Constructing 'The Anti-Globalisation Movement'
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Abstract

This paper interrogates the claim that a transnational anti-globalisation social movement has emerged. I draw on constructivist social movement theory, globalisation studies, feminist praxis and activist websites to make two main arguments, mapping on to the two parts of the paper. First, a movement has indeed emerged, albeit in a highly contested and complex form with activists, opponents and commentators constructing competing movement identities. This paper is itself complicit in such a process – and seeks to further a particular construction of the movement as a site of radical-democratic politics. Second, the movement is not anti-globalisation in any straightforward sense. Focusing their opposition on globalised neoliberalism and corporate power, activists represent their movement either as anti-capitalist or as constructing alternative kinds of globalised relationships. Threading through both my arguments is a normative plea to confront the diverse relations of power involved in both globalisation and movement construction in order that globalised solidarities be truly democratic. This is to challenge hierarchical visions of how best to construct 'the anti-globalisation movement'.

Introduction

This paper asks a deceptively simple question: is there a transnational anti-globalisation social movement?

Some critics of the movement have already produced its obituary. They point to the failure to rival the spectacle of the Battle of Seattle and, more fundamentally, to the ramifications of the September 11 attacks. The space for protest is understood to have closed down and the movement been thrown into an identity crisis (see discussion in Martin, 2003; Callinicos, 2003: 16-19). I am not responding in this paper to such contentious claims, nor to the undoubtedly changing conjuncture for activism. Rather I want to interrogate the more basic proposition that there has ever been such a thing as 'an anti-globalisation movement'.

This is not a particularly original course of enquiry but it is one that has not yet been undertaken in my discipline of International Relations (IR) in a systematic way. Phenomena associated with 'the anti-globalisation movement' have been widely discussed by IR scholars (e.g. Falk, 1999; Gills, 2000; Sklair, 2002; Glasius et al., 2002; Held and McGrew, 2002; Gill, 2003). Activist tactics, ideologies and organisations may be assessed (e.g. Halliday, 2000) but generally the focus is on non-governmental organisations or civil society; global power and governance; or the politics of resistance. This tendency to avoid the concept of 'movement' could stem from a tacit agreement with those who fear it imposes totalising and hierarchical assumptions about anti-globalisation identity and organisation (e.g. Esteva and Prakash, 1998: 13; Whitaker, 2003). I will argue below that it is more accurate to think of movements as heterogeneous and continually reconstructed. More pertinently here, I think avoidance is more likely to derive from the general neglect in IR of 'social movements' and social movement theory. Movements have traditionally been seen as located in the social and therefore in the domain of sociology. They disrupt

the usual categories of state-centric, pluralist or structuralist IR and are difficult to assess through the dominant IR methodologies of empiricist quantification, analysis of historical continuities or marxist materialism (Eschle and Stammers, forthcoming).

This paper does not provide a straightforward empirical (and empiricist) response that recounts evidence of activism in order to trace the outlines of 'the anti-globalisation movement'. There are many surveys by activists and commentators that can be consulted for that purpose, of which I will provide a short summary later. I want to focus more on conceptual, methodological and political issues: what do the labels 'social movement' and 'anti-globalisation' mean? On what theoretical and empirical resources could we draw to find out? On what basis have some interpretations become dominant over others? What are the ramifications of intervening in such debates, for IR theorists as well as activists?

In what follows, I adopt an eclecticism which is both pragmatic (given space constraints and the lack of similar work in IR) and principled (derived from a belief in the importance of paying attention to multiple discourses of activism and anti-globalisation). I draw on various theories, including constructivist social movement theory and feminism. I also foreground activist representations of themselves, from publications and from the websites of the following groupings: *Peoples' Global Action*, an anarchistically-inclined network of local organisations, founded in Geneva in order to expand the transnational solidarity work begun by the Zapatistas in Mexico; the *World Social Forum*, a vast gathering of diverse activists held parallel to the World Economic Forum, the culmination of a rolling process of national and regional activist meetings intended to generate visions of alternative worlds; and the British group *Globalise Resistance*, a membership organisation run predominantly by activists associated with the Socialist Workers' Party.

In the first part of what follows, I focus on the notion of a 'social movement'. I argue that a movement has indeed emerged, albeit in a highly contested and complex form with activists, opponents and commentators constructing competing movement identities. This paper is itself complicit in such a process – and seeks to further a particular construction of the movement as a site of radical-democratic politics. In the second part, I examine 'anti-globalisation'. Focusing their opposition on globalised neoliberalism and corporate power, activists represent their movement either as anti-capitalist or as constructing alternative kinds of globalised relationships. Threading through both parts of the paper is a normative plea to confront the diverse relations of power involved in both globalisation and movement construction, as many commentators and activists are already doing, in order that globalised solidarities be truly democratic. This is to challenge hierarchical visions of how best to construct 'the anti-globalisation movement'. I conclude by emphasising the importance of the self-understanding of movement activists for theorising globalisation and resistance in IR.

I. Constructing a Movement

I couldn't escape a growing conviction that what I was seeing was the fumbling birth of a genuinely new political movement – something international, something different and something potentially huge. (Kingsnorth, 2003: 8)

Many activists and commentators have remarked upon what they see as the emergence of a new movement in recent years. Surveys typically include some variation of the following: the armed rebellion of the Zapatistas against NAFTA and the Mexican state; high-profile protests against corporate power, free trade and international financial institutions; environmental groups; campaigns against third world debt; student anti-sweatshop activism in North America; struggles against the privatisation of utilities and basic resources; organised labour and Trades Unions (e.g. Bircham and Charlton, 2001; Danaher and Burbach, 2000; Cockburn et al., 2000; Globalise Resistance, 2002a). Paul Kingsnorth (2003), quoted above, also includes West Papuan struggles for independence, and Amory Starr (2000), whose account remains perhaps the most thorough, adds small business campaigners, peace activists and religious nationalists. There is certainly plentiful evidence here of the proliferation of resistances. But the question remains: how can such radically diverse activities be taken as evidence of the existence of a - single, new - movement?

In part, this depends on what is meant by a 'movement'. Here the field of social movement theory may be helpful. The earliest systematic approach in this field defined its subject as 'crowd psychology' and 'collective behaviour', focusing on large-scale mobilisations in the streets as a sign of social dysfunction and irrationality (e.g. Smelser, 1962). More recently, 'resource mobilisation' theorists have interpreted social movements as the rational result of individuals coming together to pursue collective interests. This approach focuses on the enabling effect of available social resources, particularly the role of movement 'entrepreneurs' in formal organisations (e.g. McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Developing on these foundations, 'political opportunity structures' theorists emphasise changes in the political context and particularly in state structures (e.g. Tarrow, 1998). The impact of globalisation on the state and thus on movements has received some attention recently in this approach (Tarrow, n.d.; Smith et al., 1997). Indeed, it is here we find a few analyses of 'the anti-globalisation movement' itself (Smith and Johnston, 2002). The focus generally remains on organisations oriented toward political institutions; and/or on the material and cultural resources used by such organisations to 'frame' their goals and mobilise supporters. This focus is challenged by the 'new social movement' (NSM) school, which begins from the assumption that there have been profound changes in recent activism, responding to structural shifts in late modernity. Movements are depicted as organised in socially embedded, diffuse, horizontal networks; as primarily concerned with culture and identity; and as aiming to constrain state and economic power rather than to gain access to it (e.g. Cohen, 1982; Melucci, 1989). This movement form is seen to be spreading around the world in conditions of cultural globalisation (Melucci, 1996a).

There are problems with all of these approaches, but the key thing I want to point to here is the perhaps rather surprising fact that there is no agreement about what a social movement actually is (Diani, 2000). Some theorists include mobilisation on the basis of identity, others emphasise shared interest; some emphasise irrationality, others rationality; some emphasise formal organisation, others horizontal networks; some institutionally-orientated lobbying, others extra-institutional activism. I want to suggest that all these forms and orientations can be part of movement activism; indeed, they can co-exist within the same movement. Mario Diani makes it clear that, although 'social movements are not organisations', organisations may well be part of a movement. Indeed, 'bureaucratic interest groups and even political parties' can be included (2000: 165-167). But he also insists that a social movement need not give rise to any formal organisations at all. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato

argue that movements typically have 'dual faces' and adopt a 'dual strategy': 'a discursive politics of identity and influence that targets civil and political society and an organized, strategically rational politics of inclusion and reform that is aimed at political and economic institutions' (1992: 550). In sum, the claim here is that movements are *typically* diverse in organisational form and orientation.

Thus the diversity apparent amongst modes of 'anti-globalisation' activism does not exclude the possibility that a movement has emerged. However, if we cannot judge when a movement has emerged by recourse to empirical evidence of a specific ideological or organisational formation, how can we identify one? In other words, on what basis can it be asserted that 'an anti-globalisation movement' has indeed emerged? I suggest that *we know that movements exist when activists claim that they are part of one and participate in efforts to define 'their' movement in particular ways*. This requires attention to activist representations of themselves.

I adopt this idea from social movement theorist Alberto Melucci's 'constructivist' approach (1989; 1996a).[1] Melucci's starting point is a critique of the assumption that movements act as 'unified empirical datum' or 'personages' – with coherent identities, pre-formed interests and a single will. He defines a social movement as 'a composite action system, in which differing means, ends and forms of solidarity and organization converge in a more or less stable manner' (1989: 28). In other words, movements are ongoing processes in which diverse actors construct a common frame of reference. One element in this construction, or one result of it (Melucci is elusive on this point), is the formation of a collective identity through which participants establish relationships to each other, locate themselves in their environment, differentiate themselves from others, and gain recognition as a collectivity. Approaching 'the anti-globalisation movement' in the light of this claim, it becomes evident that common identity themes can be found on the websites of Peoples' Global Action (n.d.), the World Social Forum (2002) and Globalise Resistance (2002a). All insist that participants share opposition to free trade, corporate power and international financial institutions. They all claim to support extra-institutional, direct action as a key mode of struggle. Further, they all state that they recognise the diversity of the movement as a strength. Significant differences remain, of which more below, but Melucci's framework implies that identity is forged through a *continuous* process of ongoing communication, negotiation and decision-making among participants; total agreement and closure is thus not to be expected. The key point is that activists have to participate in a shared process through which identity is (re)negotiated. The websites of Peoples' Global Action, Globalise Resistance and the World Social Forum all indicate that their participants see themselves as part of a wider struggle and explicitly appeal to others identified with that struggle.

For Melucci, identity-formation processes occurs largely within 'subterranean' networks through which people meet face-to-face in everyday life, with movements only occasionally surfacing as visible, public actors. It is this subterranean dimension of activism that should thus be the focus of those studying movement construction (1989: 70-73; 1996a: 113-116). However, this approach needs modification when considering the possibility of 'an anti-globalisation movement'. First, there is the widely recognised significance of the internet in constructing networks among geographically dispersed activists who may never actually meet. There needs to be more critical interrogation of the limitations that a reliance on the internet for networking, and for studying the movement, brings with it. It is possible that a 'geekocracy' is emerging (Klein, 2002: 18); many groups are excluded from access to

the internet and thus from many conceptualisations of the movement; and 'virtual' connections may remain rather weak.

Second, it would seem that collective identity has also congealed in the face-to-face but highly visible, public gatherings at Seattle, Prague, Genoa, Porto Alegre and elsewhere. These have received an extraordinary emphasis in much activist commentary as well as catching the eye of some academics (e.g. Cockburn et al., 2000; Smith, 2002). They may be particularly key in transnational movements in which subterranean networks are otherwise 'virtual' or stretched very thinly over great distances. In the case of 'the anti-globalisation movement' they have also functioned to construct the movement in ways that foreground the travelling protestor and the politics of the spectacle. Again, this means that other kinds of activism are marginalised within the movement and our understandings of it, particularly ongoing community-based struggles (Dixon, n.d.; Crass, n.d.).

Third, Melucci's exclusive emphasis on the role of participants in movement construction can be criticised for ignoring the possible role of exterior social processes, public discourses and other actors. In the case of 'the anti-globalisation movement', it has been suggested that the limited and largely negative representation of the movement in the mainstream media is one factor behind the proliferation of alternative, independent media. These aim to represent movement activism to its participants and to the public in a more positive, nuanced, light (Rodgers, 2002). Or see Naomi Klein's book of 'dispatches from the front lines of the globalization debate' (2002). Klein is centrally concerned to respond to elite, police and media representations of the movement as violent, as the politics of the spectacle, and as 'anti-globalisation', and to put forward alternatives. Evidently, representations of the movement by external actors have political implications and can act as a spur to new identity constructions by movement activists.

This brings me to the possibility that academic analyses may also play a role in movement construction. Indeed, Alex Callinicos argues that '[o]ne reason we can talk about a global *movement* is that it has found ideological articulation in a body of critical writing produced by a variety of intellectuals' (2003: 9, emphasis in original). Callinicos draws attention to the high-profile figures crossing between academia and activism, directly intervening in movement construction. However, I want to extend this point and make the case that even those apparently external to a movement, engaged in study of it for solely academic purposes, are also engaged in its construction. Melucci (1996b) and others are critical of the empiricist assumption that we study movements as pre-existing objects 'out there'; rather, it is the researcher who constructs the social movement they are studying by interpreting activism through a particular lens. This is a strong version of the post-positivist view now widespread in IR that academic study is both shaped by and constitutive of the world around it: we approach the world from a particular perspective and our work can have concrete effects upon it. It means that social movement theory is implicated in the interaction through which a social movement is constructed and should thus be self-consciously interrogated in the process of research.

Further, I want to suggest that the study of social movements is a political act. In taking the possibility of a particular movement seriously, social movement scholars are helping to call it into existence. They are using the label persuasively, to give scholarly and political legitimacy to their research and its subject matter. This paper, for example, is contributing to an academic discourse that claims diverse moments of 'anti-globalisation' activism do indeed constitute a movement that should be taken seriously. What is more, I seek in this paper to encourage the construction of a

particular kind of movement. I want to draw attention to a strand of activism that aims to confront hierarchical power relations in the movement and to reconstruct it as a site of radical-democratic politics.

Now, Melucci's framework does not pay sustained attention to the power relations through which some movement identities become dominant over others. Most approaches to social movements, and most activists, focus rather on the power relations in the wider social context, which may enable effective mobilisation or present a target. Movements themselves are typically presented as somehow outside or below power relations: as intrinsically counter-hegemonic or emancipatory; as part of a power-free, global civil society; or as new movements unconcerned with claiming power. In my view, this idealised view of movements has been challenged nowhere so thoroughly as within feminism, and we can find resources here to further modify the constructivist framework. Feminists argue that power is pervasive in social life, including in intimate relationships. They have reflected extensively on their marginalisation within radical movements. They also continue to struggle to take on board the differences and inequalities between women (Eschle, 2001: chapters 3 and 4). The interventions of black and third world feminists have been particularly key here, exposing and challenging racist hierarchies within feminist organising (Collins, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). It has thus become a central concern for feminists to pay attention to the power relations at work within movement organising; to work out who is included and excluded.

This encourages me to search for the women and the feminists in 'the anti-globalisation movement'. Although women, particularly young women, are heavily involved and there are also a few, high-profile women leaders (see Egan and Robidoux, 2001), such women rarely speak as feminists. Further, there is only limited recognition beyond explicitly feminist groups that gender is a source of power. Peoples' Global Action is an exception, including a rejection of patriarchy in its hallmarks and a critique of gender oppression in its manifesto (Peoples' Global Action, n.d.; 1998). The World Social Forum has a more ambiguous, if improving, record. At the first Forum, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001, feminist groups had to fight at a late stage to get their perspectives onto the agenda. At the second Forum, in 2002, feminist lobbying resulted in the naming of patriarchy as a source of oppression in key Forum declarations and in themed panels on the connections between domestic violence, militarism, gender inequality and fundamentalism. However, the Organizing Committee was still male-dominated and the supposedly more radical Youth Camp remained impervious to analysis of gender inequality. Further shifts occurred at the third Forum, in 2003, with a visible feminist presence emerging in the Youth Camp to fight against the sidelining of women and their concerns (see DAWN, 2002a and b; Grzybowski, 2002; Vargas, 2002; Burrows, 2002; Beaulieu and Giovanni, 2003). Globalise Resistance appears most resistant to feminism, with some women members claiming they face gender hierarchies in both political organising and personal relationships, and lamenting the secondary status of resistance to such hierarchies (Hoyles, 2003; Rodino, 2003). Such feminist critiques of 'the anti-globalisation movement' are paralleled by those of anti-racist organisers who have asked, for example, why the Battle of Seattle was so white (Martinez, 2000), and called for further work to be done by the World Social Forum to integrate Black, African and indigenous perspectives into the agenda-setting process (Marin, 2002). In short, some activist voices and struggles are systematically privileged over others.

Clearly, 'the anti-globalisation movement' does not operate outside globalised economic, gendered, racialised and geopolitical power relations but is bound up within them and reflects them. It is also possible - as many white, western, middle-class women have been forced to admit within the feminist movement - that those in a more structurally privileged position reinforce their position by promulgating a movement identity and strategy that fails to challenge and even reproduces hierarchies that shape the lives of those less privileged than themselves.

I would suggest that there are two, interrelated, efforts to construct 'the anti-globalisation movement' currently taking place that are particularly problematic from this point of view. The first aims to reorientate the movement as primarily and above all else an anti-capitalist movement, rooted in working class organisation and marxist ideology. As the feminist laments within Globalise Resistance show, this can have marginalising effects. The ideological basis of this move will be discussed in the next section. The second, related, effort to construct the movement in ways that function to marginalise others can be found in attempts to create unity along formally structured, centralised, and ultimately hierarchical, lines. On this point, marxist vanguardists and social democratic reformists are in tacit agreement. For example, critics of the World Social Forum have pointed to the influence of both the campaigning group ATTAC France and the Brazilian Worker's Party over the organisation of the Forum, and to the resultant privileging of the 'big men' of the left and of a lecture-based, hierarchical, plenary format (Coletivo Contra-a-Corrente, 2000; Milstein, 2002; Klein, 2003). The criticisms have been sharper with regards to Globalise Resistance. It should be acknowledged that the website of this organisation has links to many different groups and its newsletter makes some effort for dialogue with non-affiliated voices (e.g. Globalise Resistance, 2001). But there is also a consistent stress on the need for 'acting in unity' (Globalise Resistance, 2002b) and the organisation has been attacked for its apparent attempt to take on the leadership of the movement in the UK (see discussion in Kingsnorth, 2003: 232-233).[2]

Although such attempts may have had some success in shaping the movement in the UK, they have not succeeded in achieving dominance over the movement on a transnational scale and are widely challenged. As Klein puts it:

> At the moment, the anti-corporate street activists are ringed by would-be leaders, eager for the opportunity to enlist activists as foot soldiers for their particular vision … It is to this young movement's credit that it has as yet fended off all these agendas and has rejected everyone's generously donated manifesto, holding out for an acceptably democratic, representative process to take its resistance to the next stage. (Klein, 2002: 26-27)

Klein and others point to the existence of a resilient, radical-democratic strand within the movement. This can be attributed to the influence of anarchism, which reaches far beyond self-declared anarchist groups like Ya Basta! and the Black Bloc to encompass groups that are not explicitly anarchist such as Peoples' Global Action and large-scale actions like the Seattle protest. These share an emphasis on direct action and civil disobedience; on non-hierarchical, decentralised, self-organised modes of activism centred on affinity groups; on participatory, inclusive and consensus-based decision-making processes; and on 'prefiguring' ways of living and acting in a transformed world (Graeber, 2002; Epstein, 2001; Klein, 2002: 17-21, 34-36; Rupert, 2002). Some commentators claim that this strand of the movement defies

old political categories and is instead symptomatic of a new, 'postmodern' politics (Burbach, 2001; Esteva and Prakash, 1998). The Zapatistas seem to be the most important source of such politics. There are clear affinities between the Zapatistas and anarchism in the emphasis on local autonomy and participatory democracy, rooted in a belief in the need to decentralise and devolve power (e.g. Kingsnorth, 2003: 31, 44-45). But in addition, attention is drawn to the displacement of modern ideology by story telling emphasising the absurd, the poetic and the everyday (Higgins, 2000). Culture and the media are identified as key terrains of struggle. Further, it is argued that the notion of transnational solidarity has been reconstructed to include an emphasis on the need for a diversity of ways of life to flourish - what Gustavo Esteva calls 'one no, many yeses' (interviewed in Kingsnorth, 2003: 44) or a 'pluriverse' (Esteva and Prakash, 1998: 36). Whether or not the postmodern categorisation is widely accepted by activists, the principles and practices implied by it certainly are - witness the refusal of the World Social Forum to issue a final declaration on which all participants have agreed. Taken together, proponents of this postmodern-cum-anarchist politics are attempting to construct 'the anti-globalisation movement' in radically democratic, non-hierarchical and inclusive ways, in direct opposition to attempts to organise the movement more hierarchically through centralised, representative procedures.

It is here that we reach an important ideological affinity with more radical feminist approaches to movement construction. Of course, not all groups based on anarchistic principles are friendly to feminism or to women, particularly versions emphasising militarised confrontation with the state. Conversely, not all feminism is friendly to anarchism (or to postmodernism). Note for example the critical commentary on the 'NGOization' of transnational feminism and the limitations of its turn to 'mainstreaming' within international institutions (e.g. Alvarez, 1999). There is some evidence that this has constrained feminist participation in the more anarchistic sectors of the World Social Forum (Waterman, 2002: 6). But the more radical elements of feminism have long emphasised the need within their own movement to equalise power between participants, enabling diverse voices to be heard; to achieve consensus through participatory dialogue; to treat other participants in the dialogue holistically and empathetically (see Eschle, 2001: chapters 4 and 6). So there does seem significant potential for overlap here. Peoples' Global Action appears to have combined feminist analysis of gendered hierarchies with a radically democratic, devolved framework and feminist elements within the World Social Forum continue to push for a fuller integration. The further consolidation of the position of feminism within a radical-democratic strand of 'anti-globalisation' activism is surely to be encouraged if feminism is to maintain its radical edge and if 'the anti-globalisation movement' is to be constructed on a truly democratic, inclusive basis.

However, experience within the feminist movement does urge a final qualification. It has been argued that overly idealised applications of the radical-democratic model generated hidden, informal hierarchies and suppressed difference and dissent in the name of consensus. Such problems were one factor in the subsequent splintering of feminist organising on the basis of more distinct ideologies and identities. This in turn generated its own problems of factionalism and exclusion. Out of this experience, a feminist politics of coalition or alliance has emerged (e.g. Reagon, 1998). Black and third world feminists in particular have insisted that struggles for social change need to connect with one another on a strategic basis in recognition of the need to tackle multiple and 'shifting currents of power' (Sandoval, 1995: 218). This connection needs to be based on transparent, developed mechanisms

of participation and open dialogue, which recognise that consensus is limited to specific issues and specific times (see Eschle, 2001: chapters 4 and 6). Arguably, this approach does not entail abandoning the radical-democratic approach to movement construction but refining it. It insists on the need to build connections as well as to celebrate diversity; to do so on a strategic and democratic basis rather than work toward complete consensus; and to think through concrete procedures for democratic movement construction. There are important practical lessons here for the radical-democratic strand in 'the anti-globalisation movement'.

This first part has examined the concept of 'social movement'. I have pointed out that there is no agreement on a definition of the concept, and outlined a constructivist approach that emphasises the importance of activists' representations of themselves. My examination of 'anti-globalisation' activist commentary and websites has confirmed the possibility that a movement exists, albeit in a highly contested and complex form with activists constructing overlapping and sometimes contradictory movement identities. I have also put forward a normative argument, informed by feminist praxis, for the need to be aware of the power relations through which some activists are marginalised. Further, I have drawn attention to the fact that the accounts of opponents and commentators, including academic social movement theorists, are implicated in movement construction. I have sought explicitly here to highlight and support one particular strand of 'the anti-globalisation movement', one which resonates with anarchist, 'postmodern' and feminist organising and which seeks to construct movement activism on a radically democratic basis, in opposition to more hierarchical forms of movement organising. I want now to turn in the second part of the paper to what it means to be 'anti-globalisation'.

II. Globalise This!

My concern with terminology is to do with the role that differing discourses of 'globalization' play in the taking up of political positions. The discourse of being pro- or anti-globalization is a case in point. (Brah, 2002: 34)

The 'anti-globalisation' label became widespread after the Seattle demonstration, apparently 'a coinage of the US media' (Graeber, 2002: 63). However, it is important to realise that the term is strongly contested amongst activists – and that many, if not most, reject the label 'anti-globalisation' entirely.

So what is it, exactly, that activists oppose? Although there has been significant attention recently to militarism in the context of the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, it seems to me that most activist accounts in recent years have focused more centrally on phenomena associated with *economic* globalisation: the increasing power of corporations, the growing role of international financial institutions, and the neoliberal policies of trade liberalisation and privatisation propounded by the latter and from which the former benefit. These are seen to produce economic inequality, social and environmental destruction, and cultural homogenisation. They are also accused of leaching power and self-determination away from people and governments - of being anti-democratic. Such an interpretation of 'the enemy' chimes with many commentaries on the movement (e.g. Starr, 2000; Danaher and Burbach, 2000; Burbach, 2001; Klein, 2002). It can also be discerned on activist websites. The Charter of Principles of the World Social Forum (2002) declares participant groups

'opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism'. The declaration of principles on the Globalise Resistance site (2002a) indicates that it is primarily against the extension of corporate power over people's lives under the heavy hand of international financial institutions like the World Trade Organisation and International Monetary Fund. The group's newsletters then target the exploitative practices of particular multinational corporations as well as drawing attention to problems of debt and financial restructuring. Finally, the Peoples' Global Action manifesto (1998) articulates opposition to the extension of the role of 'capital, with the help of international agencies' and trade agreements.

There are important resonances here with academic depictions of globalisation. I have argued elsewhere that an 'economic-homogenisation' model of globalisation is becoming increasingly dominant, in both academic and popular usage, which focuses attention on the increased integration of the global economy and its homogenising effects on state policy and culture (Eschle, forthcoming; see also Robertson and Khondker, 1998). Such a model is widespread in IR. It is characteristic of liberal IR approaches that support globalisation, sceptical refutations of globalisation as exaggerated and ideological, and critical IR theories that condemn globalisation as profoundly damaging. It is with this last, critical, approach in IR that we find the strongest resonance with activist discourses. Both activist and academic critics share the assumption that globalisation equates with the neoliberal economic developments described above. Then, in a highly significant move, these developments may be linked to the underlying structures of the economy and globalisation reinterpreted as the latest stage of capitalism. According to Klein, 'the critique of "capitalism" just saw a comeback of Santana-like proportions' (2002: 12).

I would add that it is marxist critiques of capitalism in particular that are making a comeback. Marxism, after all, offers a ready-made template for theorising the workings of the global economy. It is expanding in influence in IR in recent years, in tandem with the growth of interest in globalisation. Much marxist writing in IR tends to adopt a nuanced gramscian framework, which draw attention to the interaction of economic shifts with ideologies and institutions in global or national civil society (Cox, 1997, 1999; Rupert 2000). There has also been some effort to integrate foucauldian insights on surveillance and disciplining (Gill, 2003). Neo-gramscianism can be criticised for tending toward a totalising account of globalisation in which the role of agency is circumscribed (Eschle, 2001: 166-170), although the events of Seattle and beyond seem to have inspired a greater emphasis on the capacities for resistance (e.g. Gill, 2003: 211-221). However, neo-gramscianism has not, to my knowledge, gained currency amongst activists. It seems to me that activist commentary relies rather on an ad hoc, strategic appropriation of elements of marxism (e.g. Starr, 2000) or on a more structuralist, reductive version of marxism that depicts globalisation as driven by changes in the mode and relations of production and as generating political forms that reflect class conflict and struggle. This last involves not only a reframing of globalisation as capitalism, but a re-framing of 'the anti-globalisation movement' as 'the anti-capitalist movement', a shift increasingly evident in the newsletters of Globalise Resistance (e.g. 2002c). In the most developed articulations of this perspective, there is an insistence that the organised working class plays, or ought to play, a pivotal role (e.g. Bircham and Charlton, 2001; Callinicos, 2003).

I see several interrelated problems here. The first is economism. The argument that the mode and relations of capitalist production are causal of all other developments associated with globalisation implies that gendered and racialised

hierarchies, cultural processes etc. are superstructural and that struggles focusing on them are distractions or deviations from the more fundamental struggle against capitalism. This brings me to a second problem, the consequent privileging of class as the locus of resistance. Some effort may be made to redefine working-class-based resistance in a broad and inclusive manner (Barker, 2001: 332). However, it still tends to be strongly emphasised as *the* emancipatory vehicle, given the structural position of workers within capitalism, and its role is either talked up or political effort focused on the need to strengthen it (e.g. Callinicos, 2003: 96-101). A third problem is the lack of attention then paid to how to construct relationships between workers' organisations and others on a democratic basis. Callinicos asserts that autonomy and diversity can still be preserved (2003: 98), but gives no details of exactly how, instead lambasting the preoccupation of much of the movement with radical-democratic processes as an evasion of more fundamental strategic questions posed by the struggle against capitalism. Given the structural primacy afforded to organised labour, the danger is that the relations pursued with other groups will be hierarchically organised and many groups will simply be excluded, as discussed in part one of this paper.

Some non-marxist activist strands are also highly critical of capitalism but the relationship with globalisation is explained differently. The convergence of corporations, international financial institutions and neoliberalism may still be interpreted as the latest stage of capitalism, but not equated with globalisation per se. Rather it is labelled neoliberalism, 'capitalist globalisation' or 'economic globalisation'. Further, the anti-capitalist label may not be adopted, or not exclusively. See, for example, the Call of Social Movements (2002), on the World Social Forum site, which pledges to 'continue our struggles against neoliberalism and war … against a system based on sexism, racism and violence, which privileges the interests of capital and patriarchy over the needs and aspirations of people'. This is critical of the dominance and over-extension of capitalism in its neoliberal form; it thus implies the possibility of living with a more contained version. This is perhaps a strategic move, generated by a desire to stay open to more reformist elements (Declaration of a Group of Intellectuals, 2002). However, I think there is a principled element also in terms of giving equal weight to militarism and patriarchy as globalised structures of oppression. As for Peoples' Global Action, this has shifted from simply opposing neoliberal policies to an explicitly anti-capitalist stance. Its 'five hallmarks' now emphasise 'a very clear rejection of capitalism' as well as of 'all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism' (Peoples' Global Action, n.d.; 2001). Like Globalise Resistance, this group thus opposes the capitalist system itself. But like the World Social Forum, it gives considerable weight to other global hierarchies. There is no danger here of a blurring with reformism, which is explicitly rejected in favour of a 'confrontational' approach. This appears to be an anarchist-influenced formulation that is critical of power hierarchies in any shape or form, including but not reducible to capitalism.

Taken together, I suggest that what we are seeing emerging from these groups is an 'intersectional' approach to globalisation. To my mind, this has again been developed most explicitly in feminist theory and practice (Eschle, forthcoming). Feminist movement texts and debates have long insisted that there are multiple global sources and forms of power, which manifest themselves in complex, context-specific and contingent ways, and which require context-specific resistances in a diversity of forms. More recently, this analysis has been explicitly linked to academic arguments about globalisation (see e.g. Afshar and Barrientos, 1999; Marchand and Runyan,

2000; *Signs,* 2001; *Feminist Review,* 2002). Further, feminist groups have sought to bring such an analysis into 'anti-globalisation' activism. The acknowledgement of patriarchy, sexual violence and their interconnections with neoliberalism on the websites of the World Social Forum and Peoples' Global Action, and the accompanying emphasis on facilitating contextual specificity of struggle, is a direct result of feminist influence. There is some overlap with this intersectional understanding of global power and sociological theories of globalisation that emphasise multiple structures, the interplay of the local and the global and the open-ended and contingent character of globalisation (Eschle, forthcoming). However, I can find no evidence that such sociological theories have informed movement discourses, which are in any case much more alive to the power relations involved in global processes and to the need for resistance. One common source may be the fact that both the academic and activist discourses described here evolved to some extent in opposition to more reductionist marxist formulations.

Like their marxist colleagues, most activists working with some kind of intersectional approach desire to move away from the 'anti-globalisation' label. Both movement strands recognise that globalisation is being used as a code word for neoliberalism and corporate power, and they wish to bring these into sharper focus. For marxists, this is because the connection can then be made to more fundamental underlying structures of capitalism and the movement re-orientated from anti-globalisation to anti-capitalism. For those adopting a more intersectional approach, it is because neoliberalism needs to be exposed as the specific version of globalisation to which they are opposed – and attention drawn to the alternative versions of globalisation put forward by, and embodied in, the movement. Some activist/commentators are concerned that 'anti-globalisation' is being used persuasively by critics keen to label the movement as isolationist, parochial and protectionist (e.g. Klein in Thomas, 2002). Although some activists/commentators do emphasise the necessary devolution of economic decision-making (e.g. Starr, 2000), most of the activist texts that I have read foreground the fact that the movement is or should be global in scope, extended through globalised communications, transport and social networks. Further, the movement is characterised as globalist or internationalist in orientation, concerned to construct more humane, just and democratic interconnections between people on a world-wide scale (see also discussion in Callinicos, 2003: 13-14). The precise details of this positive vision of globalisation are still being thrashed out at the World Social Forum and elsewhere. But in general, this effort has led many activists and commentators to abandon the 'anti-' label altogether and rename the movement on the basis of what it is *for*.

Thus we find labels along the line of 'the global justice movement', 'the global justice and solidarity movement', the 'global democracy movement', or even, simply, 'the globalisation movement' (Graeber, 2002: 63; Klein, 2002: 77-78; Hardt and Negri cited in Rupert, 2002; introduction to Danaher and Burbach, 2000; Waterman, 2003). This last is a bold attempt to turn the popular meanings of globalisation and anti-globalisation on their heads: to claim that the movement is the 'true' defender of globalisation. I think it is probably too ambitious a discursive shift – and also rather too simplistic. After all, we are left here with a highly complex and differentiated picture of the movement's relationship to globalisation: opposing elite efforts to globalise the economy around the interests of corporations; bound up within and reproducing other aspects of globalisation; and creating its own forms of globalised social relationships. I find the label 'critical globalisation movement' more helpful: used by several activists at a recent conference I attended in Austria, it

conveys the fact that the movement is not simply rejectionist but embodies a developed critique of current patterns of globalisation and, by implication, that it points to an alternative.[3] Or perhaps some sort of composite title might emerge, such as the 'global social justice and democracy movement'. This is a mouthful but it is also, usefully, a largely 'empty signifier' that can be filled in different ways by activists with differing concerns. It foregrounds the need to challenge iniquitous global economic relationships and that this involves not simply redistributing material resources but also enforcing popular control over those resources. Further, feminists have shown that the projects of justice and democracy can be extended beyond strictly economic concerns in opposition to hierarchies of power and resources in other areas of life. Finally, such a label highlights the radical-democratic element of the movement: the attempt to construct relations between participants on an egalitarian and participatory basis that prefigures the wider possibilities for society.

It should be stressed again that this project of democratic movement construction is not complete and the movement should not be idealised. I have emphasised ongoing struggles over the construction of the movement, highlighting the divide between those urging unity through hierarchical organisation and those defending participatory horizontal networks; and between those reframing the movement as anti-capitalist and those seeing globalisation in intersectional terms and the movement as thus developing alternative forms of globalisation. I have indicated that feminist and anti-racist critics continue to struggle against their marginalisation within the movement. Certainly, it seems to me that more work needs to be done on how best to counter the ways in which the movement is bound up within, structured and compromised by dimensions of globalisation. I have already hinted at gendered and racialised hierarchies, and at the exclusions that can emerge from a reliance on internet networks and on international gatherings. Peter Waterman (2002: section 7) adds that attention needs to be paid to the financial power of northern funding bodies over international gatherings like the World Social Forum. The discursive reframing of the movement as 'pro-democracy' rather than 'anti-globalisation' would seem an important step in raising awareness of such issues amongst activists and thus in tackling them. The democratisation of globalisation is not simply something that has to happen 'out there', in the offices of the World Trade Organisation or Nike. As many activists and commentators realise, democracy has to be nurtured within the movement itself if it is to offer a genuine, radical, alternative.

Conclusion

This paper has interrogated the proposition that there is a transnational anti-globalisation social movement. In the first part, I discussed the term 'social movement', pointing out that there is no agreed meaning. The term is applied to a diversity of phenomena and used persuasively to legitimise them. Drawing on a constructivist approach, I argued that a movement exists when activists claim they are part of one and participate in processes of collective identity formation. Such processes do appear to be ongoing amongst diverse groups opposed to aspects of globalisation, particularly at international gatherings and in internet networks. I also suggested that external forces, including academic theorising, can contribute to the construction of the movement – which makes this paper complicit in the construction process. I have sought explicitly to further a particular view of the movement, one that confronts power relations at work within it and supports its democratic potentials.

Drawing on feminist praxis, I have highlighted some exclusionary implications of efforts to reorientate the movement as a class-based, anti-capitalist movement, unified through hierarchical organisation. I have also drawn attention to resistances posed by more participatory practices grounded in anarchism and 'postmodern politics'.

In the second part of the paper, I focused on the concept of 'anti-globalisation', by looking at activist representations of what it is they are against. Although there is substantial agreement on the need to oppose the neoliberal convergence, this has led activists in very different directions. I contrasted a marxist re-orientation of the movement as anti-capitalist and class-based with an intersectional view that recognises the multiplicity of forms of global power and need for context-specific resistances. The intersectional view encourages a complex understanding of the relationship of the movement to globalisation: as opposed to some dimensions, bound up with others and as embodying alternative globalised relationships of solidarity and democracy. This has led many activists and commentators to criticise the 'anti-globalisation' label and to argue for a new name based on what the movement is for. I suggested that a name highlighting the democratising impetus of the movement may be useful. However, I also stressed that the democratic element of the movement should not be taken for granted: the struggle to make the movement more inclusive continues and there is a need for further work on the ways in which it is bound up within and compromised by broader processes of globalisation. Thus the second section ended by reinforcing my normative plea for further democratisation in movement construction.

I want to end by drawing out some of the implications of this analysis for the construction of *theory,* particularly with regards to IR. First, I want to stress that the neglect of movements in IR, and the consequent lack of attention to the detail of so-called 'anti-globalisation' activism, is not adequately redressed by an empiricist strategy that provides evidence of that activism and weighs its significance against criteria already established within the discipline. For a start, if it is accepted that a range of organisational and ideological orientations are possible within a movement then there is no easy empirical test that can be applied to check when a movement has emerged. In this paper, I have insisted on the need to focus on activist self-understandings as a source of knowledge about the movement – and about global processes more generally. This still involves empirical study, in the sense of attention to practices in the world. However, it also involves a move away from an empiricist model of knowledge based on impartial observation of external objects, toward a more interpretative model based on interaction with subjects who are producers of their own knowledge. This is predicated on the assumption that knowledge is situated, finite, socially constructed and discursively mediated. Further, this paper strives to go beyond an argument for 'grounded theory', whereby theoretical categories are developed on the basis of empirical study, toward what Noel Sturgeon (1997) terms 'direct theory', whereby movements are taken seriously as agents of knowledge generating their own theoretical categories. For example, I have drawn attention here to the analyses of globalisation put forward by activists. The overlaps and divergences with globalisation theory in IR and sociology are intriguing and point to ways in which academic frameworks, as well as activist practice, might need to be further refined or re-articulated.

In some ways, my approach here meshes with a 'postmodern' IR emphasis on the knowledge claims of subordinated discourses. Yet, and this is my second point, a rigorous postmodernist, or poststructuralist, approach is also likely to be insufficient for further research of the kind I have presented here. I have made additional moves

that slide more toward standpoint epistemology: casting activists as agents not just subjects of discourse; privileging discourses produced by activists as fundamentally constitutive of the movement; and evaluating movement discourses in relation to normative criteria generated by a feminist-informed commitment to radical-democratic practices. However, I have also taken on board postmodernist criticisms of standpoint epistemology in terms of deconstructing the movement as a unitary subject. I have insisted throughout the paper that the movement has diverse and shifting identities and that attempts to 'fix' its identity in ways that discourage diversity should be resisted. This is for epistemological as well as political reasons: the diverse voices within the movement generate distinctive insights about the operations of power and resistance in different contexts, and democratic dialogue between those voices needs to be encouraged to gain a fuller picture of reality and to build stronger oppositional struggles (Collins 2000). I cannot attempt here to resolve the tensions between postmodern and standpoint epistemologies – but I would note that many other feminist scholars work with both and find the tension between the two to be fruitful.

My third and final point concerns the issue of power and its relation to theory construction. This paper shifts away from simplified celebrations of movement diversity to explore the ways in which some movement strands become dominant over others. Such an approach needs to be extended within IR and social movement theory more generally in order to challenge idealised accounts of movements as beyond power. There is also a particular need to pay closer attention to the power of academic analysis. Some academic accounts have more constitutive power than others, for complex reasons of ideology, class, gender, nationality, social resources and media dissemination that demand further investigation. This paper may not have any representational authority beyond a small circle of IR scholars but the possibilities and limitations of this still need to be taken seriously. I have argued that theorists should overturn long-established epistemological hierarchies by acknowledging movements as a source of knowledge in and about the world. I have also striven to be explicit about my support for, and thus privileging of, certain kinds of movement activism. This seems to me to be a start but it still skirts lots of problematic power-laden issues to do with co-optation, translation, representation and authority. So I want to end this paper with another question, moving on from the one with which I began: how do we gain understanding of the transnational anti-globalisation social movement in ways that both increase knowledge and challenge globalised relations of power? The answer to this is surely of crucial importance for the future development of both activist politics and critical IR theory.

Notes

1. This is not to be confused with constructivism as invoked in IR, which usually focuses on the intersubjective practices between states that shape identity and interest within the international system. The constructivist label is also sometimes applied to poststructuralist approaches in IR. Even more confusingly, in the field of social movement theory, the label may be used for North American frameworks that emphasise 'framing' and cultural factors. The common assumptions in all these versions of constructivism, including Melucci's, seem to be the following: actors are not unitary; interest and identity are constituted through social

interaction, not prior to it; and empirical study should focus on changes in interaction, self-understanding, symbols and ideas.

2. My own, admittedly limited, experience of Globalise Resistance in action - at a conference in Glasgow in January 2001 - gives me some sympathy with these criticisms. Although different groups were welcomed at the conference, most of the chairing and opening and closing speeches were undertaken by members of the Socialist Workers' Party and there was a strong drive for recruitment to the Party throughout. This was an attempt to pull diverse resistances into a hierarchical structure under the control of one particular group.

3. The conference was organised by feministATTAC Austria and held in Graz, Austria, 11-14 September, 2003. The Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC - *Association pour la Taxation des Transactions d'Aide aux Citoyens*) was founded in France, originally to campaign for the Tobin tax on financial speculation. At the time of writing, there are over 100 national ATTAC groups world-wide, campaigning on a range of related issues. My thanks to Karin Lukas and Evamaria Glatz of feministATTAC Vienna for drawing the label 'critical globalisation movement' to my attention. The label appears to be unique to German-speaking activists. At the more recent European Social Forum, held in Paris, 12-16 November 2003, the majority of ATTAC France and other francophone activists appeared to prefer instead the label 'alterglobalisation movement'.

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