

Solidarity and recognition: the ‘long frontier’ of counter-globalism¹

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Globalism is a contested concept, but perhaps best understood as a spatial strategy, which disempowers those unable to transcend the fixity of place and social context. Under globalism fluidity becomes a key source of power, enabling the powerful to liquefy assets, to disembed, and thereby displace political, social or ecological impacts. The infrastructures of globalism enable the disembodied extension of power across territory, to the extent that one model, universally applicable for all societies, is positioned as supreme. This power-grab for globalist hegemony was succinctly expressed in 2002 when the US National Security Strategy asserted the universality of ‘a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise’, values that ‘are right and true for every person, in every society’ (White House 2002, 18). The only possible challenge to globalism perhaps, is through a similarly disembedded counter-movement, that mirrors the global reach and power of mainstream globalism. Such a perspective is found, for instance, in Michael Hardt's insistence that 'the alternative to the rule of global capital and its institutions will only be found at an equally global level, by a global democratic movement' (2002, 3).

The praxis of counter-globalist movements, though, suggests a different tendency, one that centres on the assertion of particularity against universality. Expressed in the legitimacy of ‘many worlds’ against ‘one world’ globalism, such resistance centres on

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exposing the material effects and foregrounding concrete and material experiences of globalism. Movements mobilise against the disembodied logic of globalism on the basis of co-presence and inter-subjectivity, and are embedded in relational concepts of selfhood. They are often intensely embodied and are radically emplaced through militant localism and trans-local dialogue. Counter-globalism thus does not seek to defeat geography; rather it embraces it, as the starting-point of mobilisation. Whether configured as everyday lived experience, or as revolutionary struggle, the 'real' thus impinges on the abstract globalism: universal claims to transcendence are always mythical, and can be overturned.

The starting point of this article is to analyse globalism as a spatial strategy, a strategy of displacement grounded in material power. Globalism thus signifies the capacity to exploit and dominate at distance, from the sanctity of corporate boardrooms, military briefings and media cutting rooms. The claim is to universal market, military and normative power, but the impact is of extended and deepened division. Centres of power appear more as islands, or enclaves, defined against the backwash effects of counter-globalism, and the logic of offensive defence. Counter movements gain traction as paradigmatic challengers, grounded in the aspiration to alternative ways of being.

As outlined below in table 1, and in detail later in this discussion, the three key power sources under globalism—corporate, imperial and normative—are presented with profound contradictions: corporations are confronted by an advancing crisis of social and ecological exhaustion; dominant states and inter-state organisations are confronted by legitimacy crises; claims to universal norms implode in the face of their own particularity. We find alternatives emerging across all three fields: asserting livelihood and the commons; demanding deep democratisation; and claiming autonomy with solidarity. As discussed in the closing section to this article, each is expressed in various counter-globalist spatial strategies, across multiple movements.

Table 1: Dimensions of globalism and counter-globalism

Power Sources	Resistance basis	Alternative themes
Corporate (TNCs)	Exhaustion crisis	Livelihood and the commons
Imperial (US/IGOs)	Legitimacy crisis	Deep democracy
Normative globalism	Value crisis	Autonomy with solidarity

This article discusses these counter-globalist strategies using a spatial motif, that of the ‘long frontier’. In his book ‘Spaces of Hope’, David Harvey invokes this ‘long frontier’ metaphor as ‘a politics of multiple theatres on the long frontier of insurgent action’ (2000, 12). The idea of the long frontier is particularly evocative for the politics and geographies of counter-globalism. The long frontier is a financial frontier, a frontier of opportunity for the venture capitalist, between commodification and its others. It is the frontier of values, between circuits of capital and cycles of reproduction, between exchange value and use value. It is also a social frontier between a transnational capitalist class and a conglomeration of subordinate social forces. The long frontier is also the frontier for strategy—between business associations lobbying for deeper marketisation, and between counter-globalist movements constructing links and solidarities.

The frontier is ‘long’ in the sense of being writ-large across the globe, from one capitalist incursion and counter-globalist conflagration to the next. It is also ‘long’ in terms of its roots, embedded in the first instance within consciousness and from there generating dynamics of aspiration and inspiration. It thereby connects the theatres of counter-globalist action, linking places where its politics are enacted. The conglomeration of social forces and places that it marks out are necessarily variegated and diverse, defined by differences as much as by similarities. The concept of the ‘long frontier’ then, is always in the making, never fully formed. Its power rests on the assertion of ‘other worlds’ against one world globalism, and in the capacity to link these in the imagination of the movements. For it to be effective, as Harvey argues, ‘insurgent political practices must occur in all theatres on this long frontier’ (Harvey 2000: 13).

The long frontier is thus a fluid and contingent entity, grounded in places but constantly shifting—a hard frontier in the sense that all lines of confrontation are ‘hard’, but defining

an imagined political community that is shifting and permanently up for negotiation. Central to this is the creative role of the movement, what Harvey calls the ‘insurgent architect’, a force engaged in ‘dialectical utopianism’, in resisting but also envisioning. This normative praxis stands at the core of counter-globalism, in opening fields for the speculative imagination. The key to such strategisms though, is the capacity to mediate localised insurgencies, defining an imaginary frontier of antagonism. In this spirit, Harvey calls for the active ‘construction of political forces to engage in such dialogues’, to create trans-local infrastructures that link and mediate militant particularisms. The task is a ‘crucial mediating step in bringing the dialectic of particularities and universalities into play on a world stage characterised by uneven geographic developments’ (2000, 15).

This article takes a brief excursion on the long frontier, exploring its spatial logics, and its political dynamics. The starting point in section I is definitional—simply to ground the concept of ‘counter-globalism’. Section II debates the logic of global division, Harvey’s ‘uneven geographic developments’, principally between North and South. Division, as argued in section II, is overlaid by shared dynamics of commodification and by a deepening ‘exhaustion crisis’. These themes are drawn together in section IV, which outlines some of the emergent spatial dynamics of counter-globalism. Such dynamics are seen, in the closing section, to drive shared perspectives and connections, that inject a praxis of translocalism with counter-globalism. Throughout there is a strong emphasis on the material dimensions of ideology, as expressing social relations and how they arrange social life. Globalism, as an ideology, thus expresses and reproduces material power, whether exercised through market power or military coercion.

I. Definitions of counter-globalism

Terminology is loaded: the label ‘anti-globalisation’ has been deployed to marginalise critiques of globalisation. By taking ‘globalisation’ as a given, the ‘anti’ label suggests an orientation that is oppositionalist and backward looking. To act against globalisation is to act against the future, against ‘openness’ and ‘freedom’. It is as if by acting against globalisation we act against modernity—we are new-age luddites, or worse, xenophobes.

There are a variety of attempts at shedding this 'anti-global' label. The first, and most prevalent, is to assert the need for a different globalisation. The emphasis is on shifting from oppositionalism to critique, and then to alternatives. The starting point is to emphasise that it is a particular type of globalisation that is opposed: corporate globalisation, or imperialist globalisation, not globalisation *per se*. With the terminology of globalisation accepted, debate moves onto what the different globalisation might look like. Often the legitimacy of 'globalisation from below' is asserted, along with an emphasis on 'global justice'. The recent emergence of the 'alter-globalisation' concept encapsulates the position: the alter-globalisationists call upon us to oppose the prevailing globalisation model with an 'alternative' globalisation. From this perspective we are all globalists: the future is of more, not less, globalisation. But how useful is this approach in developing an understanding first of the logic of 'globalisation', and secondly, of the potential for resistance?

If forces for opposition and transformation are to be drawn to the centre of analysis, the very concept of globalisation has to be approached critically. By embracing globalisation, whether mainstream or alternative, we accept it as a reality. In doing so, the centrality of a process that inexorably leads us to the condition of globality is assumed. In large part, then, the ideology of globalisation, as an inevitable and in large part desirable fact of life, is accepted. Counter-suggestions, that perhaps what is claimed as globalisation is in fact simply the extension and exertion of discursive power, are sidelined. It may be argued then, that with alter-globalisation and global justice concepts we see the deepened collapse of 'freedom' into globality, as a broadly disseminated global norm. The ease with which that collapse occurs perhaps reflects the hegemony of globalist ideology, rather than any inherent globalisation trajectory.

Bringing a more sceptical orientation to bear requires that we name globalisation as an ideology. Globalisation rhetoric embodies an implicit normative claim about the merits of globality as well as about the existence of globalisation that is linked to a particular worldview and therefore to particular interests. Such rhetoric needs to be named as 'globalism'. As with all ideologies, globalism is rooted in the social process, as a product

of particular social forces. It has a purchase on the world as a reflection of dominant practice: the act of naming it as an ideology thus does not require us to deny the existence of processes of globalisation. Reframing globalisation as 'globalism', though, does force attention onto the exercise of power and counter-power, rather than simply on 'alternatives'.

Equally important, deploying the concept of globalism opens up a critical space. Through its globalist orientation, alter-globalisation can erase, or worse, condemn, non-globalist alternatives. Furthermore, reducing the scope of inquiry to 'alternatives' can distort the picture, as proactive or 'project' initiatives are privileged against what are presented as reactive or defensive positions. An example is the false distinction between 'defensive' national industrial relations and 'offensive' transnational labour solidarity—approaches that in practice are bridged through various tactical manoeuvres. Analysis of possibilities for challenge and transformation requires a broader scope that allows globalist and non- or anti-globalist perspectives to come into play, allowing us to understand alternatives to globalisation as much as alternative globalisation. Here, localist or nationalist confrontation and translocalist resistance can be brought into the analytical frame with, not against, global justice and alter-globalisation approaches.

The need to embrace the broad parameters of opposition also forces analysis beyond oppositionalism, but not to leave it behind. The approach should not assume that 'anti-globalism' is the order of the day. Neither should it assume that the refusal of globalism—the assertion of veto power—is to be superseded. In many respects, the politics of refusal is becoming increasingly powerful, and may be seen as a precondition for building alternatives. Alternatives to globalism thus cannot be separated from the conditions of their existence, that is, from the process of generating emancipatory knowledges against the exercise of hegemonic power. They are embedded in the social and political process—not blueprints delivered from on-high, but rather alternative practices, values and principles that acquire significance in the process of mobilisation.

Counter-movements are thus a precondition for any movements for alternatives. Indeed,

it is in the process of constructing such movements that alternative orientations emerge. Counter-movements are necessarily multifaceted, drawing multiple players into blocs of social forces; they unavoidably reflect the hugely variegated nature of the political field. They rest not so much on the capacity to subsume themselves into a single orientation, but rather on the capacity to draw differently aligned groupings together, bringing them into dialogue. Such dialogues are generative in the sense that they allow shared analysis of the problems of globalism, of strategies for contestation, and possibilities for transformation: in a real sense they produce the alternatives. The concept of counter-globalism thus gives deeper critical purchase on globalisation rhetoric. It also offers a breadth of scope drawing on anti-globalist as well as alter-globalist orientations, foregrounding the realm of mobilisation and social praxis.

II Global division

As a spatial strategy, globalism can be understood as an ideology of displacement, from strong to weak, from rich to poor, on a global scale. With weakened systems of social regulation, both in low-income southern and high-income northern societies, the key social logic becomes one of forcing risks to the margins, of 'third-worldising' the costs of accumulation. Peripheralisation is thus driven by deeply drawn power relations, writ large as a global dynamic of class domination. In the first instance the displacement process operates at a planetary level, marking out an unprecedented consumption and development divide between North and South, leaving one fifth of the world's population to account for four-fifths of global consumption, a 'huge and growing polarisation of wealth between the immiserated bulk of humanity and extremely wealthy social groups within the core countries' (Gowan 2003: 59).

Displacement on this scale creates northern insecurity. The socio-cultural backwash from three decades of neo-liberalism destabilises social relations, implodes societies, threatening even the capitalist heartlands with 'contagion'. Ecological side effects have become inescapable as mal-development in the North brings us to the brink of planetary exhaustion, leaving northerners dependent upon the conservation of southern resources. There are parallel social side effects, as social collapse within zones of southern poverty

rebounds in the form of ‘failing’ states, transnational political violence and peoples fleeing from hunger and militarism.

The elite response is not to re-think the model, but to impose it more coercively. Cognitive dissonance is the order of the day, and militarism has returned to the centre of the imperialist project, with the direct imposition of power by command. In the backwash of neo-liberalism, the responses of northern elites have become increasingly inadequate, and their failure has forced the creativity of social movements to the fore. The more that dominant states insist on market freedoms, the more that alternative agendas proliferate and grow. In this context of radical displacement, the Polanyian ‘double movement,’ where socialisation of costs proceeds hand-in-hand with marketisation, is critically impaired (Polanyi 1944). Lacking the scope for accommodation, political conflicts are fought on a ‘paradigmatic’ level, and increasingly transformative agendas are forced onto the agenda (see Sousa Santos 1995).

Command and control become increasingly indispensable for northern elites, but also increasingly inadequate. The more that dominant players seek to deny global ecological insecurity, for instance retreating behind a climate shield, as the Pentagon recently proposed, the more the risks and insecurities escalate (Schwartz and Randall 2003). Likewise, the more that dominant states insist on market freedoms—for instance in the World Trade Organisation’s (WTO) ‘development round’—the more that peoples of the South mobilise around demands for self-reliance in terms of ‘food security’ or ‘food sovereignty’ (Dunkley 2004). Even the ‘war on terror’ itself can be seen as a panic response, as Callinicos argues: ‘The response of the Bush administration to 11 September—to declare a permanent state of war implicitly directed against potential as well as actual adversaries—indicates the anxieties at work even at the top of the greatest power in history’ (Callinicos 2003: 64).

Reflecting uneven development, the logic of globalism is borne out in deepening spatial as well as social divides. It is also borne out in the logic of resistance. Powerful links exist between southern and northern forms of agency but these are embedded in spatial

divides. The largely northern-based counter-globalist movement that emerged from the mid 1990s reflected the imposition of neo-liberal 'adjustment' in the North, a process meted out on the South over the previous decades. Reclaiming the legacy of anti-imperialism, subordinated peoples in southern contexts have defined alternative agendas against neo-liberalism. These are increasingly articulated in conjunction with subordinated social forces in northern contexts, which face similar structures, under very different conditions. The claim to sovereignty, and to the limited autonomy it offers, is especially pursued in southern contexts: this should come as no surprise as the structures of domination are invariably northern-based, and the logic of 'systemic chaos' as Arrighi puts it, is primarily visited on the South, not the North (2003). The asymmetry cannot be wished away: it has material effects. Globalist imperialism has a spatial as well as a social logic: resistance to imperialism is thus both national and transnational. As Saul argues, 'the fact is that "Empire" (the world of capitalist globalisation) and "empire" (the world of western imperialism) coexist' (2003, 227).

III Globalism and reproduction

Globalisation is best understood as an outcome rather than a cause of social change. It signifies a spatial reorientation that itself is a symptom of a large-scale reorganisation of societies driven by capital accumulation (Rosenberg 2000). Globalism, then, is a strategy of an emergent transnational capitalist class, to deepen and broaden capitalist relations. The key vehicle of globalism is the corporation, the key outcome is the integration of more and more aspects of existence into the circuit of capital, through commodification (Sklair 2000; Pieterse 2004). Unavoidably, then, it is the realms of reproduction—uncommodified or decommodified realms on the frontiers of accumulation—that are the chief targets of globalism. This latest 'intensive' mode of accumulation erodes the 'social and natural substratum' of life, driving reproduction to exhaustion. Exhaustion spreads across socio-cultural relations, 'private-personal' spheres for instance, ecologies and living environments, the structures that reproduce political legitimacy, such as welfare states, rights regimes, representative structures. All are re-gearred to the demands of commodification.

In both northern and southern contexts the erosion of socialised provision and of regenerative capacity first affects those least able to buy themselves out. It is the flexibilised employees and out-workers, the public sector and welfare-dependent communities, the piece workers and cash-croppers, informalised workers of every kind, and peoples required to live exposed to the ‘out-sourced’ ecological costs of accumulation, who bear the burdens. Intensive accumulation recasts these as social agents contesting the reduction of social, cultural, political and ecological relations to the cash nexus. In contrast with industrial accumulation, where resistance manifests primarily in workplace-based distributional conflicts, intensive accumulation creates conflicts that are literally ‘struggle[s] for survival’ (Van der Pijl 1998: 47). The exhaustion crisis thus subsumes other antagonisms as questions of cultural, social and environmental exhaustion begin to dominate. Following hard on the heels of neo-liberal marketisation, then, class conflict is deepened and widened far beyond the industrial sphere. Tensions between different movements are blunted, opening new grounds for connection.

A multiplicity of social forces, formerly assumed to be secondary to capitalist social relations, move to the fore, acquiring both the capacity and the consciousness to engage in transformative action. Ariel Salleh names this as the ‘meta-industrial class’, a class of peoples engaged in caring for people and nature, in nurturing, parenting and subsistence roles, various forms of labour that are ‘metabolic’, contrasting with the ‘instrumental’ productive labour. Peoples engaged in such labours historically have been marginalised by productivism, but in the current crisis they move to occupy centre-stage. In the field of social labour for instance, social use-value—the ‘use value of affect’ as Negri calls it—confronts exchange value through the politics of care (Negri 2004). Likewise, where nature is reduced to a measure of value flow, societies are confronted by the materiality of ecological survival and insecurity, generating a reciprocal mobilisation for the commons against exchange value (Goldman 1998). In northern contexts efforts to reclaim leisure time, to secure the liberation of time from exploitation, are reflected in a pervasive so-called ‘work-life collision’ (Pocock 2003). In southern contexts a parallel de-formalisation of work reduces security and threatens livelihoods, producing broad-based movements for survival (Diwedi 2003).

The question of social forces also raises the question of places. Exhaustion, and resistance to exhaustion has a specific spatial logic: grounded in the uneven exhaustion of reproduction, patterns of action crystallise in particular sites. There are spatial concentrations of agency where 'holding labour' acquires particular symbolic potential. Sites of social, cultural, political and ecological reproduction become radically valorised. Social movements become adept at recognising and deploying such potential, bringing in a multiplicity of localised conflagrations. Here the new configurations of subordinated classes gain a shared consciousness and capacity to act for themselves. Movements become centred on building trans-local agendas grounded in cross-culturalism, as the foundation for contestation.

What are the prospects for this grass-roots challenge? For Biel, writing in 2000, there were real opportunities: as the neo-liberal project unravelled, grassroots organisations could occupy the ideological vacuum (Biel 2000: 303). Something of this tendency is revealed in the burgeoning social movements centred on fields of reproduction, and their increased transnational articulation, for instance through the social forum, a process of seeking alternatives through inter-movement dialogue, initiated in 2001 through the World Social Forum. Such forces find new allies amongst the disaffected in the 'official' sectors, including within departments of state, and have made some headway in influencing, if not capturing state power. Such alliances are crucial in translating aspirations into programs, especially in Southern contexts (Saul 2004). One example at the national level is the Brazilian landless peasants movement, the *Movimento Sem Terra* (MST), and its relationship with the governing Workers Party in Brazil; at the international level, the defeat of the WTO's 'Millennium Round' in 1999, and then 'Development Round' four years later demonstrates the potential of this political conjunction.

These ideological agendas and strategies, coming into view from grassroots movements North and South, are inspired by a radical rejection or 'refusal' of neo-liberal orthodoxy. Central is the process of subordinating markets into society, enabling a collective

delinking from market dependence, embedding markets for societies, rather than the reverse (McMichael 2000). At the international level such an agenda may expand the concept of the right to development into a 'right to wealth' (Inayatullah 1996), an agenda of repaying the North's ecological debt, for instance, that could pose real challenges to the current model of distribution. They involve the assertion of both autonomy and solidarity, geared to deep democratisation, and to agendas for decommodification, including the assertion of the commons. Such agendas can acquire a purchase over state policy, framed for instance as the defence of people's needs against corporate power in the battle over pharmaceuticals and intellectual property rights. The creative power of movements can thereby find traction, in a productive contradiction with state authority. Such creativity rests on the capacity to mark out fields of autonomy—an anathema in a world of intervention and marketisation—that can up-turn existing hierarchies of wealth and power. Such an agenda must address structures of global inequality, enabling peoples to determine their own future, what may be understood as a 'multipolar strategy of delinking' (Amin 1997:150).

IV Spatial dimensions of counter-globalism

The exercise of power under neo-liberal globalism has set the pace for counter-globalism. Three specific targets are evident—corporate power, embodied in transnational corporations, normative globality expressed in global norms, and imperial power exercised by governmental and intergovernmental institutions. All three are under challenge: corporations are confronted by campaigns for decommodification; global norm-formation is assaulted by the assertion of diversity and plurality; intergovernmental organisations are forced to address demands for deep democratisation. In each aspect, as outlined in table 2, counter-globalist praxis has a particular spatial logic reflecting the geographic dynamics of globalist power and counter-power.

Table 2: Spatial dimensions of counter-globalism

Alternative themes	Practices	Spatial Logic	Examples
Livelihood and commons Deep democracy	De-commodification Multipolar disengagement	North-South dialogue Trans-localism	Contested 'codes of conduct' Delinking WTO/World Bank
Autonomy + solidarity	Affective engagement	Radical re-embedding	Anti-GM + refugee solidarity

In all three dimensions, counter-globalist movements find new ways to politicise power sources. Globalism strips the legitimating framework from corporations, norms and political institutions. Shorn of domestic legitimacy as 'national assets', the power of transnational corporations greatly exceeds corporate legitimacy, opening a gap to be exploited by popular movements. The logic of inter-governmentalism is likewise exposed and politicised as the political regimes of globalism widen the vacuum between national systems of representation and globalist policy-making. Furthermore, as globalists construct a single set of global norms, orientated to possessive individualism, consumerism and 'free enterprise', such norms are politicised and destabilised. They are exposed as the false universals of dominant powers, thereby validating multiple alternative orientations. Against sources of global power, counter-globalism constructs new political spaces, generating new themes and alternatives.

Decommodification, the first of these, involves a radical refusal of marketisation. Under the rhetoric of 'market access', globalism is generating manifold movements for decommodification. Movements are often offensive and proactive, seeking not only to defend presently uncommodified zones, but also to decommodify presently privatised aspects of social life (Choudry 2003). Two relatively new pressure points have emerged—mass consumer activism, emerging from the success of cross-national corporate branding, and investor activism, emerging from the volatility and sensitivity of highly inter-connected finance markets. Both of these approaches are heavily contested across northern and southern contexts, with intense debate about the worth or otherwise of corporate codes of conduct that are often grounded in northern consumer or investor campaigns, acting in the name of southern workers and communities (see AMRC 2004). North-South dialogues have been forced to the fore in such corporate campaigns, with

much effort at reconciling otherwise counter-posed positions.

Deep democracy—the second theme—involves the assertion of popular participation in the emerging frameworks for rule. It thus denotes the assertion of common realms of collective management and control beyond the increasingly minimalist public sphere. Key drivers are a sense of powerlessness, at various levels of association. There is household resistance to consumerist ethics and the assertion of alternative modes of consumption. There are efforts to democratise the workplace, forcing other actors into the arena of corporate decision-making. There are moves to deglobalise financial and productive relations, creating local embeddedness and accountability. But most noticeable are the many efforts at wresting popular sovereignty from inter-governmental institutions, and from liberalising states, delinking in order to claim or reclaim structures of governance for popular participation, invigorating locality within globality, including through rhetorics of progressive anti-imperialist nationalism (Laxer 2003).

A key strategy here is the practice of multipolar delinking, where the political institutions of globalism are rendered irrelevant as multiple social forces collectively construct their own autonomous mechanisms. These may be built ‘from below’, in the form of trans-local subsistence movements, expressed in ‘Via Campesina’ for instance, that rejects the assumption that agricultural trade should be regulated through the WTO, or in ‘Slum-dwellers International’, which is a movement of urban poor dedicated to strengthening the autonomy and power of slum communities. There are also moves ‘from above’, in the form of inter-state multilateral delinking, mostly from blocs of southern countries, which impose limits on the WTO, and offer the possibility of sidestepping international finance institutions such as the World Bank. Significantly, these trans-local and inter-state delinking strategies enact autonomy and sovereignty, not against, but with, multilateralism and trans-localism.

Contesting global norms, the third theme, involves a value orientation, where diverse localised ways of being are counter-posed against the simple idea or ideal of globalised marketisation. This simple assertion of multiplicity or plurality poses a powerful

challenge to the uniformity required and promoted under neo-liberal globalism. It is especially powerful when multiple demands for embedded or localised difference are brought together across cultural and national contexts, to challenge the absolutism of corporate globalism. Here the politics of solidarity and recognition enters by the front door: transnational social movement unionism, 'third wave' feminism, environmental justice, for instance, all centre on the process of working across cultural contexts.

These ethics of solidarity offer frameworks for living together centred on mutual recognition and are an expression of the kind of sociability necessary for paradigmatic change. From this perspective there is often a process of enacting and embedding local values, while bringing them into relationship through trans-local multipolar interactions. Again the process reflects and challenges global divides, for instance, in the politics of refugee solidarity movements, where northern-based counter-globalists challenge the global apartheid system, often in the name of local or national traditions of humanitarianism. North-South divides are again evident, for instance, in the normative politics of campaigns against genetically-modified foods, where southern campaigners are primarily concerned with the loss of autonomy, with bio-piracy and with corporate neo-colonialism, rather than, for instance, with consumer or health rights (Farhat 2002). Again, there is no collapse into an unvariegated global movement; neither is there a break-up into fragmented autonomies. Instead, what emerges is an intense imperative for dialogue and reflexive strategising.

The very success of globalist ideology presages new contradictions and instabilities. In some ways these are more intense than those they replace, and have greater potential of opening up possibilities for social and political transformation. As political community finds a new fluidity in the dynamics of contesting globalism, new connections are forged. The political infrastructures of globalism are confronted by multifarious instances of local action, constituting a powerfully reflexive counter-globalism. In a double-sided and contradictory way, neo-liberal 'globalism' contains within it the seeds of its own destruction. The seeds have been planted and nourished, extending politics into new realms.

Conclusion: the long frontier of connection

The phenomenon of counter-globalism foregrounds issues of division and dialogue. The frontier it constructs is necessarily contingent, but is the foundation for counter-globalist praxis. The long frontier is an invisible frontier of shared consciousness and connectivity that links movements challenging globalism, generating and disseminating world-views that directly counter official versions. Localised 'bush-fires' mark-out the frontier across peoples and contexts, across North-South divides between the agents and subordinates of corporate globalism. It is enacted by loosely connected localised actions, and is the first key precondition for sustained mobilisation in confronting neo-liberal globalism.

Asserting the legitimacy of non-commodified social and cultural relations in particular localities immediately raises issues of solidarity and recognition. How can localised struggles connect to constitute counter-movements capable of overwhelming capitalism? What is it that drives peoples to find common cause, despite what may seem irreconcilable differences? A starting point is the emergence of a clear frontier between 'us' and 'them', a process of what Amory Starr calls 'naming the enemy' (2000). A shared imperative to act in concert may emerge as a tactical manoeuvre, a form of connection contingent on a particular arrangement of political forces. Beyond this, connectivity emerges as a strategic necessity, forcing mutual realignments and rethinking, grounding new visions and alternatives. The latter move creates and forces new agendas, offering a genuinely counter-globalism capable of taking us beyond the current malaise.

As tactical manoeuvre moves to strategic confluence, movements are forced to engage with each others' differences. Universal commitments can no longer be assumed, and dilemmas of constructing counter-hegemony across ideological, national and socio-cultural contexts rise to the top of the agenda. There is a flowering of movements grounded in these processes of cross-nationalism and cross-culturalism, forcing the emergence of a relational model for identity and politics. In becoming relational there is no absolute universally applicable position: absolutism is displaced by solidarity, solidarity simultaneously qualified by autonomy and recognition. Visions for change

emerge from the creative interaction across differing perspectives, forcing new ideological and political programs into view. Here the process of addressing—not settling—differences becomes the key issue. In different ways, for instance, ‘third wave’ feminism, human rights activists, environmental justice movements and social movement unionists seek to balance universality with particularity—feminist unity with gender difference, human rights with cultural rights, eco-globality with living environments, worker solidarity with differing development priorities. New visions and aspirations are generated out of these realignments, and in the process movements find new frameworks for social action and transformation.

These ethics of solidarity are the founding stone of a paradigmatic alternative, in establishing frameworks for living and acting together. Internationally, the methodology of mutual engagement and solidarity building has its most impressive manifestation in the ‘social forum’ process established through the World Social Forum in 2001 at Porto Alegre, Brazil. Here the politics of the ‘program’ and the ‘mass’ gives way to the politics of interacting programs and interacting masses, forcing mutual reorientation and transformation, building shared agendas for the new sources of class power. No surprise, then, that the social forum model has proliferated across the globe as a vehicle for a new mode of democratic participation, a tool spurring collective consciousness and action.

In the present period reproduction, in all its facets, is the target of an ‘intensive’ mode of accumulation. In the process, class conflict is being deepened and widened. The key challenge for counter-globalists has been to crystallise an emergent consciousness, bringing the meta-industrial classes to act for themselves against intensive accumulation. The models, programs and strategies appear permanently provisional and transitional, yet they mark new frontiers of contestation and transformation, in a fluid and creative praxis. Forging connectivity across the emergent social forces is now the prime concern—it is the mantra of counter-globalism, and its greatest asset in the struggles for survival now being waged.

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