

## Review: Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks

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**Donatella della Porta, Massimiliano Andretta, Lorenzo Mosca, Herbert Reifer:** *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks* Minneapolis, London 2006: University of Minnesota Press, 300 pp.

The movement for globalisation from below has been growing transnationally in the past decade and has become known especially through the counter-summits and demonstrations organised against international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The unexpected appearance of this activism has significantly altered the theories of social movements. Globalisation is understood as a challenge and a source of new opportunities and resources for movements. The amount of scholarship on transnational contention, global activism, and grassroots social movements has recently grown. *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks* presents contemporary theoretical discussions on the 'newness' of the global justice movement and a detailed case study based on a sociological survey.

The research team behind the book, headed by one of the leading scholars in the field of social movements, Donatella della Porta, mainly explores the globalisation movement in Italy. The authors focus on the demonstrations against the G8 in Genoa in July 2001 and the European Social Forum in Florence in November 2002, but they also contextualise these events in the wider frame of the development of the global movement, drawing comparisons with Seattle in 1999, Prague in 2000, and other protest events and social fora.

Their in-depth analysis is grounded in data from a quantitative survey based on questionnaires and focus groups. This approach is not common in the scholarly literature on the global justice movement, which is either theoretical or based on small-scale qualitative case studies. The

team interviewed more than three thousand activists at these two transnational events and conducted six focus groups and a content analysis of activist web sites, police material, and the mass media.

The first chapter contains an analysis of the structure of the globalisation movement and the types of actors and organisations it encompasses. The movement comprises a variety of organisations, networks, and individuals from a variety of different backgrounds. There are the 'old' social movements, such as workers movements and the traditional left, 'new social movements', focusing on women's rights and environmental issues, but there are also new actors, such as migrants and social centres. The specific nature of the movement lies in its composition, including not just organisations but also many individuals who are attracted by the movement's openness and tolerance. The team compared activists from Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and Great Britain and divided them into various sectors. They found eco-pacifists (Rete Lilliput, churches), anti-neoliberalists (AT-TAC and the traditional left), anti-capitalists (White Overalls, Network for Global Rights, social centres), separate anarchist transnational networks, and black blocs. The authors argue that multiple affiliations and experience of various organisations and sectors are important for networking and recruitment into the movement. They examine how particular organisations try to incorporate internal democracy, participation, and decision-making based on consensus or unanimity into their operations.

The next chapter deals with identity and the ideas and goals of the activists. The movement links diverse campaigns on various issues together through a master frame. Given that the activists have different social backgrounds and are geographically remote from one another, they need to have a sense of collectivity. The framing process links and mobilises different

actors, identifies problem and solutions, and defines enemies and allies. The master frame has been developed through demonstrations and social fora (such as Porto Alegre and the European Social Forum). The enemy is defined as neoliberalism, international institutions, corporations, and hegemonic states (G8). Capitalist globalisation in general is understood as the source of the problems of global inequality, poverty, the lack of democracy, and the environmental crisis. The proposed solution is expressed in the slogan 'another world is possible'. The movement stands for social and environmental justice, democracy, human rights, peace, and solidarity. Wealth distribution and inequalities are on the agenda again, and conflicts cannot be understood as post-industrial anymore. The global justice movement links many issues and therefore differs from previous single-issue movements. Various global actors are unified through their diversity and through global days of action.

The authors specifically deal with the new forms of communication in the movement. Mobilisation on a transnational level has been facilitated by the new communication technologies and especially by the Internet. The Internet is an important tool for the movement, as it is able to openly distribute uncensored messages and enables transnational mass mobilisation; it is pluralistic, horizontal, interactive, fast, and cheap. The Internet also affects the structure of the movement, making it a flexible, polycentric network that supports participation. The team discusses new forms of online protest: online petitions, net strikes (when many people jam a website at once, a tactic used against the WTO in Seattle), mail bombing (sending e-mails to the point of overload), fake websites, and Internet-based campaigns. They argue that online activism can substitute real activism and that the collective identity of activists is strengthened by the Internet. The Internet facilitates contact between widely dis-

persed activists who would otherwise never know each other and it serves as a medium for the spread of alternative knowledge, for example, through specific information websites, such as Indymedia.

One chapter in the book discusses the strategies of the globalisation movement. After decades of the institutionalisation and normalisation of protest, they see a new cycle of protest having begun in Seattle. Movements dissatisfied with NGOs and lobbying have come back to the streets and developed new forms of action. Innovations, for instance, are the campaigns on specific issues, based on a strategy of naming and shaming corporations (Shell, Monsanto, McDonalds, etc.) and boycotting corporations. New forms of action are also counter-summits, critical meetings held at the same time as official summits and providing alternative information.

The authors speak about diversity with regard to the tactics used at demonstrations – in Genoa the strategies used were on different levels, from non-violence to confrontation. The researchers argue that the majority of protesters are non-violent and critical of violence. In their view the system is violent, so the movement must behave differently; violence moreover can isolate protest, and it is not a good strategy for large-scale mobilisations. According to data, 'about 90 percent (...) of the demonstrators interviewed in Genoa declared never having resorted to violent tactics' (p. 133). Violence against property was used more in the anti-capitalist sector, but was not used by eco-pacifists or anti-neoliberalists. Black blocs used violence against property and fought with the police. They claimed to be fighting the symbols of capitalism, but they also destroyed the property of residents, cars, and small shops, and they attacked non-violent marches of demonstrators. After Genoa, strong criticism of violence emerged within the movement. Subsequent protests therefore tried to be non-violent (such as in Florence in 2002). Non-vi-

olence is understood as another important step in the movement, which is learning from the past and has rejected the militant tactics of the 1970s. However, the problem of choosing a strategy remains – more disruptive tactics attract media attention, but they may negatively stigmatise the movement in the eyes of the public.

However, the clashes do not depend just on demonstrators but also on police tactics. The authors look at the interaction between the movement and the police. They also examine the other side of police strategies and controlling protests (which is quite rare in other studies of social movements). They describe the coercive strategies of the police, involving violence, applied before the protest (border checks preventing foreigners from entering a country), during the events, and later in custody. Police act on the basis of previous experiences with protest in other countries. Genoa 2001 is understood to have been a culmination point, when one young protester died and about 1000 others were wounded. The researchers point to a lack of communication with the organisers on the part of the Italian military police, their lack of coordination, their failure to distinguish violent demonstrators from the majority, repression, and their view of the demonstrators as a violent enemy.

Besides the police, the authors deal with other outside reactions to the movement, especially from the government and political parties. The movement was seen as a public order problem. Of primary importance was protecting the summit, and the right to demonstrate was less important. After 9/11 some Italian and European politicians attempted to discredit the movement by associating it with Islamic terrorism. The leftist parties showed disinterest in the protest, calling the activists kids who stimulate ideas but do not provide any answers. Only the communist and green parties, especially their youth organisations, were present in Genoa and at the ESF.

Although the majority of activists see themselves on the political left (some are radically left), unlike the New Left of the 1970s, which spoke about revolution, they try to avoid ideology and are more pragmatic and concrete. The movement criticises representative democracy and proposes ancient direct democracy from below, based on participation, consensus decision-making, and horizontal networks. The global movement developed as a reaction to globalisation and to the removal of decision-making from the level of the nation-state and the distribution of power into the hands of the market and international organisations (WB, WTO, IMF). National institutions are ineffective in the face of neoliberal globalisation. About 70% of the activists in the ESF support the strengthening of institutions of global governance such as the United Nations.

By way of criticism of this study I would say that the authors put too much stress on non-violence. A figure of 10% of 300 000 activists probably involved in physical confrontations is a large number, and the actions of the black blocs have been significant. A problem may also be that their sample did not include activists from the black blocs, whom it would have been difficult to persuade to fill in a questionnaire during the demonstrations. I would also question the approach of speaking about activism in individual countries in relation to the people that came to Italy to demonstrate. Moreover, only voices from Western Europe are presented, and people from other countries, especially Eastern Europe, were not interviewed, even though they participated at both events. The book is full of sophisticated tables and charts, but sometimes the conclusions are as trivial as saying that anti-capitalist ideas resonate most with anti-capitalists and anti-neoliberal ideas with anti-neoliberals.

Despite this criticism, I consider the book to be a very useful, well-structured, and comprehensible piece of work. It sig-

nificantly contributes to the understanding of the movement for globalisation from below. Its detailed analysis of the Italian events with a European and world reach makes it useful for comparisons with other local contexts of the global justice movement.

Marta Kolářová

**Scott Menard: *Longitudinal Research***

London 2002: Sage, 94 pp.

Longitudinal design is a way of measuring change or causal relationships. Although there are some weaknesses that need to be considered, including the attrition of cases or missing data treatment, it has become a valuable research tool, and it is not just sociology that makes use of it. Although many parts of Scott Menard's *Longitudinal Research* deal with the longitudinal design in general, there is a particular emphasis on the social sciences. The author works at the Institute of Behavioural Science at the University of Colorado, and his research interest covers statistics, demography and development, crime, and delinquency. Therefore, examples are related mainly to research on the above-mentioned topics performed in the United States.

There is no strict definition of a longitudinal design and there are different approaches in the arguments of different authors as to what it involves. In this regard, Menard's view should be seen as only one of many, and perhaps one not everyone will agree with. As Menard notes at the start, the first edition of his book was written in 1990, and a great deal has changed since then in the field of longitudinal research, particularly in data analysis. In his view, among other aspects, both the HLM program, with its revolutionary approach to multilevel and longitudinal data analysis, and the structural equation modelling programs contributed to these changes.

Therefore, all the chapters have been altered from those in the first edition, either updated or completely rewritten, depending on the progress made in recent years.

In the introduction Menard mentions that the history of collecting longitudinal data now goes back three hundred years. It dates back to the periodic censuses taken in Canada, and there are some other countries that started with their censuses relatively early – in the first half of 18th century (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the United States). The expansion of longitudinal research design came with the emergence of long-term studies of childhood development in the United States after the First World War, and since the 1970s especially a broad range of longitudinal studies has been undertaken in the social and behavioural sciences.

What I find important is Menard's discussion of the term 'longitudinal' at the very beginning of the book (p. 2). In his view, the term refers not to a single method but to a group of methods. He provides a definition of longitudinal research in contrast with cross-sectional research. Cross-sectional research can be concisely described as a design in which each individual (case) is measured once and the measurement of each variable for each case is made within a narrow time span. In contrast, the author describes longitudinal research as follows: For each variable data are collected for at least two distinct time periods, cases are the same or at least comparable from one period to the next, and the analysis includes a comparison between or among periods.

The purposes of longitudinal research and the difficulties involved in separating historical and developmental changes are discussed in Chapter 2. According to Menard, there are two primary purposes of longitudinal research: first, to describe patterns of changes; and second, to establish the direction and magnitude of causal relationships.