

**Counter-Hegemonic Globalization:
Transnational Social Movements
in the
Contemporary Global Political Economy***

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When people invoke Aglobalization,@ they usually mean the prevailing system of transnational domination, which is more accurately called Aneo-liberal globalization,@ Acorporate globalization,@ or perhaps Aneo-liberal, corporate dominated globalization (cf. McMichael 2000, chapt.29). Sometimes they are referring to a more generic process B the shrinking of space and increased permeability of borders that result from falling costs of transportation and revolutionary changes in technologies of communication. Often the two are conflated.¹

Implicit in much of current discourse on globalization is the idea that the particular system of transnational domination that we experience today is the Anatural@ (indeed inevitable) consequence of exogenously determined generic changes in the means of transportation and communication. A growing body of social science literature and activist argumentation challenges this assumption. Arguing instead that the growth of transnational connections can potentially be harnessed to the construction of more equitable distributions of wealth and power and more socially and ecological sustainable communities, this literature and argumentation raises the possibility of what I would like to call “counter-hegemonic globalization.” Activists pursuing this perspective have created a

1 Stiglitz’s (2002:9) definition is an interesting case in point: "Fundamentally, it is the closer intergration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people across borders." By seeing new commercial rules as simply removing “artificial barriers” he naturalizes globalization. Despite the fact that later in his analysis he goes on to decry some of the new rules – e.g. capital account liberalization – as quite “unnatural” and indeed economically dangerous.

multifaceted set of transnational networks and ideological frames that stand in opposition to contemporary neo-liberal globalization. Collectively they are referred to as the Aglobal justice movement.@ For activists and theorists alike, these movements have become one of the most promising political antidotes to a system of domination that is increasingly seen as effectual only in its ability to maintain itself in power.

While the growth of membership and political clout of transnational social movements is hard to measure, the burgeoning of their formal organizational reflections—transnational NGO=s—is well documented. Their numbers have doubled between 1973 and 1983 and doubled again between 1983 and 1993 (Sikkink and Smith, 2002: 31). Perhaps even more important than their quantitative growth has been their ability to seize oppositional imaginations. From the iconic images of Seattle to the universal diffusion of the World Social Forum=s vision that Aanother world is possible,@ the cultural and ideological impact of these movements has begun to rival that of their corporate adversaries.

As these movements have grown, an equally variegated body of social science literature has begun to analyze, empirically and theoretically, the possibilities of a global counter movement that would take advantage of the technological capacities associated with generic globalization and turn neo-liberal globalization's own ideological and organizational structures against itself, subverting its exclusionary rules of governance and logic of allocating resources. Yet, as is to be expected, the scholarly literature lags the growth of the movements themselves.

Any adequate theorization of contemporary globalization must include an

analysis of anti-systemic oppositional movements. Yet, with a few exceptions (e.g. Boswell & Chase-Dunn, 2000; Gill, 2002; McMichael, this volume), discussion of oppositional movements “tacked on” to the end an analysis which is theorized primarily in terms of the logic of neo-liberal globalization. From novel analyses of contemporary globalization, such as Hardt and Negri (2000), to encyclopedic treatments like Held *et.al.*(1999), structure and dynamics of counter-movements are afforded only a fraction the theoretical attention given to dominant structures.

A careful analysis of counter-movements is essential to our understanding of the dynamics of contemporary politics. Without an analysis of the organization and strategies of transnational social movements, our understanding the politics of global governance institutions like the WTO, the Bretton Woods twins and the UN system is incomplete (see, for example, Fox and Brown, 1998; Evans, 2000; O’Brien, 2000; Wade, 2001). Correspondingly, nation states much increasingly take into account the reactions of transnational counter-movements when they operate in global arenas.

The analysis of transnational movements has also become increasing important to the understanding of what might have earlier been considered “domestic” politics. Contentious politics at the national level is increasingly contaminated by global issues and movements, whether in the North or in the South. Theorization of social movements cannot proceed without full consideration of the implications of transnational experiences (cf. McCarthy, 1997; Tarrow, 2001, 2002; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink, 2002; Smith and Johnson, 2002). Concepts like “frame alignment” and “resource mobilization” take on a different meaning when the “society” involved consists of an interconnected

congeries of national political units varying dramatically in their material resources and cultural foundations (cf. Snow, 1986; Benford, 1997; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001).

Analytical, practical and political motivations for focusing on oppositional transnational social movements are all intensified by growing disillusionment with the currently hegemonic version of globalization. Margaret Thatcher's admonition "there is no alternative" becomes increasingly difficult to accept and the idea that there might be something like "counter-hegemonic globalization" correspondingly more attractive.

Hegemonic vs. Counter-Hegemonic Globalization:

Despite the visibility and fervor of its supporters (e.g., Tom Friedman), neo-liberal globalization has proved a disillusioning disappointment to ordinary citizens, not just in the global South but in the rich industrial core as well. More surprisingly, prominent development economists, who might be expected to be its most fervent promoters (e.g. Rodrik, Sachs, Stiglitz), are sharp critics of neo-liberal globalization and its governing institutions. McMichael's discussion sets out these disappointments at length in Chapter 29 and there is no need to reiterate them in detail here, but a quick reminder is in order.

Neo-liberal globalization has delivered global financial volatility that regularly destroys productive capacity (without stimulating the creativity that Schumpeter considered definitive of capitalist progress). Instead of accelerating the improvement of living standards for the majority of the world's population it has been associated with slowing growth rates (cf. Easterly, 2001). It has often

jeopardized the delivery of essential collective goods like public health, education, and a sustainable environment and it has exacerbated inequality within and between nations to a degree that is destructive of the basic social solidarity.

While generating a proliferation of electoral regimes and celebrating Ademocracy@ in the abstract, neo-liberal globalization has undermined the possibility of democratic control over state policies and insulated the most fundamental policy decisions from even the fiction of democratic control. It has had pervasively corrosive effects on any sense of self-worth that is based on local culture, difference and identity. Finally, it is now associated with a return to military adventurism whose potential future destructive effects are frightening to contemplate.

Despite its failures, few would deny that neo-liberal globalization remains “hegemonic” in the Gramscian sense of combining an ideological vision of “what is in everyone’s interests” that is largely accepted as “common sense” even by subordinate and dis-privileged groups with the effective ability to apply coercion when necessary to preserve the existing distribution of privilege and exclusion. To call movements Acounter-hegemonic” therefore implies that they have the potential to undermine the ideological power of existing hegemony and threaten the established distribution of privilege (and exclusion).² Likewise, “counter-hegemonic globalization” would entail building a global political economy that

² This is not to say that my use of the term “counter-hegemonic” should be taken to imply a commitment to complete dismantling of the current global market system. While one can imagine that successful pursuit of the changes these movements espouse might ultimately lead to a “revolutionary” break, their immediate demands are for “reforms,” including the recapture of earlier modes of capitalist market regulation. My use of “counter-hegemonic” is, therefore, quite different from the way in which Gramsci might have used the term, which, of course, he did not (see Gramsci, 1999).

used the shrinking of space and facility of cross-border communication to enhance equity, justice and sustainability rather than to intensify existing forms of domination.

For anyone who shares, even partially, disillusionment with neo-liberal globalization the prospect of a “counter-hegemonic” globalization is alluring. It is hardly surprising that analysis of transnational social movements and their theoretical implications has growing appeal among both political sociologists and activists. Unfortunately, preoccupation with discovering new agents of social change also creates temptation to exaggerate the virtues and power of existing groups and networks and their ideologies.

Avoiding inflated and unrealistic assessments of either the virtues or efficacy of those who oppose neo-liberal globalization is the first step toward real understanding of their potential power. It must be admitted that the Aanti-globalization movement@ contains its share of irresponsible nihilists. It must also be acknowledged that some alternative visions may be worse the currently dominant one. It is entirely possible to oppose western-dominated global capitalism with a vision that is more oppressive, authoritarian and intolerant than neo-liberalism, as Al Qaeda illustrates. Likewise Aanti-globalization@ provides a handy Amodern@ gloss for a multitude of old fashioned, reactionary nationalist agendas.

Nor is “counter-hegemonic globalization” a label that applies to the whole of the “global justice movement.” Some groups with goals grounded in a vision of equity, human dignity and a sustainable relation to the environment may reject the possibility of a progressive version of globalization. Instead of counter-hegemonic

globalization, these groups would reverse the effects of generic globalization and somehow retrieve a world in which power and values could be defined on a purely local basis.

Yet, ironically, even the celebration of local power and culture cannot escape the necessity of constructing some form of Acounter-hegemonic globalization.@ Even those most committed to escaping the domination of modern universalisms, end up using global networks and global ideologies. Universal citizenship rights are invoked to protect head scarves (Soysal, 1994). Transnational networks are mobilized to preserve local feast days (Levitt, 2001). The internet played a key role in the Zapatista=s defense of their local autonomy (Schulz, 1998).

The reverse is also true. Just as the defense of difference and quests for local power require global strategies and connections, likewise transnational social movements must have local social roots. Without the promise of redressing the grievances of ordinary people where they live, transnational social movements have no base and their capacity to challenge established power is limited. If global corporate strategies depend on creating deracinated consumers incapable of collective action, counter-hegemonic strategies depend on the reverse. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that participants in transnational campaigns are often what Tarrow (2003) calls Arooted cosmopolitans@ B people whose activism begins with ties to local communities and is driven by the desire to improve the lot of members of those communities. A constant dialectic between strategies that speak to local roots and strategies that leverage global connections is fundamental to counter-hegemonic globalization.

The most powerful and challenging form of the local-global dialectic are the North-South divisions that have been inscribed in the structure of the global political economy for 500 years and exacerbated by contemporary neo-liberal globalization. This divide is built into global structures of power, both public and private, economic and cultural. If transnational social movements cannot find a way to transcend it, their political effectiveness will be fatally compromised.

There are then some minimal caveats for any useful analysis of the transnational social movements that are involved in counter-hegemonic globalization. It must be about local political motivations and social structural foundations as much as it is about transnational strategies, structures and actions. It must recognize that local conditions of life are fundamentally different depending on where they are located in our abysmally divided world. Most important, the desire to discover potent new agents for social change must be balanced with dispassionate skepticism.

Exaggerating the transformative power of those groups whose efforts to build anti-systemic global networks do appear grounded in a vision of equity and dignity is as bad a mistake as pretending that the anti-globalization movement is innocent of sinister and reactionary projects. It would be a disservice to the transnational movements themselves, as well as to ordinary citizens looking for relief from the disappointments of neo-liberal globalization, to exaggerate their power. Sometimes soft power (Sikkink 2002) can indeed successfully confront hard domination, but the current hegemony of corporate globalizers is supported by a full array of cultural and ideological machinery, as well as a very solid set of coercive instruments. It will not be easily dislodged by even the most creative and

well-organized transnational social movements. To have real effects, transnational movements must first be able to generate powerful cascades of normative change and then use this ideological advantage to transform the hard structures of established political and economic (and ultimately military) power. It is a tall order.

Even after we fully accept their flaws and limitations, the proliferation of transnational social movements with an agenda of counter-hegemonic globalization is still one of the substantively exciting and theoretically provocative topics in contemporary political sociology. Whether or not the current global justice movement is capable of making Aanother world@ possible, analyzing its nature and implications, in both practical and theoretical terms, must be part of the core agenda of contemporary political sociology.

The New Organizational Foundations of Counter-Hegemonic Globalization:

Here I will focus on three broad families of transnational social movements aimed at counter-hegemonic globalization: labor movements, women=s movements, and environmental movements. Each of these movements confronts the dilemmas of using transnational networks to magnify the power of local movements without redefining local interests, of transcending the North-South divide, and of leveraging existing structures of global power without becoming complicit in them. Looking at the three movements together is useful because it highlights the ways in which surmounting these challenges might produce common strategies and possibilities for alliances among them.

Before embarking on an analysis of these three families of movements,

however, I will briefly focus on two prominent organizations which are plausible would-be agents of Acounter-hegemonic globalization@ B ATTAC and the World Social Forum (WSF). If Seattle and the subsequent demonstrations that have plagued the WTO, IMF, G-7 and World Economic Forum are the favorite media images of Aanti-globalization,@ ATTAC and the WSF are paragons of organizations explicitly designed to build omnibus transnational networks aimed at transforming neo-liberal globalization into a social protection-oriented, market-subordinating, difference-respecting mirror image.

Looking at these groups underlines the organizationally novel forms whose emergence has been stimulated by neo-liberal globalization. At the same time, it highlights the degree to which counter-hegemonic globalization draws on long-established social movements and ideological Atropes@. In both respects it provides the ideal backdrop for analyzing the way in which the labor movement, transnational women=s movements and the global environmental movement provide both an interwoven infrastructure for re-shaping globalization and a challenge to the existing political sociology literature.

No examination of counter-hegemonic globalization can avoid examining ATTAC. Perhaps more than any other single organization embodies the proposition that agency in the face of the purported power of neo-liberal globalization requires only ideological and organizational imagination. Yet, ATTAC is a curious and, on the surface, very unlikely organization to fill this role. Its name – “Association pour la Taxation des Transactions Financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens” (The Association for the Taxation of Financial Transaction for the Aid of Citizens) – suggests an organization doomed to obscurity. Even

worse, the name does indeed reflect ATTAC's initial focus on support for the Tobin Tax (itself a relatively arcane idea embedded in the mechanics of neo-liberal globalization). Its homeland B France B an archetypically Aanti-globalization@ political milieu, characterized much more by chauvinism than global solidarity, makes it even an even more unlikely candidate to be a paradigmatic promoter of Acounter-hegemonic@ globalization. If ATTAC origins make it a very peculiar candidate to typify organizations aimed at Acounter-hegemonic globalization,@ its success at spawning a network of politically active sister organizations around the world is undeniable (cf. <http://attac.org/indexen/index.html>). Hence a quick look at ATTAC is one way of illuminating the ideology and strategies of counter-hegemonic globalization.

The best analysis of ATTAC is provided by Ancelovici (2002). In Ancelovici=s view, ATTAC=s ideology is essentially one of Aassociational statism@ which essentially entails two strategies of trying to reassert the primacy of political/social decision making in the face of the growing dominance of global markets. On the one hand it has a very traditional (French) affection for the regulatory power of the nation- state. At the same time it rejects bureaucratic/representational/party control of public/political decision-making in favor of locally-based participatory structures.

In short, analysis of ATTAC suggests that the political foundations of Acounter-hegemonic globalization@ involve a combination of Ruggie=s (1982) Aembedded liberalism@ (with its emphasis on social protections rooted in the structures of the nation state) and Anew left@ forms of participatory democracy. The World Social Forum—one of the most important organizational forms of

south-based Acounter-hegemonic globalization@—confirms this perspective.

It is only a partial caricature to propose that the origins of the World Social Forum, which now arguably represents the largest single agglomeration of south-based organizations and activists, began as a sort of joint-venture between ATTAC and the Brazilian Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores or PT). Since the founding vision of the PT's organizers was of a classic Marxist socialist mobilizational party, the party's involvement in the World Social Forum is further confirmation of the extent to which Acounter-hegemonic globalization@ has its roots in both quotidian struggles for dignity and economic security in the workplace and classic agendas of social protection (*a la* Polanyi, [1944] 2001) in which the machinery of the nation state is heavily implicated (see McMichael 2000, chapter 29).

Even unsystematic participant observation of the meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil confirms this hypothesis. The fact that the Workers Party controls the municipal administration of a major city and has (until the 2002 elections) controlled the state government as well has been essential to enabling the infrastructural investments that make a global meeting of thousands of participants and hundreds of oppositional groups from around the globe possible. At the same time, in part because of Worker=s Party sponsorship, both local and transnational trade unions play a major role in the WSF.

All of this suggests that counter-hegemonic globalization is not as Apost-modern@ as its adherents (and detractors) sometimes argue. To the contrary, rescuing traditional social democratic agendas of social protection, which are otherwise in danger of disappearing below the tide of neo-liberal globalization, is a

significant part of the agenda of both ATTAC and the World Social Forum. At the same time, it would be a mistake to dismiss counter-hegemonic globalization as simply Aold wine in new bottles.” The gamut of variegated transnational social movements that must be dealt with in any account of counter-hegemonic globalization include movements with organizational forms and ideological propositions that are novel and refreshing in relation to the old agents of Aembedded liberalism@ (indeed ATTAC and the World Social Forum are among them).

This blend of novelty and persistence is one of the most interesting, features of counter-hegemonic globalization, whether one is most concerned with a substantive analysis of the movement or with its implications for existing theoretical frameworks and conceptualizations. And, if one is interested in the blend of novelty and persistence there is no better place to start in analyzing Acounter-hegemonic globalization@ than with the transformation of the international labor movement.

Labor as a Global Social Movement:³

Having been tagged by 19th century socialists as the pre-eminent agent of progressive social change, the labor movement was abandoned by most social movement theorists of the mid-20th century as primarily concerned with defending the privileges of a Northern aristocracy of labor in the face of challenges from the South and hopelessly sclerotic in any case. Now the tide seems to be turning again. Recent analysis of the U.S. labor movement has begun to argue for renewed

appreciation of the potential importance of labor as a progressive actor (e.g. Clawson, 2003; Fantasia and Voss, forthcoming).

Curiously, the literature on transnational social movements still seems to reflect earlier disenchantment. With few exceptions (e.g. Kidder in Khagram *et al.* 2002), the case of labor has not been well integrated into this literature. A typical collection on transnational social movements focusing on European cases (della Porta, Kriesi and Rucht, 1999) offered individual chapters on the campaign against international trade in toxic wastes, farmers protest movements, abortion rights movements, and indigenous peoples movements, but only two quick references to labor: one noting that “the labor movement seems to be particularly disadvantaged by the developing European institutions” (19) and the other asserting that “European labour unions are not taking advantage of the possibilities for contentious politics at the European level” (118).

Why has labor not been seen as a promising candidate for becoming a transnational social movement? Conventional ways of framing of labor=s relation to the global political economy are central to the answer. The current framing of the transnational politics of labor is dominated by what I would call a “geography of jobs” perspective. In this perspective, AWorkers of the World Compete!” replaces admonitions for transnational solidarity in the neo-liberal mantra. Even those hostile to neo-liberalism tend to assume that geographic competition for jobs precludes possibilities for transnational solidarity (cf. Rodrik, 1997). In the “geography of jobs” frame, preventing the movement of jobs to the Global South becomes the prime aim of workers in the North, erasing possibilities for North-

3 This section draws heavily on Anner and Evans, forthcoming.

South solidarity.

The “geography of jobs” perspective does capture one important facet of reality. The increasing ease with which capitalists move high productivity technologies around the globe does intensify the potential for cross-border competition among workers (cf. Shaiken, 1994). Nonetheless, as Miller (2003) points out, the Geography of jobs@ perspective is flawed even within an economic framework. Once political and ideological dynamics are included, a creative re-framing of labor struggles at the global level, similar to the one that analysts like Ganz (2000) and Voss and Sherman (2000) have described at the national level, becomes an intriguing possibility.

I will analyze the possibilities for transnational labor solidarity by looking at three ways of framing contestation: Abasic rights,@ Asocial contract @ and Ademocratic governance.” All three share one fundamental characteristic. They employ what I have called elsewhere (Evans, 2000) “political jujitsu,” exploiting ideological propositions universally acknowledged as basic to the hegemonic ideology of contemporary global neo-liberalism and utilizing transnational organizational structures that neo-liberal globalization has helped create (cf. Risse-Kappen, Ropp and Sikkink, 1999; Risse-Kappen, 2000; Smith and Johnson, 2002)

Global corporate networks built around labor-intensive, “sweatshop” manufacturing in the South and brandname marketing in the North creates political opportunities along with profits. Imbuing their brands with cultural value is vastly more important to the profitability of the overall corporation than production costs attributable to manufacturing labor. At the same time, the normative and

ideological hegemony of basic human rights makes it almost impossible for a brand to retain its value once potential customers become convinced that basic human rights are being violated in the production of the goods that bear its name. The trick, of course, is building the mobilizational structures required to take advantage of such political opportunity (see Fung *et.al.*,2001).

Looking at paradigmatic cases like the now famous Kukdong case (Anner and Evans, forthcoming) illustrates the point. The original revolt of the Kukdong workers was the product of the usual miserable local working conditions combined with unusual local courage and combativeness. Sustaining the struggle depended on an intricate transnational network which included local and U.S. NGO's as well as U.S. unions. Each organization in the network brought different but complementary capacities to bear creating a robust and powerful braid of alliances. For example, USAS (United Students Against Sweatshops), which fits the Keck and Sikkink model of an organization whose leadership and members are driven primarily by 'principled ideas or values', was able to provide campus mobilization and publicity (see Featherstone, 2002). Worker=s Rights Consortium (WRC), a "monitoring" NGO, also a product of the anti-sweatshop movement was able to credibly invoke the technocratic standards of objective investigation.

Most interesting in terms of undercutting the "geography of jobs" perspective is the role of North American trade unions in the network. The AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center provided key expertise and international connections. UNITE, which organizes textile and apparel workers in the U.S. was also deeply involved. Why were North American trade unionists involved? Certainly not because UNITE was hoping to bring the Kukdong jobs back to the United States.

Many of the individual trade union activists within these organizations were, of course, driven by the same sort of “Aprincipled ideas or values” that motivated NGO activists. More important, North American unions saw Kukdong workers as key allies in their own domestic struggles to deligitimate corporate adversaries by exposing them as violators of basic human rights, and generating the kind of political advantage that is critical to the success of the kind of strategic campaigns that are the focus of contemporary labor contestation in the North.

Despite their importance, the industries in which effective transnational alliances built around basic rights framings are a limited set. For labor to become a global social movement a broader range of industries and workers must be involved. The idea of Asocial contract@ provides one basis for expanding organizational range.

Emblematic of the post World War II Agolden age of capitalism@ was the hegemony of the idea that relations between employers and employees were more than a simple exchange of labor for wages. The employment relation came to be seen as embodying a social contract, one in which competent, loyal employees could expect to be rewarded from the firm over the long-term. Employees also came to expect auxiliary benefits that were less tightly tied to job performance B primarily retirement, disability and health benefits, provided in combination by employers and the state.

Emblematic of the contemporary global neo-liberal regime is the effort to reconstruct employment as something closer to a spot market in which labor is bought and sold with only the most minimal expectations regarding a broader employment relation. Around the globe B from Mumbai to Johannesburg,

Shanghai to the Silicon Valley B jobs are being informalized, outsourced and generally divorced from anything that might be considered a social contract between employer and employee.

Precisely because the attack on the idea of labor as a social contract is generalized across all regions of the world, it creates a powerful basis for generating global labor solidarity. I will illustrate the point with two examples: the emerging relations of effective mutual support that join Metalworkers in Brazil and Germany and the successful leveraging of transnational solidarity by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) in the 1997 UPS strike. In addition to demonstrating again that the Ageography of jobs@ perspective cannot explain transnational relations among labor movements, these cases also further illustrate how the corporate structures that form the carapace of the global economy contain political opportunities as well as threats.

The long-term collaboration between IG Metal in Germany and the Brazilian Metalworkers affiliated with CUT (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores) provides a good example. In 2001, when IG Metal was starting its spring offensive in Germany, the members of the Brazilian Metalworkers union (CUT) working for Daimler-Chrysler sent their German counterparts a note affirming that they would not accept any increased work designed to replace lost production in Germany. This action grows out of longterm alliance between the two unions that exploits transnational corporate organizational structures for counter-hegemonic purposes and has proved to be of practical value to the Brazilian autoworkers in their struggle to maintain some semblance of a social contract in their employment relations. For example in the previous year when workers at Volkswagen=s biggest

factory in Brazil went on strike trying to reverse job cuts, Luis Marinho, President of CUT VW, was able to go to VW's world headquarters and negotiate directly with management there, by passing the management of the Brazilian subsidiary, and producing an agreement that restored the jobs.

The successful 1997 UPS Strike offers a North-North example of how transnational alliances can be built around the idea of social contract. One element in the victory was a very effective global strategy, one that took advantage previously under-exploited strengths in their own global organization & the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) (Banks & Russo, 1999). Through the ITF, a World Council of UPS unions was created & which decided to mount a World Action Day[®] in 150 job actions or demonstrations around the world. A number of European unions took action in support of the U.S. strikers. (Banks & Russo 1999: 550)

Why were the Europeans so willing to take risks for the sake of solidarity with the IBT in the US? The answer was summarized in one of the ITF's leaflets "UPS: importing misery from America". UPS was seen as representing the intrusion of the 'American Model' of aggressive anti-union behavior, coupled with the expansion of part-time and temporary jobs with low pay and benefits and the use of sub-contracting (Banks & Russo, 1999:561). The Europeans also knew that they had a much better chance of reining in UPS operating in concert with the 185,000 unionized UPS workers in the US than they would ever have by themselves. Solidarity made sense and the logic of competition based on the geography of jobs made no sense.

While the defending the idea of the employment relation as a social contract

is a project that will draw broad sympathy, the actual organizational efforts remain largely internal to organized labor. Other global social movements may be ideologically supportive, but not likely to be mobilized. Given the fact that those who enjoy the privilege of a formal employment relationship with union representation is a shrinking minority of the global population, the success of labor as a global social depends on being able to complement A social contract@ and A basic rights@ campaigns with other strategies that have the potential of generating broad alliances with a range of other social movements. Contestation framed in terms of A democratic governance@ offers just such an opportunity.

The hegemony of A democracy@ as the only acceptable form of governance is as pervasive a part of contemporary neo-liberal ideology as A basic human rights.@ However substantively undemocratic the operation of the global neo-liberal regime may be in practice, invocations of the principle of democratic governance politically powerful. Global governance institutions, whether in the form of organizations like the WTO or in the form of international agreements like the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) are politically vulnerable targets precisely because their procedures so often contradict neo-liberalism=s supposed commitment to democratic governance.

The FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) is a good case in point (Barenberg and Evans, forthcoming). In its fight to restructure the FTAA, the labor movement has been able to move beyond a “geography of jobs” perspective to one that focuses on range of social issues, democratic governance prominent among

them.⁴ The organization reflection of this politics is the Alianza Social Continental/Hemispheric Social Alliance ASC/HSA), a coalition of national umbrella organizations each of which represents a coalition of NGO=s or labor organizations. Heaquartered first in Mexico and then in Brazil, the ASC/HSA brings women’s groups and environmental groups together with ORIT (Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores – the hemispheric trade union organization to which the AFL-CIO and most other major national trade union confederations belong.).

The ACS/HSA is only one of the possible mobilizational structures that might be created to democratize the creation of the hemisphere=s new Aeconomic constitution@ (which is what the FTAA is in reality), but it is an excellent illustration of labor=s potential to become not just a global social movement, but a leading element in the broadest possible coalition of social movements. To understand the possibilities and challenges of connecting the labor movement with other transnational movements, there is no better place to start than with global feminism.

Building a Feminist Movement Without Borders: While the transnational women’s movement also has a long history, global neo-liberalism has brought issues of gender to the forefront of transnational social movement organizations in a dramatic way. Until there has been a revolutionary transformation of gender roles the disadvantages of allocating resources purely on the basis of market logic

⁴ For an analysis of an earlier evolution away from the geography of jobs perspective in the case of NAFTA, see Armruster, 1995, 1998; Kay, forthcoming.

will fall particularly harshly on women. The UNDP talks of a global “care deficit,” pointing out that women spend most of their working hours on unpaid care work and adding that “the market gives almost no rewards for care” (1999:80). Others have pointed out the extent to which ‘structural adjustment’ and other neo-liberal strategies for global governance contain a built-in, systematic gender bias (e.g. Cornia, Jolly and Stewart, 1987; Elson, 1991; Afshar and Dennis, 1992; Staudt, 1997). Consequently, it is almost impossible to imagine a movement for counter-hegemonic globalization in which a transnational women=s movement did not play a leading role.

At first glance, women’s organizations have an advantage over transnational labor movements in that they do not have to transcend a zero-sum logic equivalent to that of the “geography of jobs” which would put the gendered interests of women in one region in conflict with those in another region. Perhaps for that reason, the transnational women’s movement has been in the vanguard of transnational social movements in the attention that it has devoted to struggles over how to bridge the cultural and political aspects of the North-South divide and how to avoid the potential dangers of difference-erasing universalist agendas.

Like the labor movement, the women=s movement’s ideological foundations are rooted in a discourse of “human rights” (cf. Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Meyer, 2001), but transnational feminism, much more than in the labor movement, has wrestled with the contradictions of building politics around the universalistic language of rights. While no one can ignore the ways in which demanding recognition that “women’s rights are human rights” has helped empower oppressed and abused women across an incredible gamut of geographic, cultural and class

location, any earlier naïve assumptions that there was a single “one size fits all” global feminist agenda have been replaced by appreciation that the goal is more complex (see Basu and MGrory, 1995; Alvarez, 1998, 1999; Barlow, 2000; Bergeron, 2001; Naples and Desai, 2002; Vuola, 2002)

On the one hand, the adoption of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) by the UN might be considered the normative equivalent of the environmental movement’s victories in the Montreal accord to limit CFC’s and the Kyoto Accord on global warming. On the other hand, critical feminists have examined UN activities like the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women and accused them of perpetuating colonialist power relations under the guise of transnational unity (Spivak, 1996). Mohanty (2003:226) summarizes the conundrum nicely: “The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings more better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully.”

One of the consequences of this debate is to force Northern-base women’s organizations to develop a much more sophisticated perspective on development of “collective active frames” than the treatment normally found in the social movements literature. They have been forced to reflect on the ways in which supposedly universal agendas can become ideological impositions that erase the specific interests of less privileged participants in the movement. This awareness has, in turn, has the effect of strengthening the hand of local organizers in the South in their bargaining for greater autonomy and fuller recognition of their locally-defined interests and agendas.

Millie Thayer (2000, 2001, 2002) provides one of the most vivid and nuanced analyses of the debate “on the ground” within the transnational women’s movement. In her study of the relations between transnational feminist NGO’s and local women’s groups based in the backlands of rural Northeast Brazil, Thayer (2001) shows, first of all, that “global scripts,” in this case an article by Joan Scott on the concept of gender, can in fact “make sense” to local women embedded in families and involved in class as well as gender struggles. Because the concept of gender made sense for these women, and because of their creative ability to transform and reinterpret the concept to fit local circumstances, it helped them to advance their local struggles.

Thayer’s work also illustrates how the goals and ideologies of the transnational women’s movement (including their awareness of the possibilities of ‘colonialist attitudes’) limit the dominance of Northern NGOs, despite the enormous differences in resources between the local Brazilian group and its Northern allies. Access to the resources that are channeled through transnational networks does depend on the ability of locals to conform to more standardized administrative procedures that transnational support networks can understand and evaluate (Thayer, 2002). At the same time, Thayer’s analysis also makes it clear that the ideology and goals of Northern-based transnational NGO’s give local social movement organizations important political advantages in internal negotiations. Northern-based transnational NGO’s not only know that their legitimacy in the eyes of funders and Northern supporters rests on their ability to transform the lives of local groups in the South for the better. They themselves see service to these groups as their goal. Consequently, when a legitimate local group

questions whether their local interests and goals are being met, the question cannot simply be dismissed or suppressed. The “soft power” of norms and values is even more important within transnational movements than it is in their relations to dominant global structures, and this works to the advantage of the South.

If its explicit and persistent confrontation of dangers posed by the North-South divide within the movement makes the women’s movement an exemplar for other transnational social movements, its potential influence in the transformation of other movements is equally important. The potential impact of closer alliance between the women’s movement and the labor movement offers a good example. Patriarchal organizational forms and leadership styles continue to divide the labor movement from the women’s movement (c.f., for example, Bandy and Bickham-Mendez, 2003), but the survival of the labor movement globally clearly depends on its ability to become more feminist. Women are not just important to the labor movement because both genders are now thoroughly incorporated into the labor market, they are important because they occupy the positions in the global labor force that are most crucial to labor’s organizational expansion.

The numerically predominant situation of women in the global economy is one of precarious participation in the “informal economy” B a vast arena in which the traditional organizational tools of the transnational labor movement are least likely to be effective. Women in the informal sector experience the insecurity and lack of “social contract” that appear to be the neo-liberal destiny of all but a small minority of the workforce, regardless of gender. If members of established transnational unions like the Metalworkers are to succeed in building general political support for defending the “social contract” aspects of their employment

relation, their struggles must be combined with an equally aggressive effort to expand the idea of the social contract into the informal sector. In so far as the women's movement's campaigns around livelihood issues have focused particularly on the informal sector, it might be considered the vanguard of the labor movement as well as a leading strand in the movement for counter-hegemonic globalization more generally.

One response to the challenge of the informal sector, has been the diffusion of the "Self-employed Women's Association" (SEWA) as an organizational form, starting in India and spreading to South Africa, Turkey, and other countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa, and eventually creating incipient international networks such as "Homenet" and "Streetnet" (Mitter,1994). This is not only a novel form of labor organization. Since the archetypal site of informal sector employment is among the least privileged women of the global South it is simultaneously an organizational form that should help build the kind of "feminism without borders" that Mohanty (2003) argues is necessary to transcend the contradictions that have divided the international women's movement in the past.

Global and Local Environmentalism: In the last decades of the twentieth century, organizations that focused on environmental issues were the most rapidly expanding form of transnational NGO (Sikkink and Smith, 2002:30). Starting as an almost non-existent category in the 1950's, by the 1990 they had become the most prevalent form of transnational NGO outside of human rights groups. A case can be made that the global environmental movement has also been the most effective of any set of transnational social movements at changing both the global

discursive and regulatory environment. In short, the global environmental movement offers one of the best examples of “counter-hegemonic globalization” available. By the same token, the arena of environmental politics becomes one of the best sites for measuring the limits of counter-hegemonic globalization.

Environmental stewardship is almost by definition a collective issue and therefore an issue that should lend itself to collective mobilization. Even neo-classical economic theory recognizes that environmental degradation is an externality that markets may not resolve, especially if the externalities are split across national political jurisdictions. Thus, environmental movements have advantages, both relative to mobilization around labor issues, which neo-liberal ideology strongly claims must be resolved through market logic if welfare is to be maximized, and relative to women’s movements which are still bedeviled by claims that these issues are “private” and therefore not an appropriate target for collective political action (especially not collective political action which spills across national boundaries).

The obstacles to trying to build a global environmental movement are equally obvious. To begin with, there is the formidable gap that separates the South’s “environmentalism of the poor,” in which sustainability means above all else sustaining the ability of resource-dependent local communities to extract livelihoods from their natural surroundings, and the “conservationist” agenda of traditional Northern environmental groups, which favors the preservation of fauna and flora without much regard for how this conservation impacts the livelihoods of surrounding communities (Friedmann and Rangan, 1993; Guha, R. & J. Martínez-Alier, 1997; Martínez-Alier, 2002). The North-South divide in the global

environmental movement may be less susceptible to being portrayed as “zero-sum” than in the “geography of jobs” perspective on the labor movement, the logic of division appear more difficult to surmount than in the case of transnational feminism.

Even aside from the difficulties of superseding North-South divisions, integrating local and global concerns appears more daunting in the environmental arena. Some issues – such as global warming and the ozone layer – seem intrinsically global, while the politics of others, such as the health consequences of toxic dumps, can be intensely local. The challenges of building a global organization that effectively integrates locally-focused activities with global campaigns would seem particularly challenging in the case of the environmental movement.

Despite the structural challenges it faces, the global environmental movement is usually considered among the most successful of the transnational social movements. How do we explain the relative success of transnational movements with environmental agendas? The first point to be made is how strikingly parallel the political assets of the global environmental movement are to those of the labor and women’s movements, despite the obvious differences among them. This is true both of ideological resources and institutional ones. Once again, we see a counter-hegemonic movement leveraging the ideas and organizational structures implanted by hegemonic globalization.

As in the case of the labor and women’s movements, political clout depends on the global diffusion of a universalistic ideology affirming the value of the movement’s agenda. As the labor and women’s movements are able to leverage

the ideological power of abstract concepts like “human rights” and “democracy”, environmentalists can claim an impeccable universal agenda of “saving the planet” and invoke “scientific analysis” as validating their positions. As in the other two cases, these ideological resources are worth little without organizational structures that can exploit them and without complementary mobilization around quotidian interests. Nonetheless, the point is that once again, hegemonic ideological propositions are not simply instruments of domination; they are also a “toolkit” that can be used in potentially powerful ways for “subversive” ends.

The possibility of using governance structures that are part of hegemonic globalization also applies in the case of the environmental movement. Even more than in the case of the women’s movement, the UN system has proved an extremely valuable institutional resource. As in the case of the Women’s movement, global conferences organized by the UN have played a crucial role both in helping to solidify transnational networks and to promote and diffuse discursive positions. Pulver’s (2003) research on climate change negotiations provides one of the most sophisticated analyses of how the institutional resources provided by the UN system can be leveraged by transnational environmental movements (see also Lipschutz and Mayer, 1996; Betsill and Corell, 2001; Caniglia, 2000).

In Pulver’s view, the UN climate policy process, including the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) organized to review and assess the implementation of the FCCC, provide an institutional arena that works to the advantage of transnational environmental NGOs in three ways, even though the negotiations are formally between national delegations. First, negotiations take place in an atmosphere of

“public-ness” – not only in the sense that proceedings are for the most part open to public scrutiny but also in the sense that positions must be justified in terms of the “public good” rather than simply presented as reflecting particular interests which must be taken into account because of their proponents power. This kind of discursive context lends itself naturally to arguments about stewardship and the promotion of sustainability while it is much more awkward to introduce corporate concerns with managerial prerogatives and profitability.

Equally important, according to Pulver, the “public” actors who manage the process on behalf of the UN system tend to be drawn from “epistemic communities” (Haas, 1992) in which “science” and “stewardship” are valued. (Indeed, even the national delegations that end up at the COPs are more likely to be sympathetic to these values.) Finally, both prevailing ideology and the preferences of meeting managers give environmental NGO representatives a degree of influence on the negotiations between national delegations that rivals or surpasses that of business and industry representatives. In this case at least, global governance institutions have given transnational social movements an opportunity to shape an emerging regulatory regime, which has the potential to substantially modify the market logic of neo-liberal globalization.

One might argue that climate change is a special case, that because climate change is an intrinsically global issue, it was possible to mount a global campaign without strong local foundations that transcend the North-South divide. This may be correct. Nonetheless, other examples suggest that transnational environmental networks can still make effective use of global governance institutions, even when local foundations and North-South solidarity are crucial.

Chico Mendes and his Amazonian Rubber Tappers, as chronicled by Keck (1995, 1998) and Keck and Sikkink (1998), are the classic case. Transnational environmental NGO's interested in preserving Amazonian forests and an organized local peasantry desperate to preserve their extractive livelihoods in the face of the depredations of local ranchers were able to jointly use the transnational connections that linked the Brazilian government, the World Bank and parochial but powerful U.S. politicians to generate leverage that neither the transnational NGO's nor the Rubber Tappers could have dreamed of separately. Despite Mendes' assassination, the fruits of his fight were institutionalized in important ways in the subsequently environmentalist Workers' Party Government in Mendes' home state of Acre (Evans, 2000).

Such successes depend on combinations of circumstance that are still unusual (as Keck and Sikkink's [1998] comparison of Acre and Sawarak illustrates). Nonetheless, they are also not aberrations. The worldwide movement to limit the development of large dams also brings local communities with immediate quotidian livelihood interests at stake (saving their homes from inundation) together with transnational environmental NGO networks. As in the Rubber Tapper case, the political vulnerability of the World Bank has made it possible to use the machinery of global governance for counter-hegemonic purposes and both ideology and practice at the global level have been shifted (see Khagram, 1999).

Closer alliance with the women's movement could help bridge the global-local divide. The issues of urban "livability" that are becoming increasingly central environmental issues in the South are gendered in their impact. As in the

case of the gendered impact of structural adjustment programs, the fact that women shoulder a disproportionate share of the responsibilities for caring for children and families forces them to bear the brunt of bad urban sanitation, precarious water supplies, and pollution-related disease. To the extent that prominent transnational environmental organizations like Greenpeace, Environmental Defense or the WWF were willing to focus more attention on such issues, it would help bridge both North-South and global-local divides.

Unless such opportunities are seized, the transnational environmental movement could move in a direction that will undercut its potential contribution to counter-hegemonic globalization. The intensive, wide-spread, decades-old debate over how to make sure that the women's movement fully reflects the perspectives and interests of its largest constituency (disprivileged women in the global south) rather than its most powerful members (elite women in the global north), appears to have a harder time getting traction in the transnational environmental movement.

The fact that the "scientific analysis" paradigm provides significant advantage to environmentalists in battles against degradation by corporate (and state) polluters may become a disadvantage when it comes to engaging in internal debates over competing visions within the transnational environmental movement, making it easier for northern activists to assume that the solutions to environmental issues in the South can be "objectively" defined from afar rather than having to emerge out of debate and discussion with those immediately involved (cf. Li, T. M. 2000; York 2002). None of this is to suggest that the environmental movement is doomed to go astray or end up fragmented. The point is that just as there is no "natural logic" that dictates the inevitability of a corporate

neo-liberal trajectory for globalization, even the most successful counter-hegemonic movements have no functionalist guardian angels that will prevent them from undercutting their own potential.

The Potential and Pitfalls of Counter-Hegemonic Globalization: I have focused here on positive examples, first in the form of the general organizational advances represented by ATTAC and the World Social Forum and then in the form of successes drawn from the transnational labor, womens' and environmental movements. Efforts at counter-hegemonic globalization do help shift the balance in local struggles in favor of the disprivileged. >From apparel workers, to poor rural women, to rubber tappers, there are numerous examples of how creating transnational connections can put new power into the hands of groups that face insurmountable odds at the local level. Counter-hegemonic globalization has also made some headway with respect to global regulatory regimes. Nonetheless, any progress at the level of the global regulatory regime in what are defined as "non-economic" areas has been more than counter-balanced by the deepening institutionalization of neo-liberal rules with regard to trade, investment and property.

If discounting the potential of counter-hegemonic globalization would be a serious analytic error, exaggerating its potential or discount the pitfalls that lie in wait for these movements as they develop would, as I underlined in the beginning of this essay, be an equally serious error. Now, with a better sense of the organizational and ideological structure of counter-hegemonic globalization, it is time to revisit the issue of limitations and pitfalls.

The most basic limitation is that none of the successes discussed here offers a direct prospect of shifting the basic trajectory of current struggles over the shape of global trade and property rule. As the September, 2003 WTO ministerial in Cancun indicated, putting sand in the gears of the neo-liberal global project depends on new creating political alliances that involve states as well as social movements. Future battles of this type over everything from the FTAA to the completion of the Doha Round, will be crucial to any future possibility for building counter-hegemonic globalization. Transnational social movements, even in alliance with each other cannot reshape these negotiations without collective action on the part of national delegations from the global South. Constructing a globally inclusive version of “embedded liberalism” (Ruggie, 1982) – a reasonable minimal measure for the success of counter-hegemonic globalization – is an even more distant goal. Ruggie’s (1994:525) assessment that “[c]onstructing a contemporary analog to the embedded liberalism compromise will be a Herculean task” has not been substantially changed by the more recent successes of transnational social movements.

Current limitations should not, however, be discouraging in themselves. The politics of counter-hegemonic globalization are a politics of institution-building and alliance formation, ideological innovation and re-framing, of the accretive accumulation of “soft power, leading, if successful, to “normative cascades” and real shifts in the balance of power. If a long succession of small victories (inevitably intermingled with defeats) leads eventually to major transformation, the process will only make sense to skeptics well after the fact, much as the abolition of slavery and women’s suffrage seem plausible (perhaps even ‘inevitable’) after

the fact (cf. Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

Pitfalls are a more immediate concern than apparent limitations. The kind of creative re-framing that has allowed the labor movement to shift from pre-occupation with the geography of jobs to a focus on fighting for basic rights, the social contract and democratic governance is always vulnerable to being overwhelmed by immediate defensive concerns. Transnational environmental organizations are always in danger of slipping back into a traditional conservation/preservation perspective that leaves little space for building bridges to the resource-dependent poor of the global south. Despite its continual efforts at self-reflection, steering a course between false universalism and unreflective particularism continues to challenge the transnational women's movement. In all three cases, finding ways to embody unifying framings in concrete organizational alliances is an even tougher challenge. Unless they can avoid the pitfalls that lie in their own organizational paths, superseding their current macro-political limitations is a utopian dream.

Realistic awareness of limitations and pitfalls must be balanced against the basic point established in the initial rendition of optimistic examples. Global neo-liberalism is not just a structure of domination it is also a set of ideological and organizational structures vulnerable to being leveraged by oppositional movements.

Global neo-liberalism's aggressive efforts to spread the dominion of market logic make it easier for diverse movement to mount a common program. As the gap between the formal hegemony of global neo-liberalism's ideological program and its substantive manifestations grows more stark – most obviously in the case of

“democracy” – shared opportunities for leveraging these ideological presuppositions increase.

Ideologically neo-liberal globalization generates a transnational ideological toolkit that counter-hegemonic movements can draw on in parallel ways from a variety of different social locations. Structurally, global neo-liberalism helps promote possibilities for alliance by different groups situated in divergent national contexts in similarly disadvantaged positions. Organizationally, contemporary transnational opportunities reinforce the point, made by Tilly (e.g. 1991,1995) and Tarrow (1998) among others at the national level, that just as oppositional movements can turn dominant ideological repertoires to their advantage, they can also take advantage of existing governance structures. In some cases, such as the environmental and women’s movements leveraging of the UN system to help build transnational links and gain access to public space, the possibilities are obvious. In other cases, such as the use of the World Bank by the rubber tappers or the leveraging of corporate structures via brand names and basic rights, they are only obvious after the fact.

Acknowledging the potential for use of dominant governance structures, brings us back to the cases with which we begin – ATTAC and the World Social Forum. Leveraging dominant structures will work only when there are comparable oppositional organizations and networks available to do the leveraging. Ultimately, the scope of these mobilizational structures must transcend issue-specific and group-specific organizations. “Global civil society” (Lipschutz and Mayer, 1996; Wapner, 1995) requires an organized agent of equivalent scope if it is to dislodge the highly organized system of domination that sustains global neo-

liberalism. A new (post)modern prince in the form of a “World Party” as advocated by Gill (2002) and Chase-Dunn and Boswell (2003), is probably too much of a leap, but trying to develop some kind of omnibus transnational form still makes sense.

The end result is likely to look more like a network than a bureaucratic tree and, by definition, will require unexpected organizational innovations. ATTAC and the World Social Forum are encouraging precisely because their unexpected organizational forms have been so successful. They have created new possibilities for concatenation among existing transnational networks as well as adding organizational innovations of their own. Novel organizational forms like these are reassurance that, whether or not the possibility of another world has been demonstrated, the potential for a more robust and politically formidable movement for counter-hegemonic globalization is a social fact.

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