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Global Justice Movements. The transnational dimension

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Chapter Two

The Global Justice Movements

The Transnational Dimension

Mario Pianta and Raffaele Marchetti

The Transnational Dimension: Concepts and Context

This chapter examines the trajectory of the social movements that in the last two decades have addressed global issues with cross-border mobilizations. The global dimension of transnational social movements is analyzed with a focus on their transnational activities, on the history of their emergence, on their model of organization and political action, on their shared identities and common strategies. The key characteristics of the global justice movements (GJMs) at the global level shed light on the wider context in which their national developments take place. Whereas the other chapters of this book concentrate on the national level, we focus on the global dimension, analyzing the specificity of transnational networks, as distinct from domestic mobilizations, in terms of political environment, strategies, and actors' characteristics. Transnational networks and social organizations are characterized as *global* in relation to the issues they address, the political centers of power they challenge, and the way they are constituted and operate. Each of these elements sets them apart from traditional national social movements.

In order to understand their historical trajectory, it is necessary to tackle a number of conceptual issues regarding the theory, definition, and context

of the GJMs. Many studies of political mobilizations, economic conflicts, and social movements developed around global issues have tried to understand them by extending in various directions the model of *national* social movements to a context of (limited) transnational actions. Although there is no shortage of empirical cases that fall into the pattern of a limited transnationalization of domestic activism, we believe that this approach is unable to capture the fundamental novelty of the global mobilizations on global issues that have occurred since the 1990s and more significantly after 2000, a novelty that has turned previous scattered and domestic mobilizations into global justice movements.

The starting point we propose is in the evolving relationships among politics, economy, and society in an age of global transformation and increasing international integration (Pianta and Silva 2003). At the global level, the sphere of *politics* is structured by the interstate system, where national states, international and supranational institutions exercise their power. Whereas at the national level the political relationships between state and citizens have been defined by constitutions, law, and democratic processes, at the global level, no universally coercive power of law has yet emerged, and, more importantly, no democratic processes of participation, deliberation, and voting have developed for the world's citizens. Existing political institutions have tried to elaborate new rules for economic and social activities appropriate for the new context of globalization, but have for the most part failed to properly address the global democratic deficit.

At the global level, the sphere of the *economy* is still predominantly structured by the operation of firms and markets, dominated by the search for profits and by a drive to turn into market commodities an increasingly wide array of activities previously provided and regulated by states and society, from knowledge to education and health, from public services to global public goods such as water and environmental protection. The resulting privatization, deregulation, and liberalization have since the 1980s characterized the model of neoliberal globalization that has asserted the power of markets and large industrial and financial firms over decisions made in the political sphere and over social behaviors. This has generated a profound sense of vulnerability and external imposition that has fostered political opposition and social activism.

Within this political and economic context, the emerging *global civil society* can be defined as the sphere of cross-border relationships and activities carried out by collective actors—social movements, networks, and civil society organizations—that are independent from governments and private firms and operate outside the international reach of states and markets.[1] Within such a sphere, many different and contrasting identities, interests, visions, and demands for change by collective actors can emerge, be expressed, and assert themselves. A major development has been the growing networking,

activism, and social mobilization on global issues that has defended fundamental rights and advocated change in a transnational perspective. The demands and activities of civil society have moved beyond their interaction with the national political and economic spheres and challenged political and economic power across and above national borders. By creating a contested terrain where hegemonic projects are challenged, global civil society has called into question some fundamental aspects of the nature of the interstate system and of the global economy. In particular, it has advanced three sets of political demands: 1) demands to the state system for global democracy, human rights, and peace; 2) demands to the economic system for global economic justice; and 3) demands to both systems for global social justice and environmental sustainability. Conversely, both the state and the economic systems have put pressure on global civil society to adhere to their own values and norms.

In the emerging global civil society as a sphere of relationships among highly heterogeneous actors, different types of mobilizations can be singled out. Among them, *global social movements* can be defined as cross-border, sustained, and collective social mobilizations on global issues, based on permanent and/or occasional groups, networks, and campaigns with a transnational organizational dimension moving from shared values and identities that challenge and protest economic or political power and campaign for change in global issues. They share a global frame of the problems to be addressed, have a global scope of action, and might target supranational or national targets.[2] The focus of the analysis in the rest of this chapter is on the global social movements that have challenged the dominant model of relationships among global politics, economy, and society that can be defined as neoliberal globalization. Although a great variety of different mobilizations can be identified in this area, we will refer to them with the general term of *global justice movements,* for at least three reasons: first, all of them share values and identities opposed to neoliberal globalization; second, they have woven together an increasingly tight network of coalitions and campaigns; and finally, they have regularly met and planned initiatives at major global events. In particular, the emergence of global justice movements can be traced in three processes: first, the move of activism from the national to the global scale; second, its broadening from the single issue mobilizations of individual organizations to a more comprehensive view and understanding of the challenges raised by neoliberal globalization; and third, the growing autonomy and self-organization of global movements from the spheres of politics and the economy.

According to this perspective, this chapter first provides a brief history of global justice movements since the 1970s, mainly based on the sequence of major events that have marked their slow emergence and high visibility on the global scene of the new century. Second, data on global civil society events

are provided in order to examine the transnational repertoire of actions of the GJMs. Third, a profile of GJMs is proposed through the identification of their organizational structure and characteristics. Finally, a discussion of their identities, visions, and strategies leads to our conclusions on the transnational dimension of global justice movements.

The Emergence of Transnational Movements, 1970–1999

The origins of transnational social movements and networks of organizations active on international issues lie in the "new social movements" that originated in the 1970s around the themes of peace, human rights, solidarity, development, ecology, and women's issues.[3] National experiences differ widely in terms of the social relevance and political impact of such new social movements, and in their relationship with previous movements such as the workers' movement and trade unions. Still, at the transnational level there is little doubt that they have progressively developed an ability to address and mobilize around problems of a global nature. The *global nature,* by definition, of many of the issues at the core of new social movements, and their lack of interest in the pursuit of *state power*—a major difference from previous mobilizations—are two major factors in their ability to shift from a national to a transnational perspective within their typical "single issue" approach. Starting with their own specific issue, they have built networks for information and organizing, created the space for an emerging global civil society, organized protests and actions, broadened their agenda, argued for solutions across national borders, and interacted in original ways with the sites of supranational power.[4]

This process, however, is not without historical antecedents. Steve Charnovitz has traced them back to the late nineteenth century (Charnovitz 1997), showing that in a previous wave of strong international integration from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s, the establishment of supranational bodies such as the League of Nations and of scores of intergovernmental organizations was accompanied by equally flourishing international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), social mobilizations, and civil society meetings. At several government conferences and in the operation of the League of Nations, civil society groups were often able to articulate proposals on a wide range of themes, including peace, national liberation, and economic, social, and women's rights; in some cases they were involved in official activities, opening the way for the formal recognition of NGOs in the Charter of the United Nations in 1945.

With the start of the Cold War, however, the space for international civil society activities became constrained and shaped by state power and policies. The international mobilization of civil society mainly took the form of trying

to influence national government policies on decolonization, national self-determination, peace, human rights, development, and the environment. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the political and economic order at the national and the international levels with a transformative perspective still focused on state power. A major exception was the women's movement, which opened the way for new forms of politics, social practices, and culture based on identity (Arrighi et al. 1989). An additional novelty came with the emergence of the first environmental mobilizations.

Within international institutions, NGOs had found since the 1970s a substantial opening in the UN system, in ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council), and in other agencies, although this official recognition has led, with few exceptions, to very modest results in terms of visibility, relevance, and impact on the operation of the international system (Gordenker and Weiss 1995, and the special issue of *Third World Quarterly*; Lotti and Giandomenico 1996; Otto 1996). The far-reaching political changes of the 1970s—East-West détente, the completion of decolonization, and a new attention to human rights and the parallel economic developments—as well as the end of the Bretton Woods international monetary system, the oil shocks, and the emergence of the North-South divide—raised new problems of global governance and opened the way to new centers of supranational decision making. Existing intergovernmental organizations, starting with the UN, played a renewed and broader role, and other forums were established; the first G5 summit was held in 1975. As global issues and supranational power became increasingly important, attention and action by civil society also increased. Moving on from traditional efforts to put pressure on nation-states, attention started to focus on global problems and on the failure of states to address them. Symbolic actions, at first small in scale and poorly organized, were followed by more systematic international work by civil society organizations, the creation of networks and cross-border mobilizations challenging international powers.

The 1970s and 1980s: Cross-Border Activism of "New Social Movements"

From the 1970s, the slow emergence of global movements can be best traced in the sequence of major international events that have provided opportunities for meetings, exchanges, and cross-border initiatives, creating a space for transnational civil society actions. Several streams of activism have monitored and flanked UN meetings on the environment, development, women, and human rights. In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm saw the participation of a few hundred NGOs active both inside and outside the official meeting (Conca 1995), and in 1974, the World Food Conference in Rome also included an active presence of NGOs (Van Rooy 1997). Large NGO forums were also held in 1975, when the First World

Conference on Women held in Mexico City launched the UN Decade for Women, as well as in succeeding conferences in 1980 in Copenhagen and in 1985 in Nairobi (Chen 1995). Global summits of this type, with the UN system and states allowing some room for civil society's voices, were possible because of the urgency of the issues, and because these themes did not challenge the Cold War ideologies of the time.

On more controversial political and economic issues, however, civil society had to organize its international activities independently of the operation of states, the UN, and other international institutions. In 1981, the peace movement began responding to this need with the European Nuclear Disarmament Conventions (Kaldor 2003). Following Bertrand Russell's initial International War Crimes Tribunal on Vietnam organized in 1967, public opinion tribunals were regularly held on peace, human, economic, and social rights. In parallel, a renewed wave of solidaristic activism developed on the issues of decolonization and Third World liberation struggle, generating intense cross-border mobilization between the North and the South such as those against the military regimes in Latin America (Chile, Argentina, etc.) and in support of Nelson Mandela's antiapartheid struggle in South Africa.

Another innovative event was the first gathering of The Other Economic Summit (TOES) in coincidence with a G7 meeting, organized in 1984 by the New Economics Foundation of London in association with the Right Livelihood Awards (an "alternative Nobel Prize" that has been awarded since 1980) (Ekins 1992). Initially taking the form of small conferences and media events with a strong alternative development and environmental focus, TOES have been regularly organized in cooperation with different international networks and civil society coalitions of the country hosting the G7 summit. In contrast to these early cross-border dynamics of new social movements, more traditional social actors, such as the labor movement, have remained largely focused on the domestic dimension, relying on friendly political forces and national governments for introducing social reforms and improving workers' conditions (Waterman and Timms 2005).

The rising cross-border activism of this period can be understood as a projection of the "new social movements" into a transnational scene, driven by the nature of the core issues of their mobilization. The limited development of institutions of global governance and of supranational political processes with the power to make decisions on such issues has reduced access by civil society organizations and constrained the space for such cross border activism. Limited political opportunities, little internal resources, and fragmentation on a wide range of "single issues" explain why in the 1970s and 1980s transnational social movements did develop in the fields of peace, environment, women rights, human rights, and international solidarity, but remained separate and without mass participation. It is only in the following

decade that these scattered movements gained awareness of their political potential, together with capacity for a strengthened self-organization.

The 1990s: Global Social Movements on Separate Campaigns

The 1990s, after the end of the Cold War and the weakening of traditional ideologies centered on the search for state power, offered major opportunities for the growth of transnational social movements toward truly global ones. The first of these opportunities was the new role of the United Nations and of other institutions of global governance, which provided a political context in which global issues could be addressed by both the interstate system and the emerging global civil society. A key role was played by the large UN thematic conferences of the early 1990s, designed to chart the agenda for the twenty-first century on global issues, that were open to large participation by civil society organizations (UNRISD 2003). The second opportunity was the construction and consolidation of stable networks among civil society organizations, making possible permanent cross-border mobilizations even with limited resources.

The 1992 Rio Conference on the Environment and Development saw the presence of 2,400 NGO representatives; the parallel NGO Forum saw 17,000 participants. This was an unprecedented event in terms of size, media resonance, long-term impact on ideas and policies, and for the emergence of a global civil society involved in building networks, developing joint strategies, and confronting states and international institutions (Conca 1995; Van Rooy 1997). In 1993, the UN conference on human rights in Vienna saw the participation of thousands of civil society activists and addressed a key issue long neglected by states in the Cold War (Smith et al. 1998). In 1994, the Cairo conference on population led 1,500 civil society groups from 113 countries to forge new links around concerns regarding the conditions of women, families, and societies in the North and South.

In 1995, the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development and the Beijing World Conference on Women led to a new visibility, relevance, and mobilization for global civil society. In Copenhagen, 2,300 representatives from 800 NGOs attended the official conference, and thousands attended the parallel events; in Beijing, 5,000 participants from 2,100 NGOs were at the summit, and 30,000 at the independent NGO Forum.[5] A large participation by NGOs (8,000 people from 2,400 organizations) also marked the NGO Forum parallel to the UN conference on human settlements held in Istanbul in 1996. In the same year, the FAO World Food summit was held in Rome, with a major involvement of NGOs in the official activities, in the NGO Forum, and in other parallel events. Again in Rome, in 1998, civil society organizations played a major role at the conference establishing the International Criminal Court.

A major global civil society event *without* an official UN summit was the Hague Appeal for Peace conference of 1999, held during NATO intervention in Kosovo, which gathered 10,000 participants from all over the world and involved several governments. A series of global civil society meetings held independently of UN summits, but with an explicit reference to the need for a more active and democratic UN, are the Assemblies of the Peoples of the United Nations organized every other year since 1995 in Perugia, Italy, by a coalition of Italian and international civil society organizations. They have regularly brought together representatives of civil society organizations from more than 100 different countries to discuss issues such as the reform of the United Nations, economic justice, and a stronger role for global civil society; each event included a 15–mile peace march to Assisi with participation ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 people. The theme of the 1999 Assembly was "Another world is possible" (Pianta 1998; 2001a; 2001b).

Along the complex road of transforming cross-border activism on specific issues into global social movements centered on more global political challenges, a major development with a pervasive influence occurred with the Zapatista insurgency in Chiapas, Mexico, in January 1994. This insurgency, in fact, turned what could have been a typical, locally focused Latin American guerrilla action into a much broader challenge to the injustice of neoliberal globalization. Launched by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in coincidence with the start of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the rebellion aimed at protecting indigenous peoples and peasants from the repression of the Mexican state and the ravages of neoliberal economic policies. The Zapatistas declared no interest in achieving state power and aimed at exposing the profound link between local deprivation, the corrupt role of the national ruling classes, the burden imposed by international institutions, and the inhumanity of global capitalism. With their rebellion, and by calling on the solidarity of social movements from all over the world, the Zapatistas succeeded in protecting the Chiapas Indians from repression and forced the Mexican government to reconsider its policies on indigenous peoples. Their skilled use of political communication and the global media managed to link in an unprecedented way the local destruction of communities to global processes, politicizing traditional solidarity activism in a new way (Schulz 1998; Olesen 2004). Moreover, the extensive networks of support to the Zapatistas in several countries also became vehicles for furthering awareness of the challenge of neoliberal capitalism and of the need for international political action for global justice, with a pervasive and lasting influence on global social movements and their strategies.

A wide variety of experiences—the participation and challenge to UN World Summits, cross-border activism by "new social movements," the mobilizations around the Zapatista insurgency—gave strength to the emerging social movements and to their ability to oppose economic and political

powers. In the late 1990s, this led to a growing number of parallel summits challenging G7–G8 meetings, IMF-World Bank meetings, European Union summits, conferences of North American and Pacific organizations, World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, and other interstate summits (Pettifor 1998; Houtart and Polet 1999; Pianta 2001b).[6] Parallel summits started from the need to confront the decisions of global powers on themes such as debt, international investment rules, trade, and development that increasingly concerned economic issues and moved on to challenge the consequences of the dominant model of neoliberal globalization. The protests at such events, often more confrontational than the parallel actions at UN summits, helped to broaden the vision and actions of transnational networks involved in global issues and to set in motion waves of global social movements.

This global spread became evident in Seattle in December 1999, when a broad coalition of (mainly U.S.) organizations and trade unions, together with a variety of transnational networks, challenged the WTO summit and the Millennium Round of trade liberalization talks. Seattle was the culmination of a long process, not a sudden outburst of antiglobalization sentiment. It captured the attention of the media, the imagination of people, and—at last—the attention of policy makers, because it had both the arguments and the strength to disrupt the official summit. Media coverage and innovative coalitions across countries and issues constitute two central factors in the success of the Seattle mobilization. Although the failure of the WTO conference was equally because of the divisions between the United States, Europe, and countries of the South, in the perception of social activists, public opinion, and trade officials themselves, this was the first time global civil society had a major, direct impact on the conduct and outcome of an official summit.

Forms of mobilization that were carried out in the late 1990s also significantly included major global campaigns that mobilized vast parts of civil society around the world, achieving important results. Particularly relevant among them are the campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (1995), the Jubilee campaign on Third World debt (1996), the campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) (1998), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (1992), and the Treatment Action Campaign on HIV and AIDS (1998). The campaign for the establishment of the ICC was characterized by a strong action of technical lobbying on the various delegations to the preparatory conferences and ultimately to the Rome conference, where the statute was approved (Glasius 2005). The Jubilee 2000 campaign was directed at canceling the foreign debt of the poorest countries by the year 2000 and, through large-scale public opinion pressure, induced the creditor governments and the IMF to take the first steps toward debt relief of "highly indebted poor countries" (Pettifor 1998). The anti-MAI campaign aimed at stopping the Multilateral

Agreement on Investment proposed within the OECD; it succeeded through a strategy based on education and information, in which social pressure and convergence with the position of sympathetic governments (the French in particular) was crucial. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines mounted extensive pressure from public opinion and managed to secure support from governments at the interstate conference in Ottawa, where the Mine Ban Treaty (also known as the Ottawa Convention) was signed in 1997. This was the first civil society campaign to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1997). Finally, the Treatment Action Campaign aimed at opening access to treatment and affordable medicines for people with HIV and AIDS; in this effort, public pressure was accompanied by legal strategies and support from governments from the South, leading to the WTO declaration on the priority of public health over intellectual property rights.

In the 1990s, the rise of global social movements was dramatic in all respects. Cross-border mobilizations have involved an ever-growing number of organizations, increasingly including countries of the South, linking them in stable networks and sharing information, resources, and strategies that were the backbone for the launch of several campaigns on global issues. The focus on specific "single issues" remained, but with a broader conceptualization of the challenges concerning human rights and economic issues and with a more direct political challenge to global powers. Such powers were identified either in supranational institutions (the OECD, the IMF, the WTO, the G7), or in the interstate system (the intergovernmental conferences on the ICC and Landmines). Especially in the first half of the 1990s, with the space offered by the large UN conferences, many transnational mobilizations adopted a perspective of "globalization of rights and responsibilities," opposed to the dominant neoliberal globalization.[7] Such a model was supported by some progressive national governments and found openings in the activities of a few international institutions. It envisaged a reformulation of rights and responsibilities on a global scale in the context of new arrangements for a more democratic and effective global governance (Commission on Global Governance 1995). Great expectations were generated and later turned sour, as few of the proposals for reform and policy innovations found their way through national governments and international institutions.

This evolution of transnational social movements from the 1970s to the 1990s has led to a greater focus on global problems and global political environment. The first wave of poorly organized transnational actions was soon followed by a long series of cross-border networks, international campaigns, counter-summits, and independent meetings with mass participation. These modes of actions allowed for scattered movements to gain increasing awareness of their political potential against global and national powers. Despite failures, the presence of a well-defined political context made possible the

emergence of specific terms of contention and conflict along which global social movements developed, taking advantage of favorable political opportunities and growing support from an increasingly aware public opinion. All of these developments amount to the emergence of truly global social movements; the persistence of well defined, distinct identities and of different, specific issues, however, suggest that the 1990s were still marked by mobilizations on separate issues, rather than by a more unified mobilization.

The Global Justice Movements in the New Millennium

At the turn of the millennium, a structural scale shift occurred in the nature, identities, repertoires of actions, and strategies of global social movements. The example of Seattle led to a dramatic proliferation of actions combining street protests against international decision makers and alternative proposals on global problems, which together developed into a radical challenge to the project of neoliberal globalization. The latter emerged as a powerful unifying symbol for the struggles of resistance and in the search for political, economic, and social alternatives. The focus on the challenge to neoliberal globalization, in fact, slowly but increasingly facilitated the recognition of common identities, visions, and policy agendas among the networks, organizations, and individuals mobilized in global movements. This has led to the emergence of what can be defined as *global justice movements*.[8]

Repertoire of Action and Transnational Events

A key element in the emergence of the global justice movements has been the rapid spread of transnational events and the evolution in their repertoire. Some of them followed the pattern of parallel summits established in the previous decade: The first major event after Seattle was a rather institutional one, the UN Millennium forum of NGOs held in New York in May 2000, with 1,350 representatives of more than 1,000 NGOs. This gathering did not achieve great social mobilization, but it produced an important and comprehensive document that inspired part of the movements in the following years (NGO Millennium Forum 2000). This helped broaden the vision of transnational networks that had entered the global arena from initiatives on individual issues and had previously been reluctant to engage in a comprehensive perspective on world challenges. Themes such as peace, disarmament, globalization, justice, equity, and democracy that had not been included in the previous UN summits or in the agendas of major global civil society events were put at the center of the final document. In parallel, the UN Millennium Summit of world governments adopted in 2000 the Millen-

nium Declaration, from which the Millennium Development Goals have been developed, a policy agenda that in recent years has opened new space for interaction and conflict among UN institutions, national governments, and campaigns by global social movements (UNDP 2003).[9]

Within this context, global movements stepped up their activism and developed an autonomous agenda for change. After Seattle, international meetings of transnational networks multiplied in a variety of forms. The first steps of these transnational mobilizations were the Prague protest against the IMF-World Bank meeting in October 2000, the Gothenburg protest at the EU summit in May 2001, and the large Genoa protest at the G8 summit in July 2001. From then on, global civil society meetings, convened by ever growing coalitions of transnational networks and social movements, have proliferated in all countries and continents (see the other chapters of this book for pictures of the major European countries).

These events have taken place on a monthly basis in every part of the world. They have been characterized by mass participation in street demonstrations, ranging from the tens to the hundreds of thousands, with peaks of more than one million in the events in several European cities in the 2003 and 2004 global days of action against the U.S. war in Iraq. They have attracted very high media attention as well as growing police repression. Transnational networks active on global issues have multiplied, built alliances, and radicalized their views and actions.

Together with the scale of mobilizations, however, key developments in the new century are also found in the focus and vision of global movements, in their identities and autonomy, in their forms of organization and aggregation, and in their challenge to global economic and political power. The turning point in all of these respects was the creation of the World Social Forum as a space for the meeting of all organizations, social movements, and individuals that have challenged neoliberal globalization. In January–February 2001, the first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, followed every year by ever-larger events. It moved in January 2004 to Mumbai, India, returned to Porto Alegre in January 2005, decentralized to three continents in 2006, and will move to Nairobi, Kenya, in 2007. Dozens of regional and national social forums have been held on all continents, with thousands of organizations from all continents attending each one; the total number involved in these initiatives could be on the order of a few million people (Seoane and Taddei 2001; Teivainen 2002; de Sousa Santos 2003; Sen et al. 2004; Smith 2004).

Together with the establishment of the World Social Forum, the other most important novelty of recent years has been the organization of *global days of action,* with millions of participants in demonstrations and events in hundreds of cities all over the world. Such events took place against the U.S.

war and occupation of Iraq on February 15, 2003, March 20, 2004, March 19, 2005, and March 18, 2006. *The New York Times* identified the first of these dates as the birth date of global public opinion and civil society as a "second superpower." The values and politics of global justice movements were deeply challenged by the U.S. government policy of unilateral, unrestrained global power engaged in systematic preparations for war. Opposition to war and the search for peaceful forms of conflict resolution moved to the center of global activism, and in 2003 and 2004 the first two global days of actions were an unprecedented, enormous success, bringing together people and civil society groups on all continents with an extremely wide range of cultures, political orientations, and class and ethnic backgrounds. The success of such global actions can be associated with their ability to give voice and mobilize to the consensus of a large majority of world public opinion, reflected also in public opinion polls, thereby putting pressure for a change of course on national and global decision makers.

The rise of the global justice movements described so far can be empirically documented by the growth of international events of civil society organizations and movements.[10] Figure 2.1 reports the number of global events from 1990 to 2005. A pattern of sustained growth is evident, with key turning points at the end of 1999, with the Seattle protest against the WTO conference,

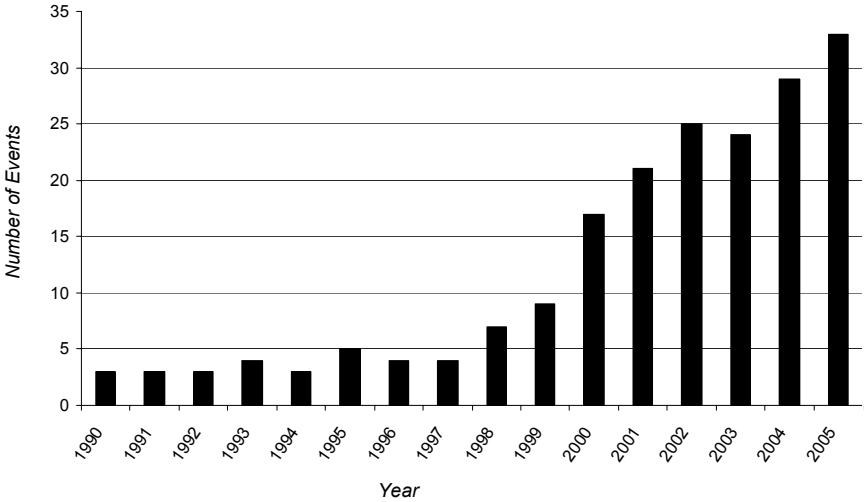

Figure 2.1 Growth of Global Civil Society Events, 1990–2005

Source: Data from Pianta and Zola 2005.

and in 2002 when the experience of world social forums became generalized in all continents. Both points are marked by jumps in the number and nature of events. Events always include an international conference and, in most cases, a street demonstration, in addition to grassroots meetings and occasional media-oriented initiatives.

The evolution of the types of events from 1990 to 2005 is shown in figure 2.2. Before 1999, the limited number of civil society events—mainly parallel summits—is distributed in a rather stable way among confrontations with G7 or IMF meetings, UN summits, and the first independent civil society events. In the period 2000–2002, there is a proliferation of protests at other global and regional summits (in the EU and the Americas in particular), with extension of the Seattle model of protest to other arenas. These actions fall in the last period as they are replaced by (and probably converge into) the rapid growth of social forums and other independent civil society events. In recent years, these two types of mobilizations account for the highest (and fastest-growing) number of civil society events, showing the high degree of autonomy, self-organization, and activism reached by global movements. G8, IMF, or WTO parallel summits continue to grow slowly, and the relevance of UN summits peaked in 2000–2002 (when a series of conferences were held in order to assess progress achieved five years after the large UN world

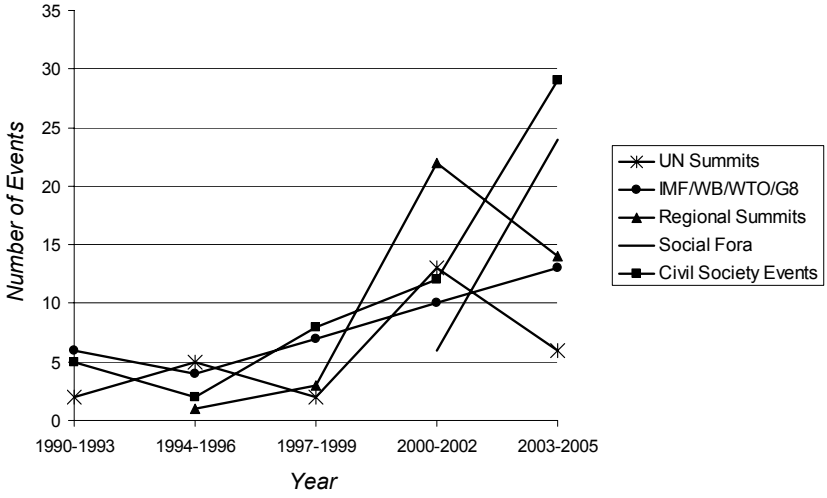

Figure 2.2 The Rise of Global Civil Society Events, 1990–2005

Source: Data from Pianta and Zola 2005.

summits) and later fell, owing to the reduced global role of the UN in a wide range of issues.

Since 2003, important developments are evident. The growth of global activities of civil society continues, with twenty-four events in 2003, twenty-nine in 2004, and thirty-three in 2005, widely spread across all continents. Latin America and Europe concentrate about 30 percent of all events, Asia and Oceania 16 percent, and North America and Africa about 8 percent. The remainder comprises events associated with actions taking place at the same time on all continents. The spread of events in the South is a major change compared with a decade ago; the importance of Latin American and Asian meetings is related to the world social forums, which now account for 26 percent of all global civil society events. Other meetings organized independently from official summits represent 37 percent of events. The rest is constituted by 5 percent of parallel events to UN conferences, 7 percent each to IMF, World Bank or WTO meetings, and to G8 summits, and 18 percent of parallel summits dealing with regional conferences (European Union, American, or Asian government meetings).

Organizational Structure and Transnational Networks

Central to the organization of global activism are transnational networks.[11] Their empirical relevance has been documented by a growing literature (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Katz and Anheier 2005). According to a survey on global civil society organizations active on global issues (Pianta and Silva 2003), more than two-thirds of the 147 responding organizations belong to an international network or coalition, and most organizations participate in one or more international campaigns. Networking emerges as a crucial aspect in their global activities and as the main form of organization linking nation-based groups to the cross-border activism of global justice movements. Beyond the formal ties of membership in a network or campaign, organizations have become interlinked in a variety of ways, relying on other groups for information, strategy, or international contacts. Some of these connections are made explicit in the links included in the Web sites of organizations. An exploratory analysis of the Web-linkages among thirty transnational organizations included in the Demos project (Marchetti and Zola 2005) has shown a very low degree of centralization and some degree of segmentation with reference to the issues addressed and the ideological perspective of organizations and groups.[12]

The crucial role played by transnational networks in the organization of the global justice movements requires specific consideration. They are forms of organization characterized by voluntary and horizontal patterns of coordination that are reciprocal and asymmetrical (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Anheier and Themudo 2002).

Flexibility and fluidity are two major features of the network organizational form. A flexible organizational structure enhances the capacity to adapt effectively to changing social circumstances and political situations, and a fluid structure, conversely, allows for porous organizational boundaries without enrollment ratified by formal membership.

Within the GJMs, in particular, a *transnational network* can be defined as a permanent coordination among different civil society organizations (and sometimes individuals such as experts), located in several countries, based on a shared frame on at least one specific global issue, and developing joint campaigns and social mobilizations against common targets at the national or supranational level. Transnational networks are key actors with a major role in terms of aggregation of social forces, development of common identities and visions, formulation of campaign strategies, and implementation of political struggles. In the last decades, transnational networks have been major advocates in the promotion of normative change in society, though they have also carried out alternative practices (such as fair trade or solidarity work) that are largely separate from the spheres of global politics and the global economy (Risse-Kappen 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Hence, transnational networks can be considered the backbone of social movements engaged in the political struggle for global justice.[13]

Transnational networks are structurally different from national coalitions and traditional domestic networks. In particular, there are a number of distinctions in their emergence that set them apart from the widely studied national networks.

1. At the global level, the lack of common language, culture, and experience makes the rise of collective action more difficult. Missing a common frame, political culture, and repertoire of action, global networks have to be slowly built through deliberate, long-term efforts at linking a number of shared values, identities, mutual trust, common visions, and strategies among organizations of different countries. This complex process of *coalition and network building* is a key aspect of transnational networks and has been crucial for overcoming the problems of national differences and allowing a broader participation in global campaigns. Evidence of this process can be found in the wide heterogeneity of participation in world social forums, WTO-related struggles, or the Food Sovereignty Campaigns, where alliances are formed among actors as diverse as indigenous movements and unions of European farmers.
2. At the global level, the institutional system is less rigidly structured than it is within states, favoring the emergence within global civil society of forms of organization and coordination that are flexible and specific to the relevant issue. Networks are the most effective models for such

purposes. Examples include the mobilization in favor of the ICC, the anti-mines and debt relief campaigns, and the actions on women's issues.

3. At the global level, a plurality of institutional actors coexists (including different states), and often no single or final authority can be identified for a given issue. This creates opportunities for "vertical coalitions," where civil society networks can develop converging demands or tactical alliances with particular state actors (such as sympathetic governments) or supranational institutions (such as some UN agencies). The anti-MAI campaign, the International Commission on Dams, and the mixed alliances within the WTO context serve as examples.
4. Membership in transnational networks is also different in that it often excludes the participation of individuals. A number of costly barriers—including education, knowledge of foreign languages, travel costs, competence on complex global issues—prevent most individuals from taking part in the prolonged actions of the networks, with the exception of sporadic participation in global events of protest or pressure actions such as "mail bombing" or "net strikes."
5. A further characteristic of transnational networks is the frequent lack, even more than at the national level, of single, charismatic leaders. This is the result of three main factors: First, the horizontal structure of networks reduces the emergence of hierarchies and leaders. Second, the focus of transnational networks' work on "proximate" social movements means that leaders might be well known to activists, but have little exposure to the wider public. Third, there is a lack of symmetry between the cross-border width of a network and the nation-based media system and public opinion that produce the "demand" for movement leaders. Examples are provided by recent Nobel Peace prize winners, such as Wandari Maathai (2004) and Shirin Ebadi (2003), who were unknown to the general public.

Identities and Opportunities

The frequent gathering of very large numbers of activists at international events has favored systematic discussions and exchanges of experiences, views, and proposals. The format of the events has generally offered wide opportunities for learning the complexities of global issues, for a critique of official policies, and for the search for alternatives. This process has led not just to a deepening of the understanding of individual issues, but to a broadening of the perspective of individuals and groups, linking together different issues into a bigger picture of global challenges. Over the years, this has helped to build common values and identities among activists from

different countries, backgrounds, and fields of engagement. A widely shared critique of neoliberal globalization has emerged, with an alternative project of *globalization from below* (Brecher, Costello, and Smith 2000; Pianta 2001a and 2001b), emphasizing bottom-up, cross-border links, common demands and practices on participatory democracy, and economic and social justice.

The pluralistic project of a *globalization from below*[14] emerges as a widely shared perspective and as a crucial meta-frame that underpins different streams of mobilizations of the cross-border social movements demanding global democracy and economic and social justice. As argued elsewhere (Pianta 2001a, 2001b, and 2003), globalization from below can be defined as an alternative to the dominant model of neoliberal globalization, a project based on the core values of peace, justice, democracy, and protection of rights that is advanced in the activities of civil society organizations and social movements advocating change, opposing current policies, and proposing alternative solutions to global issues.[15] In particular, a recent study of major transnational networks within the global justice movements has shown that their main themes of action include social justice (with the associated issues of poverty, welfare protection, and social inclusion), human rights, and democracy, all embedded in a new form of globalism that we here call globalization from below (Marchetti and Zola 2005). The predominance of economic and democracy issues is also confirmed by other studies on globally active organizations and on global civil society events (Pianta and Silva 2003; Pianta and Zola 2005). Such a combination of vision, identity, and practical economic and political challenges is at the root of the mobilizations of GJMs and their ability to challenge global and national political and economic power.

Global justice movements have developed through coalitions and campaigns on global issues. In this context, the specific actions carried out, organized, coordinated, or encouraged by transnational networks have developed at several levels, including truly global actions, transnational or regional actions, and national/local actions by national/local network members for advancing global goals. Each type of action could have a differentiated impact on the "internal," "proximate," and "external" constituencies of a global network and could respond to specific needs, challenges, and opportunities emerging in different contexts (Tarrow 2001; Kolb 2003; Yanacopulos 2005).

Although the issues that motivate mobilizations can ultimately be global (though often mediated by the local dimension), the possibility for social movements to take off is entrenched in a net of political opportunities that combines both the national and the transnational domains of political action. In the link between globalization and the rise of global social movements, there is always an important role played by national conditions (McAdam et al. 1996a).

Within the general frame of a globalization from below, the interaction between the set of values shared by social movements and the global political and economic realities leads to the emergence of different projects of political change, rooted in particular opportunity structures. In national contexts, social movements are rooted in a thick web of social relations and common identities, have access to important resources (human, financial, and so on), but operate in highly formalized political systems that both allow and constrain their mobilization and impact. Conversely, at the global level, social movements and transnational networks face major obstacles and costs in building up cross-border relationships among civil society organizations with different cultures and languages; they have access to highly limited resources and face a political system characterized by the lack of democracy. Such a deprived institutional framework and the innumerable failures to address global problems generate a twofold effect: On the one hand, they mobilize social movements, as the lack of a political voice creates conditions for political protest; on the other, they constrain mobilization into the limited avenues offered by the opportunities associated with the unstructured international political system (della Porta and Diani 1999, 201–6). The lack of legitimate responses to the democratic deficit, together with the limited constraining capacity of the international system, thus offer a complex set of both motivational and political opportunities to mobilize.

In practice, however, the lack of a rigid, well-defined institutional setting similar to the national one can widen the options for political action. When there is a low degree of conflict and some institutional alliances are possible, "vertical coalitions" on selected global issues might emerge, with civil society organizations that might cooperate, or at least establish a dialogue, with particular supranational organizations (usually of the UN system) and with some "progressive" governments or regional bodies such as the European Union. When conflict is high, on the other hand, it can be easily directed to the highest level, with a highly visible and effective challenge to the core of global decision making (as in the case of the G8 protests). In both cases, the results are greater opportunities for transnational networks to emerge as a legitimate and authoritative voice for global interests, extending their impact on public opinion and on civil society organizations prepared to join transnational networks and mobilizations.

The rapid growth of global justice movements documented in this chapter, and the diversity of their manifestations, are clearly associated with this "richness" of political opportunities at the global level and with the variety of forms of contestation that have become feasible for transnational networks and cross-border activism. Different opportunities are likely to be pursued by different organizations and networks within global movements. The combination of specific characteristics of social movements (such as values, identities, and political visions) and of external political opportunities on global

issues has led to the identification of a variety of streams within global social movements. On the basis of their attitude toward globalization, the following typology has been proposed (Pianta 2001a; 2001b): 1) *reformists* with the aim to "civilize" globalization; 2) *radical critics* with a different project for global issues; 3) *alternatives* who self-organize activities outside the mainstream of the state and market systems; and 4) *resisters* of neoliberal globalization, who strive for a return to local and national spheres of action.

This range of perspectives can be found within global justice movements, sometimes with a degree of overlap. Such a typology is centered on the identity and political characterization of social movements and is based on their interaction with the political sphere and political forces. It might be useful for understanding the interaction of values and opportunities in a comparative perspective in a given conjuncture, but it is less relevant in charting the evolving identities within civil societies over time, which are bound to change their relationship to global and national politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the evolution in the last decades of social movements on international and global issues. It began with the examination of the first international mobilizations in the 1970s and 1980s and moved to the more global, though still scattered single-issue campaigns and international actions of the 1990s. With the turn of the millennium, a scale shift has been noted toward a more unified perspective that led to the emergence of global justice movements. The key elements of these mobilizations include a network structure, a more systematic development of cross-border mobilizations, and a stronger autonomy from political power. These global social movements profoundly changed their values, repertoires of action, identities, interactions with power, and strategies during these decades.

In spite of the different perspectives, ideologies, issues of concern, and strategies, the GJMs have emerged as a self-organized, autonomous actor on the global scene, with converging identities and visions and their own policy priorities and agenda for political change. They are able to articulate a vision for global political and economic relations that is alternative to the model of neoliberal, militarized globalization. Such mobilizations are clearly *global* in their values, in their policy demands, and in the reach of their activism. They converge in protesting the *injustice* of neoliberal globalization—its lack of political democracy, of peace, of economic fairness, of social rights, of environmental protection—and in the search for international democracy and economic and social justice. But they are composed of several streams of evolving *movements,* whose plurality is accepted as a strength and not a weakness in global mobilizations. Within them, different visions and strategies for change coexist and evolve.

The most effective way of conceptualizing such an unusual combination of coalitions and diversities, of convergence and pluralism, of global campaigns and local struggles, is the model of *globalization from below.* This perspective challenges the power of markets and states and represents a project aimed at restraining the rule of the market and the sovereignty of states, in the name of universal rights—human, political, social, and economic. Globalization from below aims to empower global justice movements and provides spaces for the self-organization of civil society. In doing so, it outlines an ambitious reconfiguration of the relationships among the spheres of the economy, politics, and civil society at the global level, and it suggests, at the same time, a practical roadmap for the specific mobilizations of the new type of cross-border activism embodied by the global justice movements.

Notes

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1. A growing literature has addressed the definition of civil society, from its origins in Ferguson, Hegel, Tocqueville, to the critique of Marx, and the modern meaning emerging with Gramsci (Gramsci 1971; Bobbio 1976). (See Cohen and Arato 1992; Lipschutz 1992; Falk 1999; Anheier et al. 2001b; Pianta 2001a, 171; Anheier et al. 2002 and 2003; Chandhoke 2003; Kaldor 2003). According to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) definition, "Civil Society is a complex social arena, with individuals and groups organized in various forms of associations and networks in order to express their views and fulfill their interests. They could constitute anything from a global advocacy movement down to a village self-help group" (UNRISD 2003, 1).

2. See introductory chapter for a definition of transnational social movements.

3. This section draws upon and expands previous work (Pianta 2001b; 2003). The evolution of "new social movements" has been addressed by a large literature (Melucci 1996; della Porta et al. 1999; McAdam et al. 2001; della Porta and Tarrow 2005).

4. The involvement of global civil society and global movements in campaigns challenging global powers has been studied by a wide range of approaches (Arrighi et al. 1989; Lipschutz 1992; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Waterman 1998; della Porta et al. 1999; Houtart and Polet 1999; Cohen and Rai 2000; Florini 2000; Grzybowski 2000; Klein 2000; O'Brien et al. 2000; Pianta 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2005; Seoane and Taddei 2001; Amin and Houtart 2002; Andretta et al. 2002; Teivainen 2002; Broad and Heckscher 2003; de Sousa Santos 2003; Pianta and Silva 2003; Sen et al. 2004; della Porta and Tarrow 2005).

5. On environmental, social, and women's issues, see the case studies in (Chen 1995; Uvin 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Cohen and Rai 2000; Florini 2000; O'Brien et al. 2000; Petchesky 2000; Rajagopal 2003).

6. As an example, in 1994, the parallel summit to the G7 meeting in Naples was organized by a coalition of dozens of Italian civil society groups called "The peoples' circle," with an alternative conference, a street demonstration, and media events set up in cooperation with TOES.

7. The development of transnational social movements addressing global issues has been interpreted with reference to three main models of globalization: neoliberal globalization, globalization of rights and responsibilities, and globalization from below (Pianta 2001b and 2001a; Pianta and Silva 2003).

8. For a bibliographical reference, see the introductory chapter.

9. Three other UN summits took place in the following years. The World Conference on racism and xenophobia held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 showed that the well-tested process of UN summits involving civil society could fail to produce a consensus on highly divisive global issues. The UN-World Bank conference on Finance for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 showed the failure of the efforts to reform the policies of neoliberal globalization, even after the stock market crash of early 2001. The World Summit on sustainable development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, documented the failure to reach most environmental goals set a decade before and the scaling down of several environmental objectives. The failures of these UN summits showed the boundaries that a perspective of globalization of rights and responsibilities could not trespass. Such an outcome was made starker—but not determined—by the arrival in January 2001 of the new U.S. administration of George W. Bush, with its unilateral pursuit of national interests that after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was turned into a strategy of global preventive war, leading to the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

10. The figures presented here are drawn from the study (Pianta and Zola 2005) that extends the first analysis of parallel summits (Pianta 2001b), where a rigorous definition of such events is provided.

11. Some would even argue that social movements in themselves are networks (Diani 1992b and 2003c).

12. On the basis of current categorizations (Diani 1992a; 2003c; Olesen 2004), this appears to be a polycephalous network in which direct and indirect ties form relatively distant connections, with the effect of broadening the links across countries, issues of concern, and types of organization.

13. This is not to say, however, that all global movements need transnational networks, or that networks are a sufficient condition for the emergence of global social movements. Cross-border mobilizations may develop on "backbones" different from organization-based networks, assuming different forms, models, and duration (an example might be Internet-based global campaigns). The experience of civil society organizations is also full of international coordinations that have never led to broad cross-border social mobilization (an example might be the international trade union movement). Moreover, not all networks are movements, for an additional component of political identity, protest, and mobilization is needed to constitute a social movement.

14. According to Falk, who introduced the concept, *globalization from below* has the potential to "conceptualise widely shared world order values: minimising violence, maximising economic well-being, realising social and political justice, and upholding environmental quality" (Falk 1999, 130). See also (Brecher et al. 2000; Pianta

2001b; 2001a; Pianta and Silva 2003). A similar perspective, although with different concepts, is in de Sousa Santos 2003 and Sen et al. 2004. A comparative perspective is in Held and McGrew 2002 and Archibugi 2003.

15. In the survey of global civil society organizations (Pianta and Silva 2003, 17), when asked about the vision inspiring their actions, organizations answered *globalization from below* in 33 percent of cases and *humanized globalization* in 28 percent of cases; in all, 60 percent of respondents have a vision of globalization putting at the center civil society and human beings. In contrast, only 11 percent emphasize the need for a *governance of globalization,* and just 4 percent declare themselves *antiglobalization.* At the same time, however, one-sixth of respondents declare that their focus is on the *national/local dimension,* playing down the importance of globalization in their own identity and pressing for a turn toward localization.