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The Contemporary Global Social Movements

Emergent Proposals, Connectivity and Development Implications

Kléber B. Ghimire

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Acronyms

ATTAC	International Movement for Democratic Control of Financial Markets and their Institutions (Association pour une taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens)
G8	Group of Eight Industrialized Countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States)
HIPC	heavily indebted poor countries
IICG	International Initiative on Corruption and Governance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIGD	Network Institute for Global Democratization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TI	Transparency International
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Summary / Résumé / Resumen

Summary

This paper explores the complexities and potential for change inherent in a new wave of global movements concerned with contemporary patterns of development and globalization. One such example is the World Social Forum (WSF)—also known as the Porto Alegre Forum—which vigorously criticizes the negative consequences of neoliberal economic policies and claims to promote "alternative" globalization that defends wider social justice. But several global movements, at times loosely associated with the WSF, have also attained international significance, attracting considerable attention from the public, the media and policy-making circles. This paper has selected five of these movements: (i) debt relief; (ii) trade; (iii) Tobin tax; (iv) anticorruption; and (v) fair trade—assessing their organizational structure, social base, claims, methods of action and results. Of particular interest regarding these movements is their attempt to combine advocacy campaigns with concrete alternatives by way of action and practical application.

This paper begins by noting the difficulty associated with the existing social movement theories to deal with today's transnational social movements, continuing with the description of the nature, diversity and connectivity of the five selected movements. The evidence hints at important similarities in their basic approach, means and strategies. In particular, all five movements have a similar historical and cultural origin in that they find many of the consequences of neoliberal economy defective, consequently requiring a variety of changes. Likewise, these movements have numerous overlapping agendas, thereby providing a collective identity. Yet, it is unclear if this convergence has actually led to a stable alliance and if essential claims are put forward in a coordinated manner.

In the subsequent section, given that transnational activism associated with these movements as well as "alternative" globalization as a whole seeks to move beyond conventional opposition strategies to proposing alternatives and to work with the existing system, this paper discusses the scope and forms of the evolving collaboration between political and development institutions and social movements. This paper suggests that although governments, bilateral bodies and international development institutions have gradually begun to pay attention to the reformist transnational movements, this has not resulted in any significant policy impulse. There are major ideological limitations of the system to readily accommodate such demands.

Finally, this paper provides an overall assessment of the dynamism in the selected movements. It suggests that while public influence of these movements has increased, taken as a whole, their actions remain highly spontaneous and informal, with a low level of institutionalization. At the same time, there are few signs of stable interactions between formal political bodies and social movements. While critical internal divisions persist between reformist and radical forces, these and the "anti-globalization" movement as a whole have come under increased financial pressure, and their social base remains highly unstable. This paper highlights the lack of information and analyses on many essential aspects and concludes that, on the whole, the political impact of contemporary transnational activism has grown somewhat.

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Résumé

Dans ce document, l'auteur étudie la complexité d'une nouvelle vague de mouvements mondiaux préoccupés par les caractéristiques actuelles du développement et de la mondialisation, ainsi que les possibilités de changement qu'ils recèlent. Le Forum social mondial, appelé aussi Forum de Porto Alegre, qui critique vivement les conséquences perverses des politiques économiques néolibérales et prétend défendre une "altermondialisation" dispensatrice d'une plus grande justice sociale, en est un bon exemple. Mais plusieurs autres mouvements mondiaux, parfois vaguement associés au Forum social, ont pris de l'importance au niveau international et attiré l'attention du public, des médias et des milieux politiques. L'auteur en a retenu ici cinq, qui militent pour: (i) l'allègement de la dette; (ii) le commerce; (iii) la taxe Tobin; (iv) la lutte contre la corruption; et (v) le commerce équitable, et dont il a étudié la structure et l'organisation, la base sociale, les revendications, les méthodes d'action et les résultats. Ces mouvements présentent un intérêt particulier en ce sens qu'ils allient les campagnes de sensibilisation à l'action et à l'application pratique en proposant des solutions de rechange concrètes.

L'auteur commence par constater qu'avec les théories actuelles sur les mouvements sociaux il est difficile de traiter aujourd'hui des mouvements sociaux transnationaux, et poursuit en décrivant la nature, la diversité et la connectivité des cinq mouvements retenus. Les données recueillies font apparaître d'importantes similitudes d'approche, de moyens et de stratégies. Les cinq mouvements ont en particulier une origine historique et culturelle semblable: ils jugent défaillantes beaucoup de conséquences de l'économie néolibérale et que divers changements s'imposent. Ils ont aussi de nombreux chevaux de bataille en commun, ce qui leur donne une identité collective. Pourtant, il est malaisé de déterminer si cette convergence a effectivement abouti à une alliance stable et si les revendications essentielles sont formulées de manière concertée.

Etant donné que le militantisme transnational associé à ces mouvements et à l'"altermondialisation" dans son ensemble cherchent à dépasser les stratégies classiques d'opposition pour proposer des solutions de rechange et travailler avec le système en place, la section suivante du document traite de l'étendue de la collaboration entre les institutions politiques et de développement et les mouvements sociaux et des formes que prend cette collaboration. L'auteur estime que si gouvernements, organisations bilatérales et institutions internationales de développement se sont mis peu à peu à prêter attention aux mouvements transnationaux réformistes, cette attention ne s'est pas traduite par une impulsion majeure donnée à leurs politiques. Le système présente de sérieuses limitations idéologiques qui l'empêchent de faire droit à ces revendications.

Enfin, l'auteur porte un jugement général sur le dynamisme des mouvements retenus. Il estime que si ces mouvements ont étendu leur influence sur le public, dans l'ensemble, leurs actions restent extrêmement spontanées et peu structurées et présentent un faible niveau d'institutionnalisation. En même temps, certains signes laissent à penser à des interactions stables entre instances politiques et mouvements sociaux. S'il subsiste de graves divisions internes entre réformistes et radicaux, ces forces et le mouvement "altermondialiste" dans son ensemble subissent des pressions financières de plus en plus fortes et leur base sociale demeure très instable. Le document fait apparaître un manque d'information et d'analyses sur de nombreux aspects essentiels et conclut qu'à en juger à ses retombées politiques, le militantisme transnational contemporain a, dans l'ensemble, légèrement progressé.

Kléber B. Ghimire est coordonnateur de recherches à l'UNRISD. Ce document était initialement un document d'information pour le projet *Les mouvements de la société civile mondiale: Dynamique des campagnes internationales et application au plan national*. Ce projet est dirigé par Kléber B. Ghimire, avec l'assistance de Santiago Daroca, Britta Sadoun, Anita Tombez et Murat Yilmaz, et est financé par un don de la Direction suisse du développement et de la coopération (DDC) et par le budget général de l'UNRISD.

Resumen

En el presente documento se analizan las complejidades y posibilidades de cambio inherentes a una nueva ola de movimientos mundiales interesados en los patrones contemporáneos de desarrollo y la mundialización. Un ejemplo de tales movimientos nuevos es el Foro Social Mundial (FSM)—también conocido con el nombre de Foro de Porto Alegre—que critica fervientemente las consecuencias adversas de las políticas económicas neoliberales y dice promover una mundialización "alternativa" que defienda una justicia social más incluyente. No obstante, existen varios movimientos mundiales, en ocasiones relacionados indirectamente con el FSM, que también han alcanzado notoriedad internacional y han atraído considerablemente la atención del público, de los medios y de los círculos encargados de la formulación de políticas. Se han seleccionado cinco de estos movimientos para analizarlos en el presente documento: (i) alivio de la deuda, (ii) comercio, (iii) impuesto Tobin; (iv) anticorrupción y (v) comercio justo; al evaluar su estructura organizativa, base social, reivindicaciones, métodos de acción y logros. Resulta de particular interés en el análisis de estos movimientos, sus esfuerzos por combinar las campañas de defensa y promoción de sus objetivos con alternativas concretas, por medio de la acción y la aplicación práctica.

El documento comienza por destacar la dificultad que enfrentan las teorías existentes sobre los movimientos sociales para tratar el tema de los movimientos sociales transnacionales de hoy en día, para luego proceder a describir la naturaleza, diversidad e interrelaciones de los cinco movimientos seleccionados. Los datos insinúan la existencia de similitudes importantes en el enfoque básico, los medios y las estrategias de los cinco movimientos. Más aún, los cinco movimientos tienen un origen histórico y cultural similar en el sentido de que todos sostienen que muchas de las consecuencias de la economía neoliberal son defectuosas, por lo que requieren una serie de cambios. Igualmente, las agendas de estos movimientos tienen numerosos traslapos, lo que da forma a una identidad colectiva. Sin embargo, no queda claro si esta convergencia ha llevado a una alianza estable y si las reivindicaciones esenciales se plantean de una forma coordinada.

En la sección subsiguiente, en vista de que el activismo trasnacional asociado a estos movimientos y a la mundialización "alternativa" en general busca ir más allá de las estrategias convencionales de oposición para proponer alternativas y trabajar con el sistema existente, en el documento se analiza el alcance y las formas de la colaboración que han venido evolucionando entre las instituciones políticas y de desarrollo y los movimientos sociales. Se plantea en el documento que aunque los gobiernos, las entidades bilaterales y las instituciones de desarrollo internacional han comenzado gradualmente a prestar atención a los movimientos transnacionales reformistas, ello no se ha traducido en un impulso importante a las políticas pertinentes. El sistema tiene limitaciones ideológicas importantes que dificultan dar cabida a tales demandas.

Finalmente, se hace una evaluación general del dinamismo de los movimientos seleccionados. La idea es que si bien la influencia pública de estos movimientos ha aumentado, en líneas generales, sus acciones continúan siendo sumamente espontáneas e informales, con un bajo nivel de institucionalización. Al mismo tiempo, existen pocas señales de interacciones estables entre los órganos políticos formales y los movimientos sociales. Aunque siguen habiendo divisiones internas críticas entre las fuerzas reformistas y las fuerzas radicales, éstas y el movimiento "antimundialización" en general, han comenzado a sufrir una severa presión financiera y su base social sigue siendo sumamente inestable. En el documento se destaca la falta de información y análisis sobre muchos aspectos esenciales y se concluye que, en general, el impacto político del activismo transnacional contemporáneo ha crecido hasta cierto punto.

Kléber B. Ghimire es Coordinador de Investigación de UNRISD. Este documento se elaboró originalmente como documento de información para el proyecto de investigación de UNRISD sobre *Movimientos mundiales de la sociedad civil: La dinámica de las campañas internacionales y la ejecución nacional*. Este proyecto ha sido coordinado por Kléber B. Ghimire, con la ayuda de Santiago Daroca, Britta Sadoun, Anita Tombez y Murat Yilmaz, y ha sido financiado con una donación de la Agencia Suiza de Desarrollo y Cooperación (SDC) y el presupuesto de operaciones de UNRISD.

Nous sommes résolument anticapitalistes. Nous ne nous opposons pas seulement aux abus du système qui domine aujourd'hui le monde entier. Nous sommes radicalement opposés à ses fondements… (Alternative libertaire, n.d.).[1]

Introduction

There is a widespread perception that global social movements have intensified in recent years. Some of these movements contest not only the actual nature and consequences of current global socioeconomic relations but also the very foundation governing them. It has also been felt that the manner and speed with which global economic and technological integration has taken place—often consistently disarming the traditional welfare function of the state—is generating increased misery, inequalities and conflicts. This has provided grounds for citizens and civil society groups of diverse origins to express their resentment and advance claims in increased numbers. But how automatic are the linkages between global socioeconomic problems and the rise in transnational social movements?

These "new forms of civic participation and involvement in a globalising world" and "located in some transnational arena not bound or limited by nation-states or local societies" are being interpreted as a distinct phenomenon of the emergence and consolidation of "global civil society" (Kaldor et al. 2003:4; see also Edwards and Gaventa 2001). Such a global civil society is also believed to be "bigger" and "wider" (Anheier et al. 2001:4), offering "a positive response, even counterweight, to a narrow notion that linked globalization to economic processes alone" (Kaldor et al. 2003:3–4). But others, such as Jelin, argue that the process of globalization in communication and economic expansion, as well as transnational citizen activism, are also required to coexist with

> the revitalization of localization and reaffirmation of ancestral roots, manifested in a more precise and violent manner in ethno-cultural rivalries, in the cultural and symbolic self-referencing of many peoples—which cannot be technological or material, at the risk of falling into isolation (2003:26 [author's translation]).[2]

If a social movement were to be defined as "organized" and a somewhat "sustained" process[3] to advance a specific cause, interest or pursuit, there would be no lack of examples of social movements at various levels. Scholars like Escobar (2001:2) see social movements as "sources of alternatives, hopes and theories of how the world can be made differently". In the same spirit, Bourdieu (2001:16) asserts that there can be no change in the functioning of global economic systems and dominant institutions without powerful social movements. He argues that "it's not the market, as it's tried to make us believe today, but the social movement, which has 'civilized' the market economy while largely contributing to its efficacy".

Intellectuals like Touraine, on the other hand, contend that

> Social movements are not positive or negative agents of history, of modernization, or of the liberalization of mankind. They act in a given type of social production and organization (1985:773).

---

[1] "We are resolutely anticapitalists. We do not only oppose the abuses of the system which dominates the whole world today. We are radically opposed to its bases."

[2] Jelin's original text in Spanish reads as follows: La revitalización de la localidad y de reafirmación de raíces ancestrales, manifiesta de manera más cabal y violenta en las rivalidades étnico-culturales, en la auto-referencia cultural y simbólica de muchos pueblos—que no puede ser tecnologíca o material, a riesgo de caer en el aislamiento.

[3] See Encyclopaedia of Sociology (1992:1880–1885); Javaloy et al. (2001:39–40); and Touraine (1978:47).

Touraine (1978:47) also believes that "social movements are not any dramatic or exceptional events: they are in a permanent manner the heart of the social life". His views differ significantly from those who systematically romanticize social movements, as well as those social movement theorists who tend to define a social action mainly in terms of effectiveness in bringing about social change or resistance, to varying degrees (McAdam and Snow 1997:xviii). Indeed, differing philosophical and, at times, varying cultural origins of definitions of social movements should not be overlooked—in particular by those who see social movements primarily as organizational and political opportunities (McAdam et al. 2001) and others who perceive them as effects as well as results of power structures, class struggles and identity politics.[4] Some scholars, on the other hand, see the value in combining both definitions; for example, Rucht argues that

> a social movement exists to the extent that the following qualities are co-present: In structural terms, social movements are networks of groups and/or organizations; regarding their aims, they are attempts to fundamentally change society (including power structures and basic values) or to resist such changes (2004:4).

Another difficulty with respect to social movement theories is that they are for the most part conceptualized in the national arena in industrialized societies in North America and Western Europe. Yet, there has been no lack of transnational social movements that transcend the Western world at different junctures in time and contexts, on occasion inspiring a considerable number of people and producing major results. Various religious movements with diverse consequences had already gained an intercontinental character several centuries ago. The antislavery movement and the campaign for women's suffrage are seen by some academics as being "historical forerunners" to modern advocacy movements (Keck and Sikkink 1998:2). The Red Cross was founded in 1863. The trade unions and Communist Party–related movements were often mobilizing huge numbers of people around the world from the end of the nineteenth century. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, campaigns related to peace, antinuclear, environment, human rights, feminist rights and so forth—usually described as new social movements in the European academic debate because of their broad membership base cutting across different social groups and classes—mustered widespread public backing (Crossley 2002:149–167). Even though many of these movements were based primarily in the North and transpired in reaction to the malaise associated with industrial society, they remain an important constituent in popular contestation worldwide.

In recent years, transnational protest movements, known commonly as the "antiglobalization" movement—and more recently as "alter-globalization" movements—have brought together diverse social forces with multiple and sometimes contradictory agendas. Typically, they use the outlet of international conferences and summits, and most recently regional and international annual gatherings of the World Social Forum (WSF)—also known as the Porto Alegre Forum—for promoting plentiful ideas and claims. The WSF, an annual event that rallies a large number of people and organizations (see table 1), is now described as a "movement of movements" within the broader antiglobalization movement. Bernard Cassen (2004), one of the architects of the movement, refers to it as a phenomenon of the "globalization of alternative globalization" similar to the current processes of economic, cultural and political globalization. Indeed, Susan George (2002:111), another figure associated with the movement, suggests that "the label 'anti-globalisation' is at best a contradiction, at worst a slander". Criticizing the negative side of the global economic and political systems embodied in powerful institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the Group of Eight Industrialized Countries (G8), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union and various regional trade bodies and agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, yet defending the public mission and role of the state and seeking to advance diverse propositions, the movement asserts itself to be "alter" (or alternative) rather than "anti"

[4] See Touraine (1978); Melucci (1996); and Bourdieu (2001).

globalization as such (Said and Desai 2003:59; Askolovitc 2003). It has gained influence among certain political leaders, political parties and governments and is no longer considered to be a gathering platform of "irresponsible left-wingers", but instead a reservoir of ideas that policy makers could use. In terms of political impact, some believe "Porto Alegre has killed Davos"; many politicians are eager to participate in the former, and the latter—which used to be seen as a very exclusive gathering of politicians and business people—is now considered "outmoded" in comparison (Boniface 2003).

Table 1: Popular participation in World Social Forum events

Year	Place	Number of participants representing social movements/civil society organizations	Total number of participants	Number of countries represented
2001	Porto Alegre	4,702	20,000	100
2002	Porto Alegre	15,000	55,000	131
2003	Porto Alegre	5,717	100,000	156
2004	Mumbai	2,660	80,000	132
2005	Porto Alegre	6,872	155,000	151

Source: World Social Forum, n.d. (Porto Alegre 2001/2002); World Social Forum 2003 (Porto Alegre 2003); World Social Forum 2004 (Mumbai 2004); World Social Forum 2005 (Porto Alegre 2005).

The quotation from the Alternative libertaire, a French anarchist group cited earlier, is indicative of how certain forces that form part of the current antiglobalization movement back combative views with a consistent claim for "immediate rupture with capitalism" (see also Forum social libertaire 2003),[5] the logic of profit, wage economy and money (Fédération anarchiste 1996:10–13). Overall, the spirit of the current antiglobalization movement comprises non-violent struggles, democratic practice, social justice, peace, solidarity and so forth, hence not a total break with, or violent revolution against, the present economic and political order (Chase-Dunn and Gills 2003; Cavanagh et al. 2002). For example, the main themes of Porto Alegre 2003 included the production of wealth, access to wealth and sustainability, civil society, political power and ethics.[6] Bourdieu (2001:37), one of the intellectuals associated with *Le Monde diplomatique* that largely helped to conceive the Porto Alegre project, characterized this forum of collective thinking, political action and common elaboration of projects as a demonstration of solidarity and help toward the victims of neoliberal policies, as *utopies réalistes*.

While the Porto Alegre initiative has been quite successful in "setting the agenda of much of the recent debate", several global movements loosely associated with the WSF have begun to propose distinct actions in a range of areas. Five movements will be considered below, in relation to debt relief, changing trade rules and barriers, global taxation, anticorruption and fair trade, assessing their framework of actions, resources and ability to open new opportunities as well as create new limits. It is important to note that there is no reason why it is necessary to automatically cajole a general mood of high expectations and demands on what is frequently called "global civil society". Nevertheless, of particular interest regarding these five movements is that frequently their responses extend beyond simple protests or advocacy, as they seek to offer certain alternatives by way of action. But what is the substance of these proposals as well as actual mobilization capacity inherent in the movements, which are frequently seen to be rather propitious? And how are these proposals being implemented?

[5] Available at http://fsl-sla.eu.org/sommaire.php3, accessed on 8 April 2005.

[6] See www.planetaportoalegre.net/publique/cgi/public/cgilua.exe/web/templates/htm/2I5RU/home.htm?user=reader, accessed on 8 April 2005.

It is clear that while these movements attempt to adopt fundamental reforms in world economic governance and financial systems, differences can be expected in their coverage and attainment of goals. They may also differ in their methods of action, social base and organizational means. At the same time, there is also considerable overlap on the range of issues covered, as well as their main mandates and programmes of action. From the point of view of a social science inquiry, it is always informative to examine these different proposals and outcomes, but what is particularly edifying is to grasp how specific trajectories of selected movements lead to particular effects. In addition, it is instructive to comprehend how differences and tensions that emerge from various movements may affect alliance building, leading to the establishment of a more coordinated and sustained movement.

It should be noted that not only the five selected movements, but also the whole of the antiglobalization movement[7] are profoundly developmental, demanding significant changes in the present neoliberal economic model and practices. They intend to protect the vital public sector from privatization and curtail the power of multinational corporations. They call for the eradication of political and economic corruption. And they call for alliances with broad-minded national elites and governments and the strengthening of the United Nations system, while expressing opposition to the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO (see Patomäki and Teivainen 2004). Attempts to develop and implement various proposals within the existing institutional structure, as well as seeking to strengthen the role of the state and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, have profound development implications that have not been adequately examined in the literature. In this regard, the key question is: How are the different propositions emerging from the different movements understood and internalized within development institutions? In particular, are these institutions sufficiently open to the different approaches and propositions advanced by the civil society sector?

As the antiglobalization movement takes a more reformist orientation by seeking to work within the system, various contradictions and tensions are likely to arise. First, the movement is highly heterogeneous. Second, its popular legitimacy could be negatively affected if the movement appears to be fostering its contacts with formal institutions, while failing to bring about change in the latter but continuing to make the population concerned feel deprived of social justice and decent living conditions. An examination of the experiences of the five selected movements, as well as the consolidation process of the WSF, should prove helpful in eliciting some of these underlying ambiguities and strains as well as their overall potential for structural changes.

Given that social movements vary greatly with respect to sensitivity and purpose of actors, fluid actions and unpredictable reactions of opponents and authorities, in-depth research and careful analysis will be necessary to adeptly deal with the issues raised above. The purpose of this paper is essentially that of a "pointer". It is based on readily available literature and the author's personal observations of recent WSF processes. Nevertheless, it seeks to raise key issues and kindle reflection, with the hope that this will spur academic interest and policy debate. The principal areas of research gaps requiring further empirical observations will also be suggested in the course of the discussion.

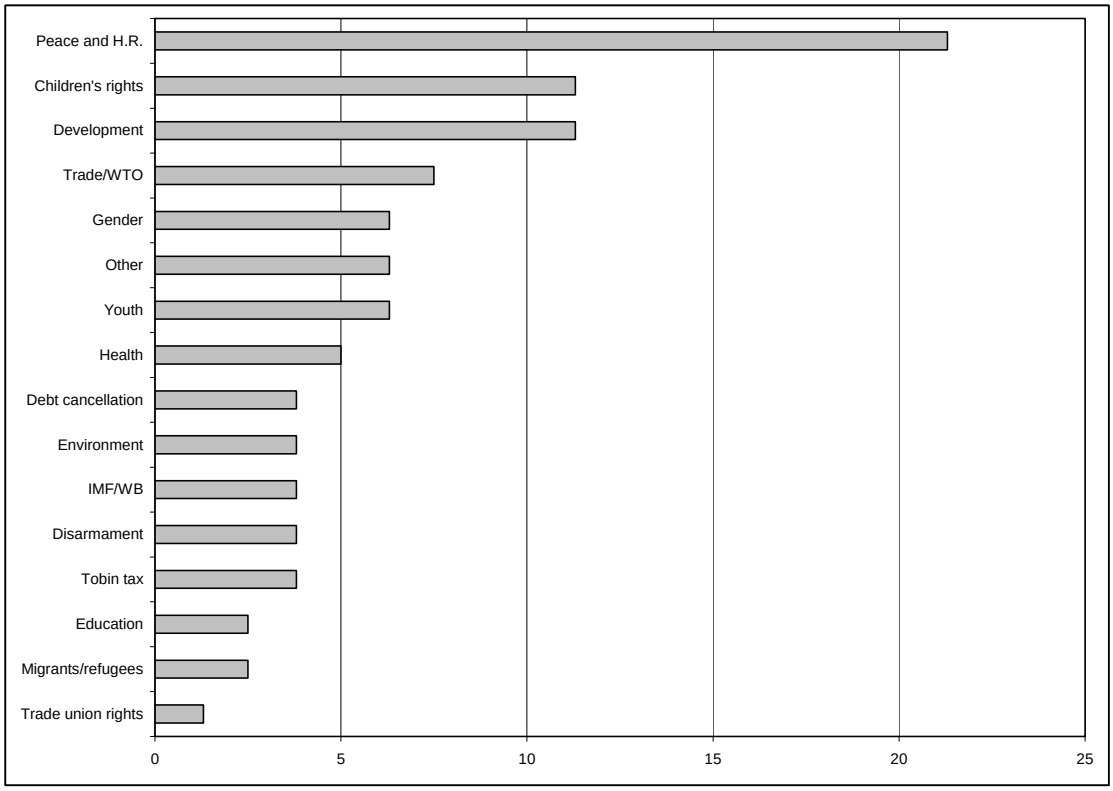
Nature, Diversity and Connectivity of Selected Movements

Touraine (1978:108) identifies the three crucial dimensions of a social movement as: (i) a collective "identity", (ii) manifesting "opposition" to the adversary; and (iii) stemming from the "totality" of its historical and cultural terrain. The movements related to debt relief, changes in trade rules and barriers, global taxation, anticorruption and fair trade contain many of these characteristics. Furthermore, they have a transnational character, yet must always evoke certain national contexts or North-South relations. This combination is worthy of note. What is more, within these movements, there is an attempt to advance certain alternatives and proposals that can be implemented with concessions from the existing institutions. This makes the study of these movements all the more interesting.

[7] In this paper, the term "antiglobalization" is used—primarily because of its widespread application and the fact that substitute expressions have tended to be largely vague in comparison.

Obviously, these are not the only active transnational movements, or even the principal ones; indeed, peace, human rights and children's rights seem to be the issues around which the current international campaigns remain intense (see figure 1). Likewise, based on the data provided in the yearbook of the Union of International Associations (1973, 1983, 1993 and 2000/1 editions), Smith (2004:268) illustrates that the proportion of organizations active in the fields of "development/empowerment" grew from 7 per cent to 10 per cent (from 52 out of 711 organizations in 1993 to 95 out of 959 organizations in 2000) and "global justice/ peace/environment" from 4 per cent to 11 per cent (from 30 out of 711 organizations in 1993 to 109 out of 959 organizations in 2000). These categories experienced the highest growth rates, although single-issue organizational focus on human rights, environment and peace remained dominant. Trade, debt and the Tobin tax frequently stand as focal concerns in these international campaigns, and probably some parts of the campaigns related to development and environment also include these themes. Likewise, corruption issues are often referred to by civil society organizations in relation to the problems linked to autocratic regimes, human rights violations and the lack of economic transparency.[8] Thus, a short description of the selected movements is provided, followed by a discussion on the differences and commonalities inherent within these movements and their interconnectedness.

Figure 1: Principal campaign themes of global social movements and civil society organizations *(per cent)*



H.R. = human rights

Source: Pianta and Silva (2003:40). The information was derived from a questionnaire circulated at three events: Genoa Social Forum, Genoa, 2001; the IV United Nations Peoples Assembly, Perugia, 2001; and the Second World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2002; as well as an email survey of about 1,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). From the 147 returned questionnaires, one third were from European organizations and about a fifth each from Africa, the Americas and Asia.

[8] In the survey of Pianta and Silva (2003), the issue of corruption was included in the category of "other" as well as in human rights, democracy, and fair trade and ethical finance (information provided by Mario Pianta in a personal email communication on 2 July 2004).

General Overview of Five Selected Movements

Debt relief movement

Arguing that the debt problem is one of the primary obstacles to attaining global economic justice, the debt relief movement has attempted to raise the issue of debt cancellation among G8 leaders, multilateral and bilateral donors and creditors. The movement campaigns for the removal of conditionality on IMF debt relief and also calls for more transparency in the process—with a level of success in G8 countries writing off some of the bilateral debts, and the IMF and the WB having proposed debt relief schemes, such as the initiative for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). In order to intensify pressure and encourage media coverage, campaigners frequently collect signatures for global petitions and organize huge gatherings and human chains around the buildings where powerful politicians and donors meet.

Many networks of NGOs, religious groups, unions and academic centres have commonly rallied behind the debt problem in developing countries, with the Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign being the acme.[9] Although Jubilee 2000 has officially ended, the movement has continued to function in various forms, namely the two movements focusing on the campaigns in the North and the South: Jubilee Debt Campaign[10] and Jubilee South[11]. The latter has taken a consistently more militant view, seeking to pressure national leaders to collectively repudiate the debt. Indeed, within developing countries the debt movement has always been a lively debate on whether campaigns should primarily focus on the question of partial debt "relief" or on total debt cancellation, or even reparation of the damage caused by debt in developing countries (Bond 2001:5; Keet 2001:243–267). On the whole, although debt in developing countries is frequently an issue at international summits and meetings, with powerful multilateral and bilateral agencies proposing diverse debt relief plans, their implementation has been slow, partial and has, above all, involved a relatively insignificant amount—that is, less than the amount paid as interest.[12]

Movement to change international trade rules and barriers

Within the movement to change international trade rules and barriers, the focus has been to draw attention to the problem caused by the repeated creation of trade obstructions in Northern countries for Southern products, while at the same time undermining Southern industrial and agricultural capacity through export dumping by rich countries. The Trade Justice Movement in the United Kingdom (UK)[13], which claims to have affiliations with 50 civil society organizations with over nine million members, calls for a fundamental change in the unjust rules and institutions governing international trade. Oxfam Great Britain (2002)[14] has launched a major market access campaign, arguing that the removal of trade barriers in rich countries would produce clear benefits for poor countries, although some groups have criticized this campaign by saying that more emphasis should be given to the development of local and national self-reliance economies rather than to international trade (Watkins and Hines 2002). The Focus on Global South[15], based in Bangkok, is another powerful network on trade issues and has asserted that the trade position of Oxfam International does not challenge the WTO-led globalization process in any forceful way (see Bello n.d.).

Besides these initiatives, there are numerous movements and networks that have sought to bring globalization and trade issues to the forefront, for example, the Third World Network

[9] www.jubilee.org.

[10] www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk.

[11] www.jubileesouth.org.

[12] See De Filippis et al. (2003); *Le Temps* (2003); and Greenhill and Sisti (2003).

[13] See www.tjm.org.uk.

[14] www.oxfam.org.

[15] www.focusweb.org/main/html.

(main office in Malaysia)[16], Global Trade Watch (United States)[17], International Forum on Globalization (US)[18], Foundation for Science and Ecology (India)[19], Trade Observatory (US)[20] and World Development Movement (UK)[21]. Albeit of varied capacity, these organizations frequently mobilize around trade matters, at times also drawing support from the governments of developing countries.

An example of this was the alliance between civil society groups and powerful governments from developing countries at the Cancun trade negotiations in September 2003, which insisted on the removal of Northern agricultural subsidies and changes in the rules for foreign investment and competition that were unfavourable to developing countries (Third World Resurgence 2003). These issues surfaced again at the WTO trade negotiation talks in Geneva in July 2004, with industrialized countries compelled to accept the idea of steady reduction in agricultural subsidies—excluding export subsidy credits—but no end dates were mentioned (*Financial Times* 2004).

Tobin tax

Among the proposals for various forms of global taxation, the Tobin tax movement is significant. This is in large part due to the rapid growth in financial speculation and volatility of markets, with enormous effects on the economy of many developing countries. It is argued that a small universal tax on foreign exchange earnings would deter speculation and, most importantly, create an important source of public financing for social development. Although conservative writers and institutions have tended to express doubts regarding the feasibility of this proposal—especially its ability to prevent currency and financial crises (Wolf 2002)—a few governments, including some in developing countries[22], parliamentarians and political parties have expressed support for the idea of global taxation. In particular, civil society organizations have rallied behind this initiative, eliciting support from political leaders, trade unionists, journalists and intellectuals (Paul and Wahlberg 2002; Ruggiero 2002).

The International Movement for Democratic Control of Financial Markets and their Institutions/L'Association pour une taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens (ATTAC)[23], founded in France in June 1998, is a leading network calling for the introduction of the Tobin tax. In July 2004, it had affiliations in 38 countries, principally in Africa, Europe and Latin America. The number of people adhering to the movement has increased dramatically; and in some countries it has become a focal point for anticapitalist movements and the struggle against "dictatorship of the market". Combining academic talent, media use and increased coordination of activities with different movements and organizations, ATTAC has been successful in introducing the issue of the currency transaction tax, as well as dealing with the problems associated with financial havens and criminality.

Other civil society groups, with leadership roles and strong programmes on the Tobin tax, include the Halifax Initiative (Canada)[24], Tobin Tax Initiative (US)[25], War on Want (UK)[26], 11.11.11 (Belgium)[27], World Economy, Ecology and Development (Germany)[28], and Network

[16] www.twnside.org.sg.

[17] See www.citizen.org/trade/about/.

[18] www.ifg.org.

[19] www.vshiva.net.

[20] See www.tradeobservatory.org.

[21] See www.wdm.org.uk/about/index.htm.

[22] For example, on 8 July 2004, the newly elected Congress Party in India presented a finance bill in parliament proposing to introduce a transaction tax—at the rate of 0.15 per cent—in the Indian financial markets (Singh 2004).

[23] Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens. See www.attac.org.

[24] www.halifaxinitiative.org.

[25] www.ceedweb.org/iirp.

[26] www.waronwant.org.

[27] www.11.11.11.be.

Institute for Global Democratization (Finland and Peru)[29] as well as several trade union confederations and church-based organizations—for example, the World Council of Churches[30]—although most of their activities, as well as those of ATTAC, remain limited mainly to Northern countries.

International anticorruption movement

A classical definition of corruption is a "behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains" (Nye 1967:417). Corruption takes such forms as bribery, embezzlement, fraud and extortion. Anticorruption and economic governance issues have increasingly become popular themes of international meetings among bilateral and multilateral agencies, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption 2003[31], Inter-American Convention against Corruption 1996[32], and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions[33]. However, while corruption is most persistent at the higher echelons of political and economic power, it is typically civil society actors who have tended to play a primary role in exposing extreme cases of corruption and raising public awareness about the damaging effects of corruption, as well as advocating policy reforms. Some civil society groups also work toward implementation of multilateral conventions and monitor compliance.

Transparency International (TI)[34] is a leading anticorruption organization, bringing together numerous civil society organizations as well as governments, donor agencies and business groups in over 80 countries. TI's national chapters work to increase levels of accountability and transparency, monitoring performance of institutions and calling for reforms to reduce corruption. TI publishes an annual bribe payers index as well as a corruption perception index that have helped to bring issues of corruption to the forefront of public debate in many countries.

A number of civil society groups have shown displeasure over TI's links with the international funding circle and its exclusive focus on national-level corruption issues. The International Initiative on Corruption and Governance (IICG)[35], with networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America, for example, argues that leading financial institutions use corruption and governance issues as a powerful tool to impose economic and political conditionalities on Southern countries. The IICG calls for campaigns to expose the global structures and systems of corruption, in addition to those at national level. Various human rights and lawyers' organizations, journalists' associations, faith-based groups and academic networks that lend support to anticorruption campaigns are equally critical of existing power relations at different levels, resulting not only in poor governance and corruption, but also in growing national debt and economic crisis.

Fair trade movement

Realizing that current international trade rules favour the narrow commercial interests of industrialized countries and large corporations, the fair trade movement has sought to offer producers in developing countries fair prices for their goods. But fair trade is more than an economic campaign. It is about consumer campaigns and evolving public attitudes toward

[28] www.weed-online.org.

[29] www.nigd.org.

[30] www.wcc-coe.org.

[31] www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_convention_corruption.html.

[32] www.oas.org/juridico/english/Treaties/b-58.html.

[33] www.oecd.org/document/21/0,2340,en_2649_34859_2017813_1_1_1_1,00.html.

[34] www.transparency.org.

[35] www.peoplesgovernance.org.

more responsible forms of day-to-day living and expression of support toward producers and their social and physical environment. In this sense, some suggest that the fair trade experience represents "a new model of development" (Sanjurjo 2003:40, 47).

There are various networks and outlets facilitating this process in Europe and North America, some of them dating from the 1970s. Currently, many trade union groups, indigenous peoples' organizations, Via Campesina[36], cooperative movements, women's groups and environmental associations have shown strong support for the movement, and some are also linked to a number of specific fair trade projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Typically, fair trade groups are small structures linked to solidarity organizations and consumer outlets, although larger production units and multinational organizations have also begun to take advantage of a growing consumer interest in fair trade goods (Jacquiau 2004:55–58). Fair trade initiatives support the establishment of business cooperatives of farmers, workers and crafts people seeking assistance in promoting improved self-help provisioning locally, as well as eliminating the "middleperson" and providing a minimum price for goods.

However, as fair trade schemes usually address the organization of production or purchase of products by Northern consumers by Northern fair trade groups using a commercial logic, a significant Northern ascendancy can be expected, with workers and local communities from the South having relatively little say in what they would want to produce or under what conditions. The core question is: How have these initiatives helped to build new skills, incomes and power blocks favouring the marginalized groups? All the same, these various initiatives have tended to encourage privileged consumers in rich countries to take responsibility for the role they play when buying products from developing countries as well as locally within developed countries, thereby raising wider public awareness in the process.

The Issues of Commonalities and Interconnectedness

As can be seen from the above descriptions, although each movement is quite specific in its mandate and core area of action, there are numerous commonalities. They retain many resemblances in their origin, social makeup, organizational structure, modus operandi and types of strategies and actions proposed. A number of these key similarities are summarized below.

- These movements are value-oriented. They attach great importance to social justice through removing imperfections in world economic governance, trade and financial relations. They advance ethical arguments to alter unequal economic relations, fraudulent activities and self-interest. But despite serious misgivings, they propose to work within the system using persuasive and non-violent means.
- They attempt to generate significant public interest and solidarity in their respective areas. At a time when the influence of trade unions and political parties is decreasing, they enjoy considerable public support and legitimacy.
- They have similarities in their organizational and membership structures, each one constituting an assemblage of various networks and coalitions, with an absence of a centralized body or hierarchy that is common among political parties and organized labour movements to mount and oversee activities. Similarly, they have no determined social or membership base, thereby relying on drawing popular support from multiple sources and groups.
- Like in most new social movements noted previously in sociological studies (see Offe 1985:817–868), leadership emanates mainly from the middle class, in addition to being predominantly Northern-based.
- They strive to make maximum use of new technology—particularly through the Internet—to influence both the media and general public. This has helped the movements avoid official censorship or other forms of control before they are able

[36] www.viacampesina.org.

to reach the target audience. This is done without abandoning traditional forms of communication and action, such as lobbying, advocacy, public demonstration and acts of civil disobedience, meetings and election canvassing.

- They are no longer limited to protesting against what goes wrong, but increasingly advance various proposals that seek to influence regulative institutions and practices.

As can be expected, there is also a certain degree of difference manifest in the structure and way these movements function. The debt relief movement, for example, has a relatively solid organizational structure since it is largely church-led, thereby allowing the various campaigns to be integrated within the church's existing structure and actions. The anticorruption movement led by TI is quite organized and has shown significant adaptability in dealing with governments and international bodies. Fair trade initiatives impose a variety of regulations sanctioned by supervisory bodies in Europe and North America. The movement also maintains a membership base of customers, producers and suppliers. ATTAC, the leading movement associated with the global Tobin tax, has sought to create a more clearly defined membership base at the national level. The campaign to change international trade rules and barriers often has the reputation of a "flashy" movement designed to influence delegates and media during international summits and annual or regular meetings of leading financial institutions. It has the least structured organizational and membership bases among the movements considered. However, this does not mean that its ability to produce desirable results is automatically inconsequential, as was recently demonstrated with respect to the outcome of the civil society mobilization at the Cancun WTO meeting. Perhaps it is the Tobin tax movement that has so far produced modest but tangible results vis-à-vis its stated mandates, despite remaining vague in its range of goals—that is, whether the transaction tax should be used primarily to better manage/stabilize financial markets, to draw essential resources to reduce North-South gaps or for long-term socioeconomic development—as well as in its modus operandi, that is, who should coordinate the associated projects and supervise funds: governments, the United Nations or civil society (see Barrillon 2001; Ruggiero 2002). But this does not mean that its future prospects are inexorably compromised. It is probable that, since the core demand advanced by this movement contradicts the very logic of the current neoliberal model of unhindered and tax-free flow of capital, the room for negotiation and producing desired results has generally remained constricted.

This paper does not have a sufficient empirical base to suggest what has specifically been gained or fallen short—or even gone wrong—in each of the movements or collectively. Nevertheless, at the level of abstraction, it is evident that for any significant bargaining or negotiations to occur, the movement must be able to convince the population concerned that it has the potential to positively change their lives. It should have an ambitious pedagogic purpose and be able to demonstrate the feasibility of its project to the general public. Yet, the ambit of interaction and influence of the five movements remains essentially a Northern, educated, middle-class public, with the latter defending these movements mainly as a moral cause or solidarity gesture. Those who are directly concerned with the consequences of such problems as debt, corruption, financial instability, trade barriers and so forth—that is, the marginalized population groups and their representative organizations and movements from the South—seem barely connected with, and represented in, these campaigns. Overcoming this imbalance is intricate, as these pressure groups would need to tackle not only the interorganizational structure and linkages between leadership and the grassroots at various levels, but also many of the contradictions and tensions already inherent in North-South relations and among social categories.

Furthermore, any notable achievement, or even the very survival, of transnational movements of this nature will depend upon how they are able to coalesce and thus include social movements and groups in the South. Again, there is little information available on the types and solidity of linkages between North-South social movements. But as far as the connectedness between the five movements considered in this paper is concerned, it seems there are no specific points that would automatically bring them into disagreement or open conflict. First of all, all five movements have

a similar historical and cultural origin in that they find many of the consequences of neoliberal economy defective, consequently requiring a variety of changes. Second, these movements have numerous overlapping agendas, thereby providing a collective identity; for example, the movement to change trade barriers and rules would be involved—in addition to its main area of activism—in campaigning for debt relief, and vice versa. Third, as suggested earlier, there are many common elements regarding their basic approach, means and strategies.

But to what extent does this convergence actually lead to stable alliances among these movements? In particular, does this help them to put forward core claims and demands in a more coordinated manner? What are the results? Overall, what are the principal processes and dynamics? Data and insights are critically lacking on many of these aspects. Nonetheless, scholars who have looked at some of these more recent social movements assert that there is a trend of "new internationalism" among different movements, while at the same time individually seeking to retain their distinctiveness.[37] Taking into consideration the mobilization against international financial institutions and holding civil society forums and meetings, others express an even more buoyant opinion.

> The idea of internationalism, for decades little more than an inspiration of the most militant and far-sighted activists, has become a practical reality, influencing and strengthening resistance everywhere (League for the Fifth International 2003:55).

In recent years, the Porto Alegre process has been perceived as a distinct evolution in its attempts to launch a more unified worldwide social movement against the ills of neoliberal globalization. Bello (2003), one of the key critics of the present economic policies and leading financial institutions, describes the Porto Alegre phenomenon as "the main expression of the coming together of a movement that has been wandering for a long time in the wilderness of fragmentation and competition". The WSF experience is again addressed in the final section of the paper; in the next section, the focus is on an assessment of how a surge in the antiglobalization movement, despite important diversities as well as recent trends in alliance building, has generated a combined importance that the political and development establishment is required to take into account.

Reactions from the Political and Development Establishment

Sociologists Della Porta and Diani (1999:233), who have analysed in great detail the links between social movements and their effects on political and development institutions, assert that "all movements make demands on the political system". But what kinds of demands stemming from social movements result in specific impacts being open to discussion? This would depend, in part, upon the specific sociopolitical and cultural context in which social movements emerge and the degree of "flexibility" considered acceptable in political negotiations.

Looking at the principal propositions of the five selected movements, there is no doubt that they are not making any impossible demands on the system. After all, they are the outcome of the system and demand change in order to achieve a greater degree of governance, social justice and more redistributive development. In particular, they are not seeking to take state power or gain entry into state power, or even actively sponsor "emancipatory politics" (Giddens 1990:7). In this sense, these movements are profoundly "pacifist" and in any event profoundly "reformist", thereby creating room for negotiation with political and development institutions for desirable policy changes. In fact, the results of an opinion poll covering 545 participants of the Second European Social Forum in Paris in November 2003 suggest that only 8 per cent radically oppose the current processes of economic globalization. Another recent survey covering nearly 1,000 global civil society groups and organizations found that only approximately 5 per cent identified themselves as being "anti" globalization (Pianta and Silva 2003:44). Indeed, it can be argued that

[37] Bourdieu 2001:61; see also Löwy 2004:19–24.

the militancy of this small percentage of "radicals"—for example, anarchists, extreme left, militant trade unionists and deep ecologists—who would like the present capitalist system to be destroyed and replaced with a utopian or another form of political system, has helped the demands advanced by the "reformist" camp.

In any event, as suggested at the beginning of the paper, the mainstream forces within the antiglobalization movement have not only agreed to work within the present system, but also aim to strengthen the interventionist development capacity of the state and multilateral system. By doing this, they open the possibility for different social forces—enlightened elites and administrators, business people, international agencies and social movements—to become receptive to the principal issues raised within the movement. Increasingly, political personalities, heads of state or government and political parties have shown interest in the movement. Not only left-wing leaders, such as President Luiz Inacio Lula of Brazil, President Fidel Castro of Cuba or President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and advocates of developing countries, such as former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, former Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir of Malaysia and President Robert G. Mugabe of Zimbabwe have spoken in favour of the movement, but more centre-right leaders like President Jacques Chirac of France and representatives of European social democrat political parties also see the need to attach a stronger social dimension to the current nature of globalization (Said and Desai 2003:59–61; Boniface 2003). European (reformed) communists, socialists and green parties usually maintain a supportive stance toward the movement. Some argue that, in addition to these efforts, the recent enthusiastic rallying behind the movement of the Christian democrats and Christian charitable organizations has especially made the antiglobalization movement more stable and affable (Askolovitc 2003).

The reformist nature of the core claims inherent in the movement makes it easier for the political or development establishment to positively respond to many of the propositions that are put forward (see table 2). The propositions related to the problems of debt, corruption, trade barriers and global taxation, especially for the developing countries, could present new contexts and opportunities for negotiation, for example, within the framework of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. For any international development agency and government that seriously attaches importance to reducing social inequalities and deprivation, a priori, these sorts of civil society propositions should prove advantageous, allowing them to build a wider political support base in order to achieve a greater development purpose. But a general intuit is that established institutions may be slow to take on board this "new" opportunity.

Despite various prospects, there are numerous problems arising from both sides. First, as far as the role of social movements is concerned, it is often suggested that they are primarily "incapable of negotiating because they do not have anything to offer in return for any concessions made to their demands" (Offe 1985:830). Scholars like Offe (1985), who have analysed the relationships between social movements and institutional politics especially in relation to new social movements, argue that, unlike, for example, labour unions that could pledge for wage restraints in return for maintaining other advantages, new social movements such as peace or environment are unable to propose anything distinct or legal.

Second, social movements often lack a legally approved organizational base or entity to respect any formal deals. The existence of a specific social base of a movement, with leaders appearing on the surface and certain proposals filtering through, is not in itself a sufficient organizational criterion to allow entry into formally binding arrangements for state institutions that are built on a legal artifact.

Third, social movements are frequently unstructured and spontaneous, with notable variations in the pace of their actions. This situation makes it difficult to conceive and operationalize agreements and plans with state institutions, which usually function within a more structured management framework, timing and direction.

Table 2: Overview of interactions of selected social movements with development institutions and the political establishment

Name	Main organizations involved	Principal social base	Key claims/demands	Contacts with development/political establishment	(Future) scope of collaboration/possible tensions between social movements and political/development establishment
Debt	Jubilee 2000 and its variants	Church groups	Debt reduction/cancellation	Significant contact with Christian democratic parties; political leaders frequently make announcements on debt relief at various meetings; civil society organization participation is sought in the IMF/WB–led HIPC initiative	Debt relief is limited and even when announcements are made implementation remains slow; frequent media coverage and government declarations give public the impression that the debt problem is solved or less acute
Trade rules and barriers	Oxfam International	Social justice movement–related NGOs	Removal of unfair trade rules and barriers	Media, political parties and government ministers; receives government funding/support	Its "market access campaign" is being supported by most developing countries and many civil society organizations but Northern governments find it exasperating
Global taxation	ATTAC	Anti-neoliberal development economists/institutions	Universal tax on foreign exchange to deter financial speculation and volatility and create a source of public financing for social development	Participation in working groups to elaborate various ideas, plans and legislation with governments, political parties, parliaments and bilateral and multilateral agencies	Governments hesitate to introduce global taxation for fear of capital outflow and opposition from the United States; even in the event of promulgation of certain legislation/schemes, who should actually enforce/monitor is likely to be an issue of disagreement between civil society organizations and public bodies
Anti-corruption	Transparency International	Human rights activists, jurists, journalists	Reduction/elimination of corruption through public awareness, greater transparency and information	Seeks to collaborate with international agencies in the adoption of international convention against corruption, as well as develop anticorruption laws in a number of developing countries; funding received from bilateral and multilateral agencies and private foundations	Tensions are likely when the movement becomes a more powerful watchdog, exposing corruption scandals involving major political parties, government and the private sector, as well as when it seeks to enforce legislation forcefully
Fair trade	International Fair Trade Association European Fair Trade Organization Fairtrade Labelling Organisation International	Socially aware (often privileged) and ethically minded consumers and retail groups	More responsible forms of living/consumption and expression of support toward producers and their social and physical environment	Various governments and donor institutions have shown interest in supporting fair trade projects	Tensions are likely when fair trade begins to hold a sizeable percentage of market share, and governments and transnational corporations seek to mainstream fair trade with significant investment and political control

Source: This table is based on the review of annual reports of the main organizations concerned, the information posted on their Internet sites, as well as the publications cited in the section General Overview of Five Selected Movements.

Fourth, social movements have neither the mandate nor the ability to formulate, sanction or implement relevant laws, treaties and agreements on such issues as debt, global taxation and trade. For this they must ultimately look for support and collaboration from the state and relevant international institutions, although some antagonism, together with some hostility toward authority and established institutions, persists within most contemporary social movements.

In the same way, the structure and functioning of established political institutions represent numerous constraints in responding to the various claims emerging from social movements. Melucci (1996:301), for example, suggests that the dominant system remains essentially hostile to social movements since collective actions "must be conducted in terms of social relations". As such, there are the "repressive apparatus of the state and the mechanism of social control" that "strive… to obstruct, contain and repress collective action" (Melucci 1996:301). In this sense, social movements would be seen primarily as "trouble makers". Unless a particular social movement becomes sufficiently powerful—thereby threatening the foundation of the system and associated privileges of the elites—there would be no, or little, need for dialogue. This too would have the prime intent of either diminishing the impact of the movement or manipulating it.

No system can be entirely monolithic in terms of its social composition and group interests. Certain forces within the system might be more tolerant than others or share certain basic values rooted in social movements. Others might find some common ground for lending a supporting hand to social movements. There might also be contending forces wishing to align with social movements in order to reach their political goals. All this would obviously vary from one sociopolitical and historical context to another. But without going too far into an abstract discussion, it can be said that gaining institutional support for social movements is highly complicated and cannot be regarded as certain.

Nevertheless, a few recent indicators tend to suggest that there is increasing interest in these movements from political forces embedded in the state system, many of which, both right- and left-wing, recognize that the current process of economic globalization must be accompanied by a level of human empathy in order to survive. *The Economist* and the *Financial Times*, for example, which function as strong forums for defending the liberal economic globalization model, now allow the more nuanced view that a growing international economic inequality, pinpointed by the antiglobalization movement, is an issue that needs some attention. Left-wing political forces usually express more open support to the movement. For example, *l'Humanité*, the journal associated with the French Communist Party, wrote in a recent editorial, "The altermondialists...are gentle utopians, surely useful to alert us to the most serious drifts of the system", but it went on to say that, "For the rest, the serious things, it is another business. The altermondialists dream. The governments govern. Each one has its place" (Laurent 2003:2).

But despite this sort of cautious remark, the interest in the movement by various political parties and groups has significantly risen. For example, during the European Social Forum in Paris in Novemeber 2003, most of the major French political parties attempted to organize events or influence the debate. Observers indicate that there are two principal reasons for this: first, many of the militant antiglobalization activists originally came from political parties that they left when disappointed (Hassoux 2003a); and second, more importantly, many young people are attracted to the movement. Indeed, a movement like ATTAC in France has more membership than the Green Party and nearly half of that of the Socialist Party (Boniface 2003). Because of this growing influence and weight, various political groups have attempted to increase contacts with the movement, at times even providing financial and other support.[38] At the same time, the leadership of some of these movements has openly called for political parties to reclaim the ideas advanced by the movement. For example, the coorganizer of the Paris

[38] For example, France's right-wing government supported the Second European Social Forum held in Paris in November 2003 by providing half a million euros. Similarly, the Socialist Party–controlled Paris municipality offered one million euros, and logistical support was provided by the associated mayors of four neighbouring municipalities governed by the French Communist Party, where most of the Forum's events were organized (see, for example, Jaigu 2003).

European Social Forum in November 2003 declared that multiplying contacts with the political establishment

> is for us a form of recognition. The sign of the importance of the social forums and the alter-globalization movement. It is the demonstration of the growing weight of the social and citizen movement in public opinion. I say to the political parties: go ahead, take us on board! You adapt our ideas. And even, put in practice our proposals concretely! (Hassoux 2003b [author's translation]).

Whether this kind of contact and dialogue would help the antiglobalization movement to have sustained influence over the system, however, is far from certain. In particular, there is the question of how the system itself is taking stock of the growing antiglobalization movement. In other words, are there any specific attempts on the part of the system to "decode" the different ideas and propositions advanced by the movement? There is a general impression that governments, bilateral bodies and international development institutions have been slow in recognizing the movement's growing influence on the public, as well as its call for establishing political channels with the system. Shaw, looking at diverse studies on globalization or antiglobalization, suggests that, on the whole, development studies have largely failed to keep up with contemporary discourses and dilemmas, stating:

> If today's students of development and related disciplines are able to use www.attac.org and www.nologo.org, why should not professional administrators, analysts, consultants, academics and practitioners in the field? (2001:168).

It is clear that the propositions emerging from civil society movements on debt, anticorruption, trade barriers, financial instabilities and global taxation have important implications for development thinking and practice. But this is only of significance when political and bureaucratic circles earnestly consider these issues, allowing for ideas to solve the problems to emerge and working with social groups and movements to resolve them. Again, there is no guarantee that agreement on the substance of the problem would automatically mean that there would be conformity on the means or methods employed to solve it. The debt relief issue is a good example of this, since despite much agreement on the social injustice and economic hardships caused by the debt burden in many developing countries, a vast difference persists among leading financial institutions and powerful Western governments, on the one hand, and social movements, on the other hand, in terms of how it might be resolved. Evidently, there are numerous differences between, and within, various social movements.

On the whole, while there is some sign that the political establishment is gradually paying attention to the reformist transnational movements, it is hard to say whether this is giving way to any significant policy impulse. The information on how legislative changes, financial support, facilitation of public debate, awareness measures, and specific programmes and projects are being jointly proposed or implemented could prove useful indicators for gauging trends in policy shift. Furthermore, the information on the actual output as well as potential impacts of the initiatives are vital in assessing the quality of policy responses. At present, most of this essential data are not available, or found in a highly dispersed form.

Concluding Observations

The discussion above has considered social movements associated with debt relief, anticorruption, trade, the Tobin tax and fair trade, indicating their organizational structure, principal areas of action, internal differences and commonalities. In the absence of a sound empirical base, it has tried to examine the broad dynamism inherent in these movements and the various complexities associated with it. Above all, the discussion sought to highlight the transnational dimensions of these movements. On the basis of the preceding observation, it is safe to say that the political visibility of these movements has continued to increase, with a

growing influence on the general public, media and some political parties. If social movements are to be measured in terms of their capacity to become a *force symbolique* challenging existing power relations (see Bourdieu 2001:40), these movements are clearly a success. Furthermore, many of the calls and claims arising from these movements have helped to produce a "symbolic multiplier" effect, which is often seen to be an important element for the efficacy of a social movement (Melucci 1985:813). This latter phenomenon is particularly fitting for the World Social Forum, which now acts as a sort of "federation" of many of the issue-based global social movements.

The antiglobalization movement has been frequently criticized as being weak in postulating concrete propositions. Teivainen (2001:59) suggests that this has in fact "become a problem for the legitimacy of the protest movements", thus one of the main aims of the organizers behind Porto Alegre was "to show that alternatives could be constructed". The social movements related to debt relief, trade, the Tobin tax and fair trade campaigns are rather distinctive in that they have sought to press forward and implement various specific propositions, achieving in the process a certain degree of professionalism in the use of the media and the Internet, and self-confidence in dealing with established political forces—for example, political parties and institutions.

In seeking to implement alternative proposals, a major paradox that these movements face is that while, on the one hand, they choose to follow the tradition of highly informal and, at times, spontaneous nature of social action, they are, on the other hand, increasingly confronted with a higher degree of need for institutionalization. Yet, as indicated earlier, these movements lack coherent central organizational structures that would allow them to conceive and implement proposals in a systematic manner, including negotiations with authorities for necessary resources and legal and political endorsement. This phenomenon of a deep-rooted opposition to centralized, legal and formal forms of social action is by no means uncommon within social movements (Eder 1985:879), but does become more problematic when movements move away from protest actions to elaboration and implementation of concrete plans. A certain degree of institutionalization would also help to maintain enhanced communication links between leadership and grassroots elements within a given movement, as well as making more efficient contacts and mounting joint actions with other social movements.

Low institutionalization, in part, may be linked to the general disorientation within these movements regarding the extent to which they should participate in the existing political system and state institutions. Indeed, according to Sader (2002:93), the antiglobalization movement as a whole is "deliberately distanced from the political arena" because it is occupied by NGO-type groupings that define civil society in opposition to the state, governments, parliaments and political parties. The lack of serious reflection on the issue of political participation is now becoming a theme of increased debate within the WSF between those who desire it to become a major "locus of power"—in the form of a political party or a new international force—for postcapitalist activism and others seeking to maintain it in the present form purely as a mechanism for exchanging, disseminating and debating ideas.[39] The first standpoint usually considers that while movements such as debt relief, the Tobin tax and improvements in trade regulations are "useful proposals", "none is enough to change the fundamental structure of the world-system" (Wallerstein 2002:2; Lingg 2002); as such, more offensive actions aimed at radical transformation in power relations are needed.

Some, like the social movements associated with the anarchists, call for "a clear rejection of capitalism" and "all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalization"; they also put forward a multitude of localized actions (see box 1). Since 1998, many of these groups have both joined People's Global Action[40] as well as sought to organize

[39] See Teivainen (2004:1–4); League for the Fifth International (2003); www.pouvoir-ouvrier.org/index.html (accessed on 8 April 2005); and Wallerstein (2002).

[40] www.agp.org.

parallel events at the WSF.[41] It is logical that these groups would not want to collaborate with development or political institutions. But even the more reformist position that is being advocated by WSF leadership and the five specific movements considered in this paper has not helped much toward a greater institutionalization or consolidation or even the implementation of actions proposed, as they have generally sought to abstain from political parties, electoral politics and state institutions.

Box 1: List of actions sponsored by People's Global Action to mark the Global Day of Action against Capitalism, 1 May 2000

Examples of conceivable actions are: strikes – demonstrations – critical mass bike rides – carnivals – street parties – reclaiming streets, government land or office buildings for non-commercial and good activities – marches – music – dancing – speeches – handing out flyers – banner hangings – distributing community-controlled newspapers – street theatre – building gardens – handing out free food – mock trade fairs – offering no-interest loans outside major banks – solidarity actions – pickets – occupations of offices – blockades and shutdowns – appropriating and disposing of luxury consumer goods – sabotaging, wrecking or interfering with capitalist infrastructure – appropriating capitalist wealth and returning it to the working people – declaring oneself independent from capitalism and authoritarian governments – setting up grassroots community councils and holding meetings outside city halls – setting up economic alternatives, like workers' cooperatives – promoting economic alternatives to capitalist companies – promoting grassroots based forms of community organization.

Source: People's Global Action Manifesto (2000).

So far the radical part of the antiglobalization movement has lent a valuable helping hand toward strengthening the position and activities of the more reformist initiatives such as the Tobin tax and debt relief. Consequently, any major rupture from the movement of the radical section may mean weakening this type of reformist movement. As was previously indicated, within each movement there are already differing views and perceptions in terms of the nature and scale of reform to be pursued, as well as important North-South divisions. In the event that reforms are slow and results are less than expected, frustrations are likely among the followers and public alike, with the probable result that some may decide to leave the movement while a small number may seek to further radicalize it. In any event, it is generally recognized that social movements are highly cyclical and never eternal (Tarrow 1995:89–116; Frank and Fuentes 1988:26).

At the same time, the system has shown little evidence of readily accommodating reformist demands. It is clear that the types of reform sought by the movements around global taxation, anticorruption, debt or trade regulations—if undertaken to their full extent—touch upon existing power relations and distribution of resources between North and South, richer (lending) and poorer (borrowing) countries, and dominant and dominated social classes and categories. There are also ideological limitations of the system as private and corporate property; unhindered flow of capital, investment and trade; and consumerist lifestyles are considered virtually sine qua non to social progress and economic prosperity. This makes it difficult for a specific bureaucratic structure to be overtly receptive to calls for sweeping changes within the system and to be integrated in the planning and resource allocation process, although certain individuals or departments may recognize that economic misery and social contradictions cannot be tackled in any significant way through existing policies and institutions. But the point that should be underscored is that even calls for minimum reforms by social movements that seemingly do not represent any major menace to the system are barely heeded. Only recently, some political parties have begun to take increased interest in reformist

[41] For example, this group mobilized nearly 6,000 people at an alternative, parallel gathering at the Second European Social Forum held in Paris in November 2003 (see *Le Monde* 2003). During the Third European Social Forum in London in October 2004, the "horizontals" organized many parallel activities, opposed to the "verticalist" management of the official forum (Levidow 2004; *The Guardian* 2004).

movements, although how, or if, this has actually helped to establish reliable communication channels with the system is still unclear. With the exception of the anticorruption movement led by TI, on the whole, few concrete policy decisions have been adopted in light of the demands advanced by these movements.

In this regard, obviously a fundamental issue is how any changes in official attitude or formal policy decisions impinge on the general health and capacity of the social movements themselves. In other words, how do these changes help—or hinder—social movements to mount more forceful and sustainable actions, and produce intended results? Is the political establishment now increasingly aware of the broader social justice issues and usefulness of the social movements' demands and propositions, thereby giving hope for more stable alliances between formal political groups and institutions, and social movements? Is there recognition that, by supporting social movements that speak in favour of a reinforced role of the state in the economy and social welfare, the state administration might be able to strengthen its own interventionist capacity to achieve development goals by arguing for essential resources and political support? In any event, whether it is for the political or development establishment, or whether it is at the local municipal, national or international level, growing support accorded to some of these transnational movements by the public is an issue that they cannot totally disregard. But the path that established political or development establishment may take in a specific context is a complex issue. Predictably, there would be no lack of attempts to portray a "populist" image within the system or use its links with social movements for electoral ruse, but how this actually occurs—including if certain experiences tend to produce more long-term and candid alliances and implementation of joint actions—is an intricate topic.

Moreover, movements such as the World Social Forum have come under increased financial pressure, since maintaining dynamism through regular and decentralized meetings and action programmes are beginning to cost sizeable amounts of money,[42] thereby compromising their ability to independently deal with authorities and donor agencies. Yet, many of these movements have neither a stable membership base nor any autonomous sources of income through cooperative enterprises and ethical business to alter this situation. Would this actually lead to a significant internal weakening or even collapse of these movements? The information and analyses to answer these questions are lacking as well as on many other essential elements characteristic of contemporary transnational social movements—for example, organizational structure, perceptions and values, wider linkages and types and scale of actions undertaken and their outcome.

It should be noted though that the movements related to debt relief, anticorruption, trade, the Tobin tax and fair trade, and the antiglobalization movement represented by the World Social Forum as a whole, are relatively young, thus it is difficult to gauge the success or failure of their overall campaign strategies, interconnectedness and ability to advance and test alternative ideas and impacts on the policy process. Overall, are the movements sturdy? Most writings are either too sanguine or too pessimistic. There is little convincing evidence to date that would allow propping up one side or the other. The only safe conclusion is that the political impact of the contemporary transnational activism has incontestably increased.

[42] For example, it is estimated that the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2005 cost as much as five million euros (*Libération* 2005).

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