Complexity and Social Movement:

Process and Emergence in Planetary Action Systems

Graeme Chesters and Ian Welsh

Abstract

This paper theoretically locates the alternative globalisation movement in the conceptual in-between spaces occupied by minoritarian thinkers such as Bateson (1973), Deleuze and Guattari (2002) and Melucci (1996). It argues that within the virtual and complex forms of organisation manifest by this movement(s) one can observe processes that are fundamentally antagonistic to the axiom of neo-liberal globalisation and it suggests that the iterative quality of these processes means they are capable of profound system effects.

The paper demonstrates how this self-defining 'movement of movements' is akin to a series of 'vectors in tension' (Melucci, 1996), a dynamic self-organising system that is manifest and reconfigured in movement 'plateaux'. Trans-national gatherings, protests and social forums that are facilitated by computer-mediated communications and the advent of unprecedented mobility, constituting a 'shadow realm' that is largely invisible to political exchange theories operating within the conceptual confines of the nation state.

The aim is to refine our understandings of the cartography of social struggle in empathy with the power of concepts identified by Deleuze (with due respect to Marx) and to interrogate the complex and immanent qualities that are partially expressed in the movement slogan and refrain 'Another World IS Possible'.

Introduction

> As we weave and unweave our bodies… from day to day, their
> molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave
> his image (Joyce, 1986:159)

Our intention in this paper is to unweave some strands of subjectivity, antagonism, communication and reflexivity that energise the movement(s) arguing that 'another world is possible'[1]. These networks of communication, 'project' identities, symbolic interventions and prefigurative alternatives we describe as the 'alternative globalisation movement' (AGM) (Chesters and Welsh, 2002; Chesters, 2003a). A movement we suggest is best understood as a social expression of complexity responsible for precipitating key global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation into the public realm as controversial and contested entities. Comprising forces constitutive of what the New York Times called 'the second superpower'[2], a 'new power in the streets' that is challenging both the economic orthodoxies of neo-liberalism and the 'inverted' totalitarianism[3] underpinned by permanent war.

When considering social and global complexity from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences one can begin to identify a number of thinkers who have intuitively worked with concepts that are being systematically theorised and nested within the complexity turn. The link Joyce makes between art and molecular reproduction is one instance, we shall also advance others. Joyce reminds us in

particular of Deleuze and Guattari's (2002) re-grounding of life as/in process, and their use of *becoming* to destabilise the idea of being. Such becomings (woman, animal, intense, imperceptible) are a feature of the 'war machine' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986), the image of thought they construct to illustrate the antagonistic quality of forces that escape the binary machines of social reproduction. This is important for our argument because our concept of the AGM, born of empirical engagement[4], is congruent with such an understanding.

In this paper, we demonstrate how the AGM exerts a deterritorialising force that explodes along lines of flight to overcode linear and molar lines of segmentarity (economic, social and cultural) wherein power produces and imposes order. We argue that the creation of a 'war machine' is a task of both discovery and artistic intervention that locates and synthesises forces immanent to the practices of resistance, refusal and escape. What emerges is a movement space with a fractal geometry, akin to the patterning of self-similarity in complex systems, where modes of symbolic contestation, discursive democracy and antagonistic conflict overflow borders and are iterated through various scales from the local to the global.

This leads us to suggest that the AGM derives as much of its antagonistic quality from its capacity for cultural intervention as it does from its acts of economic contestation, many of which are culturally rendered in a *siege of the signs* of informationalised capital flows. The AGM as a self-styled 'network of networks' works with the raw material of subjectivity and symbol, often preferring poetic utterances to political rhetoric and frequently deploying carnival rather than collectivism as its modus operandi (Notes From Nowhere, 2003). As a movement, it

self-consciously adopts artistic modes of expression, seeking space for ritornellos of the subject, movement refrains and 'rhythms of resistance'[5], all of which constitute a complex ontology of signification. Therefore, it remains inaccessible to social movement models of political exchange that operate within the conceptual confines of the nation state and frame analyses that focus on the construction of collective identity for political campaign or lobbying purposes[6].

In staking our own claim to this territory, we arrive at complexity through consideration of interventions in the socio-psychological theory of the subject and social action and their relation to a planetary system. A lineage we trace from Bateson (1973), through Goffman (1974) to Deleuze and Guattari (2002), and finally to Melucci (1989, 1996). We argue that these intra-disciplinary and 'minoritarian' thinkers articulate an image of thought that is synergistic with complexity theory and commensurate with the experiences of those shaping and being shaped by the dissipative system of the AGM.

The paper proceeds through description of the AGM and elucidation of the concepts we have developed in order to understand it. We begin by describing the new problematic of global social movement and its implications for social theory. The genealogy of a systematised approach drawn from the minor literatures above is then described and simultaneously applied to the AGM and the synergy between this framework and the theory of non-linear dynamics is explored. Our intention is to demonstrate how these insights are compatible with and further direct us towards complexity analyses of global social movement(s).

Globalisation and Social Movement

From its inception, the global turn has represented a challenge to the social sciences particularly to disciplines, such as sociology, premised on the study of discrete national societies. This challenge includes the issue of identifying relevant data and research sites capable of addressing important processes such as identity formation under global conditions (Albrow and King, 1990; Burawoy et al, 2000). Within social theory the global turn results in social movements being prioritised as key agents of social change (Beck, 1996; Castells, 1996; Giddens, 1990, 1994). Giddens identified social movements as the only social force with the potential to constrain the 'juggernaut of modernity' basing his argument on well established actors such as the environmental and peace movements (1990). This analytical extension of the movement milieu to the global domain immediately raises the *sui generis* problems posed by globalisation for sociology to the sub discipline(s) of social movement studies. Given the centrality of the movement milieu to contemporary social theory this represents a fundamental challenge to established approaches dealing with 'marginal' actors operating primarily within 'closed' i.e. national 'systems', albeit with attention to comparative studies (Kriesi et al, 1995; McAdam et al, 1996).

Key challenges posed by the global complexity turn include the problematisation of notions of 'collective identity' used to explain movement cohesion (McDonald, 2002). The assumed orientation of movement actors towards national systems of political opportunity and representation (McAdam et al, 2001), the assumed continuity of 'dynamics of contention' within social systems no longer structured around left / right binary divides and the continued prevalence of mobilization cycles

and resources. These key features of social movement studies are criticized for their inability to engage with movements during 'latency periods' (Melucci 1989, 1996) during which significant 'identity work' occurs within submerged networks, thereby failing to capture the cross-fertilisation of movement networks resulting in a cumulative process of 'movement capacity building' (Welsh 2000, 2001).

It is our contention that movements operating at the global level effectively collapse most established analytical categories of engagement. Further, complexity theory offers not only a metaphoric resource vital to theory building (Urry 2002, 2004) but also a means of engaging with the dynamics of a global movement typified by increasing internal complexity derived from its multi-linear social evolution. A mode of engagement that accords with Deleuze and Guattari's identification of the key issue for social theorists working around the problematics of complex social change:

> The issue is not at all anarchy versus organization, not even centralism versus decentralization, but a calculus or conception of the problems of nondenumerable sets, against the axiomatic of denumerable sets. Such a calculus may have its own compositions, organizations, even centralizations; nevertheless, it proceeds not via the States or the axiomatic process but via a pure becoming of the minorities (2002: 471).

We are therefore arguing that the capacity of traditional social movement analyses is blunted by the attempted imposition, globally, of a capitalist axiomatic[7] that exacerbates existing divisions and fissures in the architecture of national disciplinary

and control systems and reduces their importance as sites of pressure for global social movement actors. As global flows increasingly escape the capacity of national regulation so the conflictual axiomatic of 'denumerable sets' provides the context for the heterogenesis of what Melucci (1989) conceived as a complex planetary action system[8]. A system whose complexity increases through the exponential development of systemic feedback facilitated by the assimilation of computer mediated communications (CMC) in to all aspects of social life and the advent of mobility on historically unprecedented levels (Urry, 2000).

Globalisation, Complexity and Initial Conditions

A fundamental sociological problem in engaging with global complexity arises from the cultural appropriation of powerful technologies and techniques (Elul, 1964; Winner, 1977) initially intended to enhance the ability of national actors to exert control across time and space. Attempts to exercise global regulatory reach (Welsh, 2000) through twentieth century state-centric 'Big Science' projects harnessed to military ends, such as the atomic bomb, merge into wider corporate strategies such as those associated with GM foods and the new genomics (Welsh and Evans, 1999). The combination of big science, corporate capital and state mediated regulatory practices attempt to create 'smooth space' across which specific technologies can be introduced irrespective of the ecultural and social differences, preferences and resistance that striate that space[9].

The origins of the internet as a backup command and control system for nuclear weapons is a particularly acute example of this dual process of enhanced control accompanied by significant new bases for identity, sociality and collective

emergence as the technology is dispersed and appropriated under market conditions. Attempts to maintain / regain control through the use of legal sanctions such as the extension of terrorism tropes to environmentalists, hackers, human rights activists and all citizens questioning officially prioritised 'trajectories' produces collective cause and affinities across diverse milieus (Chesters, 2000). These processes of contestation intensify, as the underlying technics and associated techniques become interlocking machinic assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002) with a telos that confounds regulatory approaches based on discrete technologies.

The internet and powerful search engines render once distant and discrete expert knowledges accessible within the public sphere as part of a significant increase in the prevailing knowledge density within societies. Wynne (1981) notes the incredulity of objectors at a 1976 'local' planning inquiry into Britain's nuclear future when confronted by the global domain of nuclear 'expert systems'. In the twenty-first century citizens of global locales confront the global domain of neo-liberal economic doctrine with similar incredulity. In a sense movement engagement with 'expert systems' has extended to 'abstract systems', notably the primacy of money, thus unifying fields of opposition with the fusion of environmental and socio-economic justice movements being particularly significant.

This enhanced knowledge density constitutes the global in unexpected and unanticipated ways transforming long established practices in the process, including the pursuit of social change. The reliance of neo-liberalism on theories of perfect knowledge and the knowledge economy is problematised by knowledge being a 'commodity' open to wide-ranging attributions of meaning that are at least as diverse

as the sign values attached to physical products (Lash and Urry, 1994). Part of the argument advanced here is that the promotion of market solutions and the accompanying social and cultural contestation is a centuries old process which complexity theory allows sociology to engage with as an iterative rather than cyclical process.

In the minor literatures we argue are congruent with complexity theory, this process of iteration comes strongly to the fore. As Zizek (2004) points out, iteration is correlative with a Deleuzian emphasis upon *becoming* thus highlighting the 'proper' Deleuzian paradox that 'something truly new can only emerge through repetition' (Zizek, 2004: 12). Melucci (1989, 1996) makes similar points about the 'epistemological limitation' of both sides in the debate about the 'novelty' of the 'new' social movements. Where contemporary movement phenomena are perceived as 'unified empirical objects' – 'living characters moving and acting upon a stage of history', rather than as combinatory effects of forms of action impacting upon different levels of a social system, containing diverse goals and belonging to different phases of the development of particular historical systems (1989:43). In both instances process comes to the fore, allowing us to pay attention to the diachronic and synchronic elements of movements and to acknowledge how the process of iteration can re-configure the relationship between the virtual (as the quality of potential imminent to an event) and the actual (as the degree to which that potential was realised). Therefore, as Zizek argues, 'what repetition repeats is the not the way the past "effectively was" but the virtuality inherent to the past and betrayed by its past actualisation' (2004:12).

In this sense complexity theories attention to self-organising systems which are in effect nested within other systems (Byrne, 1998) can be thought of as an extension to the global level of Habermas' (1988) use of systems dynamics in *Legitimation Crisis*. In particular, the notion of a cultural system mediating the dynamics of legitimation rooted in economic and political domains resonates with the use of cultural and symbolic repertoires at the global level by the AGM. This up welling of innovative engagement with 'the system' has been predominantly appropriated through a backward looking lens which once more encapsulates one of the key paradoxes of complexity – how to recognise emergence. This paradox increasingly confronts all sciences through the tendency to incorporate the new via the familiar leading to the over-extension of established concepts and methods. Thus, the conflictual repertoires of the AGM have been interpreted through categories developed in response to the 'political ecology' of the 1960s whilst 'substantial equivalence' is applied to GM crops for example. Faced with a 'parameter collapse' (Ardener, 1989) there is an attempt to cling on to familiar terms whilst new analytical terms of engagement are constructed. Within both the natural (Barnes 1974:57-59) and social sciences (Urry 2003) metaphor becomes a crucial resource in forging new theory. The metaphoric richness of complexity theory (Thrift, 1999) is a powerful explanation of the growing attention to this field of inquiry and it is one which we seek to deepen by eliciting concepts we believe are congruent with complexity theory.

Plateaux

In this sense we suggest that one of the most potentially interesting yet under-theorised concepts to arise from within our minor literature is the concept of plateau(x), originated by Bateson (1973) and subsequently developed by Deleuze and

Guattari in their second volume on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2002). Plateau has geological, mathematical and figurative meanings but was used by Bateson to differentiate a preference within Balinese culture for the continuation of intensity over the transcendence of culmination or climax, an orientation that he noted as extending from sexuality to aggression. Deleuze and Guattari (2002) developed this concept as an extension of their distinction between arborescent culture (linear, binary, hierarchized) and the rhizomatic (multiplicitous, heterogenous, non-linear) culture they sought to describe, celebrate and create: 'We call a "plateau" any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002:22).

In our formulation we use plateau(x) as a descriptor for the manifestation of diverse social movement actors (individuals, groups, organisations and networks) in physically and temporally bounded spaces that facilitate the proliferation of weak links, the exchange of knowledge and the construction of affective relationships through facework and co-presence in conflictual situations requiring co-operation. These processes of physical interaction that characterise global social movements - the protest actions, encuentros and social fora are further understood to be dynamically interconnected and co-extensive with a *digital commons*[10] that underpins computer mediated interaction and communications and which co-constructs the rhizome of the AGM.

The 'movement of movements', (Mertes, 2004) or 'network of networks' (Melucci, 1996), constituting the AGM has used a variety of consensus and directly democratic mechanisms to mount confrontational collective action against trans-national

financial and administrative institutions such as the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank. It has also constructed 'new' democratic spaces for deliberation on complex global problems and framed these problems within the discourse of 'anti-capitalism'. These participatory fora, including the conferences and gatherings of People's Global Action (PGA), the World Social Forum (WSF) (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003) and its regional sub-conferences, are becoming increasingly central to the consolidation of global social movement networks and the emergence of an antagonistic orientation within global civil society (Chesters 2004).

In suggesting plateau as an appropriate conceptual device for unpacking the dynamics of global social movements, we are arguing for globally focussed, process oriented social movement research that suggests a further potential for one of it's most familiar analytical devices – frame analysis. In Goffman's (1974) original formulation the object of 'frame analysis' is a 'strip of activity' arbitrarily selected by an individual and subject to sense making activity. His discussion of reflexivity is thus centred on the individual and introduced as a means to 'an understanding of basic themes informing diversity' (1974:13). His auto-critique includes the observation that his work on framing is 'too removed from fieldwork' (Goffman 1974:10).

Our use of plateau departs from Goffman's notion of a strip of activity in two important ways. Through fine-grained fieldwork, using multiple recording techniques not available to Goffman, we have analysed how individual frames become group frames within particular movement events (Chesters & Welsh, 2004).

Such plateaux are typically longer than the notion of a strip suggests, creating multiple event horizons that persist long after the particular event is 'over'. We use the concept of reflexive framing (elaborated below) to address the iterative process of renegotiation of meanings that results from retrodictive sense making acts derived from subsequent plateaux through feedback mechanisms including computer mediated communications (CMC); list-serves, web logs and post-event video screenings. This allows us to advance a conceptual framework for interrogating processes of iteration at different scales (macro to micro, synchronic to diachronic) across the ebb and flows of movement activity and allows further insight into processes of capacity building accentuated by relations of affect and intensity inculcated within plateaux:

> …a plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated in a climax leading to a state of rest. The heightening of energies is sustained long enough to leave a kind of afterimage of its dynamism that can be reactivated or injected into other activities, creating a fabric of intensive states between which any number of connecting routes could exist. (Massumi, 1992:7)

Thus we conceptualise plateaux as events of temporary but intensive network stabilisation where the rhizomatic substance of the movement(s); groups, organisations, individuals, ideologies, cognitive frames etc are simultaneously manifest and re-configured. Therefore, the study of movement plateaux requires a focus upon process, interaction and intensity. The 'object' of analysis becomes the

iterative character and fractal patterning of overlapping networks and the processes of interaction and exchange between global locales, the relationship between the virtual and the real, and the interaction between new social actors and familiar forces of antagonism.

Understood this way plateaux provide a reflexive impetus for movements, an opportunity to recognise 'oneself' and the points of connection between one's identity and actions and those of other participants engaged in similar struggles. They also allow for the expression and exploration of difference (identity, politics, strategy, goals) through theoretical and practical innovation. This includes cognitive and symbolic re-framing (Welsh and Chesters, 2001; Chesters and Welsh, 2004) and the construction of distinct spatialities within the one temporality (e.g. dedicated action zones for different protest repertoires).

Interaction of this sort encourages the formulation and shaping of political projects at local and global levels and enables strategic and tactical reflection. Other outcomes include a degree of skill development and knowledge transfer, as well as the development of mechanisms for the expression of solidarity and mutual aid. Plateaux are therefore increasingly the means through which phase transitions occur in movement forms; they precipitate increases in flows of energy, which produce non-linear changes in the system (of relations) conducting that energy. These can include anything from a mundane re-orientation of campaign focus, through changes to the internal dynamics of decision-making within a social movement organisation, or the wilful 'contamination' of leftist parties seeking greater purchase amongst social movement actors (Chesters, 2004).

One of the most interesting examples of movement plateaux is the World Social Forum and its regional offshoots, eulogised by Hardt and Negri as '*the* representation of a new democratic cosmopolitanism, a new anticapitalist transnationalism, a new intellectual nomadism, a great movement of the multitude' (2003: xvi). This space of encounter was strongly influenced by ideas expressed during the Zapatista Encuentros (encounters) of the mid-90s, where the concept of creating a global 'mirror and lens' (collective recognition and focus) for antagonistic movements was first elaborated. This process enabled activists to 'bridge worlds' through the deliberate construction of spaces wherein links between diverse movements could be made.

The importance of 'weak ties' and 'social bridges' for the elaboration of communication and access to resources is familiar from Granovetter's (1973) work on the 'strength of weak ties' and latterly from those elaborating theories of small world networks (Barabasi, 2002, Buchanan, 2002). It is, of course, unlikely that the Zapatista strategy was consciously informed by Granovetter's work[11] although the mode of self defence developed by the Zapatistas used their weak ties to maximum effect, enabling them to electronically mobilise pressure upon the Mexican government through e-mail and denial of service attacks, thereby avoiding wholesale repression. This experience of virtual networks actualised in the 'electronic fabric of struggle' (Cleaver, 1998) combined with the need and desire to internationalise their struggle provided much of the impetus for the Encuentros – grandly entitled – 'Intercontinental Gatherings for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism'[12].

The idea of the World Social Forum was proposed in 1996 at the same time as the first International Encuentro and originated from intellectuals and activists associated with the Tricontinental Centre[13] (Belgium). It was conceived as an alternative to the World Economic Forum, the 'informal' gathering of political and business leaders hosted yearly in Davos, Switzerland and finally realised in Porto Alegre[14], Brazil, in 2001, through the efforts of a number of organisations. These included the Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission (CBJP), the Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (ABONG), the Social Network for Justice and Human Rights and the founders of ATTAC (France).

The social forum movement has grown exponentially since the original Porto Alegre meeting and this has led to the establishment of regional social fora in Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and the Americas, as well as numerous local and city fora that have been initiated by activists autonomously. It is by far the fastest growing example of what we term movement plateaux, with its explicit recognition of the value of, and desire for, a space of enunciation, interaction and iteration that is co-extensive with the actions of movement networks and organisations, without trying to represent them, or in turn to be represented by them. Nor is the social forum movement conceived of as temporally or geographically bounded, instead its Charter of Principles recognises that:

> 'The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre was an event localized in time and place. From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre that 'another world is possible', it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be

reduced to the events supporting it.'

(http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/)

Attempts to control this process by relatively powerful actors, including minor political parties[15] and some of the wealthier campaigning organisations that provide much of its material infrastructure[16] have largely failed. Although the rapid growth and political capital available through the forum process means that its assimilation by orthodox political currents cannot be ruled out.

The complex character of the system of relations comprising social forums has been a major factor underpinning the autonomy, diversity and self-organisation characterising the forum process. The variable and contested structures of the forum movement are emergent properties of processes of interaction in real and virtual domains; they are both adaptive to, and contingent upon the differing contexts of their manifestation. This capacity to change structure in response to external environments is a quality that signifies a high degree of self-organisation and renders the forum movement particularly adept at perturbating established political and economic discourses, through the distillation of complex and abstract argumentation combined with 'social force' (Welsh, 2000:189-190) and political pressure.

It is this combination of elements: large numbers of interacting individuals, groups and movements constituting an open system that adapts to its environment leading to increased reflexivity facilitated by feedback loops and non-linear processes of interaction and iteration that leads to greater complexity and sophistication. We are suggesting therefore that plateaux are combinatory expressions of complexity effects

realised through assemblages of material and immaterial elements. They are shaped by the material infrastructure of mobility and communication systems that are a pre-requisite of a 'network sociality' (Wittel, 2001) and through their emphasis upon co-presence, face-work, meetings and encounters they constitute material assemblages realising the potential of small world networks. The resultant rhizome – the alternative globalisation movement - is further shaped by an eclectic mix of minoritarian subjectivities, of free-radicals or *virtuosi,* (Virno, 2004a, 2004b[17]) including net-workers of various kinds - artivists, hackers, mediatistas, and academivists (Notes From Nowhere, 2003) - whose capacity to resist co-option by party discipline and ideological strictures has grown as a direct result of increasing complexity[18].

Reflexive Framing , Quantum Universes and Small World Networks

In this section, we introduce our notion of reflexive framing developed through empirical engagement with the movement plateau arising from protests against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Prague in 2000 (Chesters and Welsh, 2004). This work revealed how complex non-linear interactions occurring between minoritarian actors and movement virtuosi resulted in multiple processes of sense-making and meaning construction within a single event.

Metaphorically, we would point to parallels with contemporary debates within the physics community. Here, there is an intense debate on how many parallel universes there might be and a gathering consensus that the 'laws' of physics operating in each universe might also be different and possibly mutually antagonistic. The Nobel Prize winning physicist Robert Laughlin suggests that so-called 'fundamental' laws held

to be the basis of reality are in fact emergent properties produced in the random chaos of the vacuum[19]. Coming at a time when the speed of light, Einstein's universal constant, has been shown to be variable, this gives some indication of the profound revolution in scientific thinking underway as the century opens. The networks of networks constituting the alternative globalization movement can be thought of as analogous to the existence of a number of parallel social universes each with different 'laws' of conduct. Reflexive framing is our conceptual descriptor for activists individual and collective 'sense making' capacities and practices within this multi-dimensional universe.

Whilst frame analysis has been used widely in theorising New Social Movements (Snow et al, 1986; Johnston, 1995; Klandermans 1997) - predominantly at a national level - we are not aware of any systematic attempt to appraise these established approaches in terms of global movement nor any work that attempts to incorporate Bateson's (1973) insights on framing that pre-figured Goffman's (1974) formulation.

Bateson & Reflexive Framing

We have outlined our approach to reflexive framing extensively elsewhere (Welsh and Chesters 2001, Chesters & Welsh, 2004) and we will confine ourselves to a summary and elaboration of key points here. This approach to framing must not be confused with established uses in the social movement literature which have developed out of a concern for the framing processes of social movement organisations (SMOs) and their alignment with, and potency within, existing political opportunity structures (Snow et al, 1986). Many actors within the AGM are self-declared 'disorganisations' regarding the existing political system as part of the

problem not part of the solution. As a grassroots movement without large scale institutions, permanent buildings, workers or pension funds and a primary commitment to direct action as a preferred mode of intervention rather than a tactic of last resort, this movement is sufficiently distinct from those which have been studied under the auspices of frame analysis to require a more nuanced approach.

Following Bateson we take reflexive framing to refer to the process through which individual psychological frames are deployed as 'sense making' strategies leaving an individual with adequate reserves of 'ontological security' to retain the capacity to act.[20] This emphasis on ontology is consistent with recent moves establishing the importance of ontological citizenship as a generic category of increasing importance within contemporary societies (Turner, 2001). One important consequence of this is the attempt to maximise the degree of fit between daily personal acts - repertoires of self - and desired social, political and cultural ends. Within social movements' personal frames thus intersect with elements of the ideological and discursive expressions' of contemporary society. In this process of reflexive framing, individual psychological and subjective experiences of the 'life world' of contemporary society are related to the ideological expressions, discourses and material practices perceived as shaping the personal and planetary milieu. Such 'frame-work' (Chesters and Welsh, 2004) unavoidably articulates frames, ideology and discourse in an attempt at sense making that renders concrete (in intended and unintended ways) the material, economic, political and cultural forces and practices impacting on person and planet. Clear examples from our data where such 'frame-work' occurs include the definition and use of violence, the implications of gender order, freedom of speech, association and movement (Welsh, 2002).

A crux issue for all framing approaches lies in the translation of individual psychological frames into group or collective frames, part of the process of aggregation that Urry (2000) has suggested is so problematical for the sociological enterprise. Established approaches have come under mounting criticism on a number of grounds here. These include neglecting issues of frame generation by activists (Tesh, 2000), failing to specify the relationship between frame, ideology and discourse (Fischer, 1997) and imposing secondary, analytical frames, upon movement categories. Reflexive framing is one response to such criticisms. Whilst individual frames unavoidably articulate ideological and discursive elements of the social formation within which they are situated, the process of aggregation leading to group and movement frames remains to be outlined. We argue that close attention to intra-movement frame-work through co-presence in movement defined spaces of interaction needs to be combined with analysis of the iterative capacity of CMC to communicate, refine and disseminate internally resonant frames.

Bateson's relevance here lies in his emphasis upon the protracted dialogical and cultural nature of a process that is *not* confined to clearly defined rational increments or linguistic acts of communication. The types of communication and interaction generative of such 'sense making' are *necessarily* diverse with music, dance, and rhythm serving as examples of communication modes constitutive of social solidarity and trust. This movement milieu *produces* temporal and spatial locations that suspend the fragmentation of life (Bauman, 1995) dominant within established political and economic systems. Anomie is transcended through the exchange of views and the realization that reflexive criticality is not an individual quirk but is in

fact a widely experienced and appropriate mode of response to the neo-liberal axiomatic. This normalization of critical reflection empowers movement members to physically confront the economic and political institutions associated with 'negative' life world impacts.

Collective identity has been one of the main approaches to social movements and we would emphasise that *we are not* arguing that the product of the processes outlined here was or *ever can be* an uncomplicated, unified or seamless collective identity. Rather, we regard these plateaux as spaces within which critical anarchist, liberal, socialist, libertarian, feminist and anti-racist/imperialist perspectives exist in creative tension around the definition and pursuit of immediate objectives - stopping a summit or planning a 'day of action', and beyond this the longer term objectives of the global movement; developing strategic capacity, enunciating alternatives, consolidating networks. With all due respect to Marx and Engels we argue that plateaux are constituted through a *parallelogram of forces[21]*.

It is in this context that significant frame generation takes place. As we have demonstrated empirically elsewhere (Chesters and Welsh, 2004), it is during interactions within plateaux constituted through a parallelogram of forces that marginal actors (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; Atton 2002:106-107) generate new movement frames independent of 'movement intellectuals and entrepreneurs'. A second, and related claim, is that the emergent quality of such frames enables them to achieve longer-term resonance within and across the network of networks perturbating established movement frames and dispositions. Thirdly, such facework dispels the preconceptions that inevitably accompany CMC network contacts (Welsh,

2002) exposing participants to each other's tenor, demeanour and character in real time and space.

In terms of core networks, such facework is part of longer cycle of association, interaction and trust building. Whilst not regarding this as a panacea we are cautiously optimistic that such interaction is an important means of consolidating and advancing movement 'frames' across the rapidly imploding North South divide. In the absence of such reflexivity the movement would no doubt develop what Bateson refers to as 'habits of mind', a normative discipline that would lead to the network eventually ossifying and losing the ability to lay siege to the signs and realities of global neo-liberal capitalism. The alternative globalization movement thus represents the latest expression of a Meluccian 'antagonistic' social movement conflictually engaged with issues of what is produced, how it is produced and why it is produced at the level of meaning, sign value and material product (1996:38-39). The importance of meaning and sign value is underlined by the consideration of movement as media.

Movements as Media

Melucci's (1996) argument that movements *are* media in terms of planetary action systems has been developed by Atton (2002), who argues that the producer/ consumer dichotomy which has structured key debates within media studies is significantly attenuated in relation to movement media product. This is particularly so within CMC modes, such as Indymedia (www.indymedia.org). The creation and production of autonomous media significantly extends the framing capacities of movement actors by linking individual frames to collective dialogical forums

constitutive of group identities. The ontological capacity of movements to act in the face of complexity is thus enhanced in terms of agency, technical and strategic knowledge. The available knowledge density interrogated and engaged with by the AGM as an iterative process is a social example of the ability of 'fairly ordinary thinkers' to exercise 'imaginative extrapolation' noted by Eve et al, (1997:xxvi) in their evaluation of the implications of complexity theory for sociology.

Eve et al's, (1997) formulation is particularly useful when used in conjunction with Melucian terms such as 'complex societies' and 'planetary action systems' as a means of formalising both the theoretical and methodological stakes for sociology in meeting the complexity turn. Eve et al, advance several related propositions central to our argument here. First, they recognise the growing currency of freedom as a meaningful term within science and philosophy (1997:xiv) in the sense that 'free events' cannot be predicted though the occurrence of such events can be expected. Second, they acknowledge that 'observation – knowing – is an ontological event' (1997:xiv) emphasising that 'Freedom implies discoverable meaning in an act . . . distinguishing an act from an event'. Whilst such 'free acts' are unpredictable in advance, they are 'retrodictable in that they "make sense"'(1997:xiv)[22]. Faced with such acts it is argued that social science can usefully engage with the 'history and semantics of the [underlying] complex personal and social feedbacks' recognising the '*primacy* of nonlinear historical process… even individual acts and decisions' (1997:xvi-xvii). We will return to issues of historical iteration in our conclusions and confine our comments here to movement as media.

The significance of complexity theory for sociology and social movement studies

arises from processes of globalisation spanning economic, scientific, technological and socially ascribed meaning that have been termed 'scapes' (Appadurai, 1990) and 'flows' (Lash and Urry, 1994). Scapes and flows are directed across space and through time operating as powerful descriptors of processes constitutive of emergence. Despite this, neither term is particularly satisfactory in addressing issues of agency. Qualitative engagement with movement as media underlines various commentators' recognition that interactionist approaches have long emphasised the complexities underlying apparently stable social formations and institutions (Eve et al, 1997:279; Atkinson and Housley 2003).

Through fine-grained engagement with the movement milieu it is possible to track some of the key phase shifts within the global flows that transform 'meaning' into the 'acts' which perturbate apparently dominant institutions, impacting upon the image within the public sphere. The Seattle meeting of the WTO, widely dubbed 'The Battle of Seattle' serves as a particularly powerful example of the outcome of a 'free act'. Numerous accounts of this action describe it as an event out of the blue, something totally unanticipated. Whilst this may have been the case for the academic commentators concerned, such accounts are profoundly misleading. The 1999 WTO meeting had been identified as the potential venue for confronting global neo-liberalism since 1996 with the intention of delegitimising it through the media by the creative use of non-violent direct action before the world's media (see Notes From Nowhere, 2003). Similar targeted interventions against the WTO took place the year before in Geneva (Chesters, 2003b). Whilst this may appear to reinforce Gamson's (1995) claim that social movement actors are 'media junkies', actively scouring mainstream media output for evidence of their actions, this would be to neglect other

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important impacts of movement as media inside and outside the AGM.

Movement and Mainstream Media

The ability to shape mainstream media agendas through briefings, high profile press conferences, strategic leaks and off the record briefings represent significant political resources which the time-space compression (Harvey, 1989) of globalisation has made more problematic for politicians and corporate entities (Thompson, 1995). Key social movement commentators (Gamson, 1995) argue that mobilising around highly abstract issues, such as neo-liberalism / capitalism, are self defeating given the impossibility of achieving a set of simplifying frames coherent enough to permit the negotiation of a collective identity. The AGM's interventions suggest a more complex set of emergent outcomes. By mounting autonomous media product, the AGM influences mainstream media. During the Seattle protests the Indymedia Centre (IMC) and web site was inundated with journalists seeking information about the protesters. Similarly, during the protests in 2003 against George W Bush's visit to England the UK Indymedia server recorded over one million 'hits', more than any of the mainstream media sites, making it a significant resource for the activist community, the public and reporters alike. The 'frame-work' contributing to such sites codifies and 'declares the collective stakes' through a processes of social negotiation of meanings condensed as information *and* symbolic imagery. These informational and symbolic forms are disseminated through both mainstream and movement media milieus perturbating established discourses. The portrayal of integrated global capitalism by national political leaders as an implacably smooth, inevitable and unopposable force of progress is thus exposed to a multi-faceted critique with movement as media operating as an attractor around which other voices

condense.

The establishment of critical discourses within the global public sphere promotes discursive linkages amidst hardening opposition to neo-liberal globalisation amongst developing nations, adds social force to expressions of internal dissent (e.g. Stiglitz 2002) and are recognised as potentially counter-hegemonic forces within the IMF / WTO nexus. The articulation of such critique is underpinned by the liminality of the originating social actors that enables then to conceive and mount 'free-acts' precisely because of their social distance from dominant mindsets. The impact of movement media persists across time with mainstream media professionals continuing to value and protect Indymedia sources whilst state actors increasingly target both surveillance and repressive forces against IMCs[23]. Whilst it can be argued that the declining novelty value of 'summit sieges' has produced a return to established categories of reportage, with an attendant focus upon violent events, Cottle (1999) has argued that the presence of articulate voices from below has impacted upon both news gathering and production values adding a degree of reflexivity.

Movement, Media and Reflexive Framing

Within the AGM extensive use of modern technologies of communication, recording and mobility enable a dramatic extension of framing repertoires beyond those initially formalised by Snow et al, (1986). Activist produced CMC are increasingly independent of external forms of control as open source software integrates with wireless technologies facilitating mobile, user-defined spaces of information production and exchange. This co-exists with more traditional print media to produce an autonomous sphere of circulation with multiple weak links to a multitude of

'users' in both virtual and 'facework' contexts. Consequently, plateaux become extensive of time and space as they are opened to multi-perspectival representation, reflection and critique, enabling actors within the AGM to suture meaning through a diverse range of 'retrodictable sense making' acts. This frame-work becomes subject to a complex process of iterative refinement arising from the ensuing virtual and facework discussions producing further sophistication of both product and interpretation, a process of negotiation that occurs across a diverse range of actors.

In an important sense these processes are constitutive of a global activist community that has transcended the lack of 'collective memories, a succession of generations, sacred sites and past golden ages' regarded as a barrier to the 'construction of community' by Lash and Urry (1994: 310)[24]. The notion of movement as media and the practices associated with what we term reflexive framing combine to produce a community with a commitment to a cultural politics (the opposite of a political culture). A politics inscribed in the slogan 'unity in diversity' and manifest in the seemingly paradoxical attempt to valorise *both* counter-hegemony and a proliferation of minoritarian interests, hybridised identities and new forms of subjectivity. In this sense, the AGM can be described as network that is concerned more with sociality - the quality of interaction and the process through which spaces for interacting are opened, reproduced and sustained - than with the prescription of outcomes for those interactions. This represents 'faith in the process' that tacitly acknowledges the contingent and unpredictable qualities of emergence. This can be equated with what Deleuze and Guattari called a 'revolutionary-becoming', as Patton describes it:

'What they mean by this is not simply resistance to the mechanisms

of capture and re-territorialization, but the invention of new forms of subjectivity and new forms of connection between deterritorialized elements of the social field' (2000:8).

The Charter of the World Social Forum is indicative of this novel desire for contingent spaces of interaction (plateaux) amongst activists within the AGM. It opposes political representation within the forum, expressly forbids participation by political parties[25], limits its activities to dialogue and discourse and eschews constituting itself as a representative decision-making body (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003; Sen et al, 2004). The forum *is* the process and the process is sovereign irrespective of the huge amounts of energy and resources invested by political parties, NGOs, charities etc. in pursuit of more narrowly defined goals. At a more abstract level, there is a deep commitment to providing spaces of encounter that involve and invoke recognition, trust building and affectivity that have little obvious instrumental value in terms of immediate social change. Rather there is a presumption that the iteration of such practices through the extension of similar spaces within the nested networks represented, and the linkages formed through the practice of encounter are in, and of themselves, a coherent model for achieving change. This could be regarded as an intuitive attempt to maximise small-world networks through the promotion of weak ties and it undoubtedly has such effects. However some participants have experientially come to recognise these effects and thus there has been some attempt to self-consciously promote both spaces of encounter and the need for 'free radicals' – highly mobile and well connected activists who are able to fulfil the role of bridging densely clustered activist locales.

Conclusion: History, Social Movement and Iteration

As we have noted the notion of historical iteration within complexity theory has been identified as key locus of investigation for the social sciences. The idea of path dependency unfolding from an initial set of conditions raises issues of agency crucial to any understanding of social change. Complexity theory thus embraces both an historical telos and the potential for 'free-acts' to transform this telos with the recognition that initial conditions are virtually impossible to recreate and are inevitably influenced by the initial formalisation established by the observer. The results are profoundly challenging in theoretical and methodological terms, something compounded by the arrival of new data collection techniques permitting fine-grained engagement with the dynamics of movement milieu. We would suggest that one of the key challenges lies in striking an analytical balance between the continued relevance of established conceptual means of engagement and recognising areas that require further empirical and conceptual innovation.

As scientific and technological developments have accelerated globalisation within the neo-liberal axiom, social movement studies have largely continued to address movements within the context of discrete nation states prioritising the search for programmatic and systemic change within such systems. In the course of such theorising the activities of direct action movements targeting modern global institutions are commonly addressed through familiar categories redolent of those applied to 'riotous assemblies' throughout history – the fear of the mob continues to haunt the halls of modernity.

Urry (2000) has noted that sociology has had a parasitic relationship with social

movements ascribing progress to 'rational' processes originating within modernity when the impetus for such change has frequently lain within the liminal movement milieu. We will close by situating the AGM within the context of such intellectual stakes through the notion of a bifucated modernity that features prominently in the work of Beck (1992) and Touraine (1995). We would suggest that the tension between community and society formalised by Tonnies and state centric rationalities and 'affect' expressed through Weber represent significant sub-texts to these formalisations. As the appropriation of the future becomes a moral trajectory (Giddens, 1991) societal / state actors have focussed on scientific and economic progress and prospects as a key means of displacing contemporary critiques through promissory futures. We have argued here that the AGM's prioritisation of becoming (discursive, revolutionary, carnivalesque) represents the rejection of justifying actions in the present by reference to temporally distant ends.

In terms of historical iteration, we are suggesting that two persistent themes are melded within the AGM the pursuit of socio-economic and environmental justice. Within organised capitalist societies like the UK, these are historically persistent themes (Gould, 1988; Hardy 1979; Wall 1994) around which considerable social force has been exercised. The Marxist historian E. P. Thompson's account of such force provides a useful summary of themes relevant to this task. Thompson draws a distinction between the 'mob' and forms of sophisticated 'direct action' arising under 'specific conditions' and protected by 'the local community' (1978:67). The impetus for such action in both rural and urban contexts was a 'consumer-consciousness' and the attempt to 'reimpose the older moral economy… against the economy of the free market' around issues of price[26] and quality of food stuffs[27] (1978: 70-73).

Thompson is clear that such expressive forms pre-figured organised concerns over control of the labour process and political representation[28]. As Zizek's (2004) commentary on Karatani (2003) notes 'If workers can become subjects at all, it is only as consumers' who actively complete the process of circulation by purchasing the product of abstract labour (Zizek, 2004:124). Without this final act of consumption the production of a commodity merely results in a product with the potential to realise value[29].

Throughout the intervening centuries, modernity has progressed the pursuit of increasingly global aspirations over and above locally sedimented traditions and aspirations. Defence of the local in the face of scientific and technical progress harnessed to the enhanced realisation of profit continues to be dismissed as irrational, a position buttressed by apparently common sense assertions such as Keynes statement that 'in the long run we are all dead'. As sections of the medical community begin to declare death an illness which can be cured through advances in genomics such comforting justifications begin to be challenged on 'rational' grounds at precisely the same time as issues of inter-generational equity gain ground through discourses of risk, sustainable development, the precautionary principle and the possibility of ecological modernisation. The bi-polar choice between the local and the global between an actual humanitarianism and the continuing exploitation and degradation of the organic realm – both human and environmental - is thus confronted within changed circumstances where an old order stands on the edge of chaos.

In this context, the AGM represents a strange attractor with the potential to impact on

the default resolution of this bi-polar tension. Eve et al (1997) are clear that scientific theorising is a product of attempts at sense making confronted by the white noise of complexity. We are suggesting that rather than seeking to impose old moral sensibilities the AGM is, as Offe argued in relation to environmental movements of the 1970s and 1980s, in pursuit of a selective modernisation of modernity's values (Offe, 1985). There is here the continuation of a historically persistent critique of modernity based in the exploitation of external (environment) and internal (human) nature. The social forces analysed by E. P. Thompson acted at a time when environmental concerns represented an absolutely minoritarian position during a period of widespread public disaffection with prevailing forms of political representation. Such disaffection is a commonplace within contemporary advanced democracies where membership of environmental organisations significantly exceeds political party affiliations. As Maffesoli (1996) argued, publics are disengaged from politics and investing in new forms of sociality more congruent with their immediate and local needs. The AGM represents a massive experiment in the global expression of such sociality, self-organised as a complex, adaptive system. CMC and enhanced freedom of movement facilitate the co-ordinated expression of this network of networks rendering the multitude of global locales a world-wide social force. Continuing to approach social movements solely as actors operating within discrete societies ignores these complex interactions which complexity theory offers a useful and useable means of engagement with. In this sense the minoritarian thinkers addressed here represent important, if difficult, resources for an engagement which has only just begun. There is no panacea here but an opening out onto a world where the need to exercise judgement and enter into 'free-acts' is an increasingly common ontological position.

1   The slogan of the World Social Forum – see Fisher, W.F. and Ponniah, T. (2003)

2   Patrick Taylor, 'A New Power in the Streets', *New York Times*, 17 Feb, 2003.

3   Sheldon Wolin has coined this term to describe the integration of corporate capitalism with political power to promote 'generalised fear'. He considers it inverted because of its reliance upon promoting 'a sense of weakness and collective futility' amongst people in comparison to the Nazi regime which he argues was dependent upon a sense of collective power and strength. See Wolin, S. 'Inverted Totalitarianism', *The Nation*, 1 May, 2003.

4   The empirical basis for this paper is funded research conducted by the authors over the last 3 years. This includes ESRC funded research (R0000223486) on framing in global social movements (Chesters & Welsh, 2004), British Academy funded research (LRG-33561) on 'leadership in the new social movements' and ongoing work on global civil society and deliberative democracy (Chesters, 2004) funded by the Leverhulme Trust (SRF/2002/0065).

       Rhythms of Resistance is the name of a international collective of musicians and dancers that play during anti-capitalist protests – www.RhythmsofResistance.co.uk. Frequently referred to as a 'Samba Band' their roots are 'closer to the Afro Bloc parading drum bands that emerged in the mid 70s in Salvadore, Bahia in Brazil.' The outcome of such rhythmic interventions is to introduce an affective and ambiguous dimension to the space of protest, which marks the becoming-Carnivalesque of that space. The use of mucial metaphors – 'ritornellos', 'refrains' etc as a means of illustrating the complex and dynamical interplay between action, agency, affect and sensation is prominent in Deleuze (2001) and Deleuze and Guattari (2002), see also Buchanan & Swiboda, (2004).

6   Similar criticisms have been made by McDonald (2002).

7   This capitalist axiomatic is properly described as neo-liberalism and illustrates an attempt to limit the multi-realizable quality of capitalist axioms by attacking the capitalist axioms of social democracy. This according to Deleuze and Guattari is part of a tendency towards 'totalitarianism' that avoids social-democratic attempts to 'master the flows' and instead seeks to regulate dominant flows via a small number of axioms whilst imposing upon other flows a derivative status which 'does not preclude the brutal intervention of state power' (2002:462). The 'Washington consensus' on global economic regimen and the brutal 'US coalition' intervention in Iraq during 2003 have been suggested as examples of precisely these traits (Bonta and Protevi, 2004:58).

8   'the "planetarization" of action profoundly alters the environmental conditions in which actors are formed and act: the field of opportunities and constraints of action is redefined within a multipolar and transnational system' (Melucci, 1989:74).

9   The complex relationship between smooth and striated space: 'smooth space is constantly being translated, tansversed into a striated space, striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space' reminds us that 'in fact the two spaces only exist in mixture' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002:474).

10   The concept of a digital commons is closely associated with the free software movement, however it is used here in a broader sense to include the patterns of information/knowledge exchange within activist milieu that are mediated by digital technologies.

11   Subcommandate Marcos' (the Zapatista spokesperson, poet and polemicist) role in this strategy is
    pivotal and given he is most likely Rafael Guillen a former philosophy professor from Mexico City, it is possible that he was acquainted with Granovetter's work.

12   For an excellent insight in to the philosophy and praxis of the Zapatistas see Marcos (2001) *Our Word Is Our Weapon*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

13   http://www.cetri.be/

14   Porto Alegre is a stronghold of the Brazilian Worker's Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores) and achieved renown through its implementation of participatory community budgeting.

15   In Europe this would include the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire in France, Rifondazione Communista in Italy and the Socialist Workers Party in Britain.

16   One such example would be ATTAC: The Association for a Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Assistance to Citizens, a French NGO which claims some 35000 individual members and a number of affiliated organisations.

17   The concept of virtuosity is central to Virno's analysis of the axiomatic of neo-liberalism (2004b). He argues that the interjection of verbal communication and affectivity in to the production process renders evident the imminent capacities of a 'general intellect'. The way for social change to occur therefore is for the general intellect to be severed from (wage) labour and reunited with political action. Thus amongst certain actors one can observe the possibilities inherent through the post-Fordist generalisation of virtuosity (communication, co-operation, performance and affectivity).

18   This is already evident in the attempt to bring the European Social forum to London in 2004

19   Cited in Muir, H. 'The Quantum Oracle', *New Scientist*, 176:2365. 12 October, 2002.

20   There are obvious parallels here with Giddens work on Modernity and Self-Identity (1991) where such psychological 'bracketing-out' is regarded as vital in constituting an 'identity'. We depart from Giddens in that we do not associate this sense of self / identity as based in a primary set of 'trust relations' resulting in a 'carapace' (McKechnie & Welsh 1994) but see the process as reflexive in the anglophone sense of the word i.e. an open and iterative negotiation of identity and meaning giving rise, in a Kantian sense, to a need to make judgement and engage in social action in pursuit of aesthetically prioritised ends (Jowers 1994).

21   Originally used by Marx this term has gained currency through its use by other social philosophers/commentators, for example: 'A force is applied to another force: They form a parallelogram of forces. They do not cancel one another; they are composed, according to a law. The play among forces is reformist: It produces compromises. But the game is never between two forces, it is among countless forces; the parallelogram gives rise to far more complex multidimensional figures. To decide which forces must be set against which other forces, decisions are made which are dependent not on the play of forces but on the play of power. A knowledge is produced, of the composition of forces.' Umberto Eco, (1986) *Faith in Fakes*, London: Secker & Warburg. English edition: 249.

22   In terms of our empirical engagement with the AGM the unpredictable rise of 'Tactical Frivolity', a carnivalesque repertoire of perfomance/action initiated at the Prague IMF / World bank summit in Prague represents an example of such an act. Here, despite the presence of key 'free radicals' comprised of 'internationals' – a category of globally active individuals analogous to organic or movement intellectuals – a key movement innovation originated within a previously marginal group (Chesters and Welsh 2004). Eve et al's distinction also relates to Touraine's distinction between an individual and an actor (Touraine 1995).

23   These points are clearly illustrated by the Italian state's violent seizure of the Indymedia centre during the Genoa event in 2001 following the shooting of an activist who was then driven over by a Landrover containing the Carabinerie. During the eviction, indiscriminate violence was meted out to activists many of whom were asleep. The seizure and destruction of computers failed to prevent the distribution and circulation of activist footage of events which are widely available as media products and frequently used as the basis for public meetings and discussion.

[24]   Whilst participation in plateaux is dominated by the biologically young Melucci's insight that youth is also a state of mind is reinforced by the active engagement of activist 'free radicals' from the 1960s onwards. The American Star Hawk (www.starhawk.org) serves as a particularly clear example. Movements actively commemorate and mark significant past engagements, such as the Twyford Down actions that attempted to stop road construction in the UK. The collective memory of global engagement includes frequent recollections of a past golden age before the advent of harsher policing regimes.

[25]   This has been circumvented through the use of front groups, including Globalise Resistance in the UK which is a well known front for the Socialist Workers Party.

[26]   The use of direct action by 'fuel protestors' in the UK in 2000 revolved centrally around the price of fuel suggesting that such consumer sensibilities persist and are significantly enabled by modern communication techniques.

[27]   Public responses to GMO food crops throughout Europe and the majority world have been significantly influenced by concerns over food safety, environmental impacts and maintaining established property right systems.

[28]   The Chartists use of direct action in pursuit of more representative democratic institutions and structures is a good example of an insurrection which is subsequently re-appropriated as the origin of true democracy featuring prominently in Newport's bid for city status more than a hundred years after the 'last rising'.

[29]   Corporate sensitivity to the uptake of GM crops illustrates this point. According to an academic biotech researcher in Iowa ''I think that what we need to watch very very closely is what the consumer continually communicates around the world. The consumer is King . . . we have elevated the consumer to a high pedestal. The consumer doesn't have to be right. The consumer doesn't have to be knowledgeable. The consumer makes a choice and we do what the consumer wants… Consumers are aware that the greatest change is occurring in the history - probably - of the human family on the globe in their foodstuffs and no processor no seller of food products wants to ever be caught selling something the consumer does not want.' (BBC Radio 4, Seeds of Trouble, Pt II, 14 March 2003).

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