unity of purpose, has led many commentators to see it as a distinct movement. Indeed, to the degree that we are interested in the masses that joined the movement who had not been involved in alternative globalisation movement, this is a coherent mode of analysis. However, there is also a danger that focusing purely on the biggest demonstrations mystifies the earlier stages of the campaign, which were essential to its later success. Firstly, the campaign against war in Iraq was a part of a broader movement against the ‘war on terror’ that began within days of 9/11. The UK Stop the War Coalition, for instance, was created on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2001, creating a platform explicitly aiming to “stop the war currently declared by the United States and its allies against ‘terrorism’.”<sup>249</sup> The anti-war movement therefore encompassed both the campaign against the invasion of Afghanistan, and that against invasion of Iraq. It build partly on a pre-existing movement that had emerged sporadically ever since the protests around the previous US-led invasion of Iraq in the early 1990s. Protests against the subsequent regime of economic sanctions on Iraq encompassed criticisms of unnecessary human suffering and were an affront to sovereignty. This had erupted into a more populous movement in 1998 as a result of a new wave of bombings ordered unilaterally by President Clinton.

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<sup>248</sup> Hertz, N., 2001, “We Beg to Differ” in *The Guardian*, 17/09/2001.

<sup>249</sup> Stop the War Coalition, 2001, *Platform*, available at: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/about.asp>; last accessed: 15/04/05.

Furthermore, the fact that the anti-war movement was composed of many individuals and organisations active in the alternative globalisation movement was obvious to media commentators from the beginning.<sup>250</sup> In Washington a planned protest against a meeting of the IMF and World Bank for 29<sup>th</sup> September had been rescheduled as an anti-war rally and some commentators were led to pronounce the death of the ‘anti-globalisation’ movement. However, it is clear that what in fact was occurring was a shift in focus.<sup>251</sup> In particular, during the alternative globalisation movement, the focus was primarily on international bodies and multinational corporations. Governments were understood as engaged in a battle for market share, their sovereign powers reduced by the diktats of free trade.<sup>252</sup> As the titles of two books – *The Silent Takeover* and *The Captive State* – that come from within the movements make clear, the state was seen as weakened by global capitalism.<sup>253</sup> The US-led reaction to 9/11 refocused attention on the powers retained by the state both in terms of military force abroad and repression at home. Claims that this marked a radical departure for the alternative globalisation movement can only be seen as superficial, however, since (as I will demonstrate in Part II of this thesis) many activists were operating with orientational frames that understood the political and the economic as closely interconnected. The destinies of states (and in particular the US state) and powerful multinational corporations were often understood as intertwined. Indeed, protesters targeted summits such as the WTO Ministerials, where it was primarily state actors that were criticised for pursuing the neoliberal agenda. Moreover, that agenda itself has clearly been effected by 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror, with notions like that of ‘regressive globalisation’, cited above, attempting to make sense of the shifting priorities of significant actors. Rather than the death of the alternative globalisation movement, therefore, 9/11 and the war on terror prompted its development into an anti-war movement more vigorous than the contest against international financial and political institutions ever had been.

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<sup>250</sup> Anon., 2001, “Give Peace a Chance? A Peace Movement Springs Up” in *The Economist*, 22/11/2001; Walsh, N.P., 2001, “Protesters Threaten to Block Military Bases” in *The Guardian*, 23/09/2001. In chapter seven I offer evidence that this was the case in Sheffield.

<sup>251</sup> Campbell, D., 2001, “Anti-War Rally Gains Pace in New York, Pacifists Globalisation Effort Gives Way to Peace Protest” in *The Guardian*, 20/09/2001.

<sup>252</sup> Hertz, N., 2002, *The Silent Takeover, Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*, (Arrow, London), pp. 9, 13-4.

<sup>253</sup> Hertz, *The Silent Takeover...*; Monbiot, G., 2000, *The Captive State. The Corporate Takeover of Britain*, (MacMillan, London).

## ***The Social Forum Movement***

The birth of the social forum movement actually preceded 9/11, demonstrating that the shift from the ‘anti-globalisation’ position and the rejection of violence within the movement were not purely effects of the new constituency involved in anti-war protests. The first World Social Forum (WSF I), held in Porto Alegre in 2001, emerged as a counter to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held annually in Davos, Switzerland. Previous WEF summits had seen unofficial counter-conferences, but tight security and often inaccessible locations made planning large events particularly difficult.<sup>254</sup> The originators of WSF, aimed to create space for an alternative summit that contained its own centre of gravity, while simultaneously opposing the WEF.<sup>255</sup> By so doing they created an event with the potential for demonstrating that those involved in the ‘anti-globalisation’ movement were capable of constructing a positive vision for a future driven by social rather than economic concerns. An analysis of neoliberalism as a dogmatic claim that ‘there is no alternative’ led to the slogan ‘another world is possible’.

A brief comparison of the WSF with PGA highlights relevant similarities that may be taken as evidence of continuity within the general movements. The two organisations are similar in both the targets they select and the role they choose for themselves within the struggle for social change. In relation to targets, PGA clearly opposes “capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation”<sup>256</sup> and the WSF brings together groups “opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism”.<sup>257</sup> In relation to roles, both structures were created in order to connect ongoing struggles, rather than to build a political programme around which to mobilise. PGA’s first organising principle is that it is “an instrument for coordination, not an organisation.” The WSF principles similarly offer a self-description that stresses a coordination role, as “an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action.”<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Teivainen, T., 2002, “The World Social Forum and Global Democratisation: Learning from Porto Alegre” in *Third World Quarterly* 23(4), p.623.

<sup>255</sup> Cassen, B., 2003, “On the Attack” interview in *New Left Review* 19(Jan/Feb). Brazilian activists Chico Whittaker and Oded Grajew and Bernard Cassen of ATTAC France are generally acknowledged as the originators of WSF; e.g. Teivainen, “The World Social Forum...”, pp. 623-4.

<sup>256</sup> PGA, 1998, *Hallmarks of People’s Global Action* available at <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/pga/hallm.htm>; last accessed: 12/12/05.

<sup>257</sup> WSF, *Charter...*

<sup>258</sup> PGA, 1998, *Organising Principles* available at <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/cocha/principles.htm>; last accessed: 12/12/05; WSF, 2001, “Charter”; WSF, 2001, *Charter of Principles*, principle 1. Available at

Significantly, both PGA and WSF are expressly committed to creating connections across global distances demonstrating the importance attached to the recognition of common enemies in the agents of economic globalisation. This idea influenced the decision to locate WSF I in Brazil. Cassen explains that,

“We need a symbolic rupture with everything Davos stands for. That has to come from the South. Brazil has the ideal conditions for doing so, as a Third World country with gigantic urban concentrations, a wretched rural population, but also powerful social movements ... Although most anti-globalization activists come from the North, Western Europe or America, for our purposes it was crucial to kick off from the South.”<sup>259</sup>

In the first edition of WSF activists from America, and to a lesser extent Europe, were under-represented. This may be partly explained by the continuing draw of protests at the WEF. Subsequent editions of WSF found much greater numbers, including many more from America and Europe, as participation jumped from 12,000 in 2001, to 68,000 in 2002 and 100,000 in 2003. In fact, critics have suggested that the events in Porto Alegre have been ‘too white’,<sup>260</sup> with over-representation of relatively wealthy civil society organisations. Nevertheless, a real connection with grassroots social movements from the global south is maintained. This is first through location of WSF. After three editions were held in Brazil, the fourth edition attracted 74,000 participants to Mumbai, India in 2004. WSF returned to Brazil for 2005 and will take place in ‘somewhere in Africa’ in 2007. This not only makes it easier for participants from the south to attend but also puts the tasks of organising the huge event in the hands of Organising Committees drawn from civil society organisations and social movements in the host countries. Particularly notable is the long-running influence of MST, the Brazilian landless peasants movement, in organising the events. While the geographical reach of WSF remains very uneven, Wallerstein’s assessment that WSF is “probably more global already than any prior historic agglomeration of antisystemic movements” is highly plausible.<sup>261</sup>

As well as continuity, the WSF represents significant changes in the cycle of contention. I will begin chapter eight by arguing that WSF represents a greater commitment to diversity and pluralism than seen in previous attempts at international coordination. It is also clear that WSF shifts emphasis away from the confrontation of

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[http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id\\_menu=4&cd\\_language=2](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=4&cd_language=2); last accessed: 12/12/05.

<sup>259</sup> Cassen, “On the Attack”, pp. 49-50.

<sup>260</sup> Hardt, M., 2002, “Today’s Bandung?” in *New Left Review* 14, p. 112; Allahwala, A. & Keil, R., 2005, “Introduction to a Debate on the World Social Forum” in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(2), pp. 409.

<sup>261</sup> Wallerstein, I., 2004, “The dilemmas of open space: the future of the WSF” in *International Social Science Journal* 56(4), pp. 634.

problems to the creation of positive alternatives, and by doing so reduced the influence of violence within the movements. Finally, the social forum movement has also changed the nature of local-global dynamics. The WSF does so by providing space to connect local concerns in a positive way that is far more conducive to linking local struggles than the context of a heated demonstration. More importantly, and almost as an unintended consequence, the success of the various WSFs has led to the creation of social forums at regional, national and local levels world-wide. In some ways, the creation of autonomous organisations inspired by the WSF has led to an efficient flow of complex political ideas both horizontally and vertically, as well as creating multiple sites for the interlinking of concrete struggles. This dynamic is the subject of chapter eight.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The peak periods of activity during the alternative globalisation movement took place before the period of empirical research for this study. However, a broad understanding of this period is essential context within the hermeneutic approach described in chapter one. Activists' interpretations of the present are always coloured by their past experiences and their understanding of the history of current processes. This chapter shows that there are multiple understandings of the alternative globalisation movement that come out, in particular, in issues around labelling the movement and interpreting its history. The three particular interpretations outlined above map broadly onto other analysts' divisions of the movement into, for instance, alternatives, reformers and statisticians which may be broadly related to the direct action, radical liberal and revolutionary socialist frames that are identified in Part II of the thesis.<sup>262</sup> Because the specific strands of movement activity connected to these orientational frames each have a longer history in pre-existing periods of contention, these distinctions highlight a significant dimension of diversity that makes the 'movement of movements' label apt.

In part II it will become clear that a part of that longer history is present in the new social movements discussed at the beginning of this chapter. However, the various strands of the alternative globalisation movement were connected through making largely distributive demands on inter-state organisations. As energy was diverted into anti-war activities, the movements took on the state. When one looks at the most obvious claims within the movement of movements, therefore, there appears to be a

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<sup>262</sup> Green, D. & Griffin, M., 2002, "Globalization and Its Discontents" in *International Affairs* 78(1), pp. 49-68.

shift away from the cultural focus of the new social movements. This is not to deny that social movement participants are engaged in the creation of new cultural codes or collective identities but that if they are doing so, then it is an adjunct to the contest over globalisation and war taking place in the realms of economy and state.