

## **The Global movement's strategies.**

New forms of collective action in the control of urban space in protest  
against international organizations.

The anti-summit model.

*Paper Presented at the ESRC/RSGS Advanced Research Training  
in Human Geography, Kindrogan Field Centre, 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> September 2004*

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**Key words:** Social movements, Globalisation, Collective action, Urban space's control.

**Abstract:** This paper is about the new social movements against the Globalisation. In particular, I will speak about the period between the demonstrations of Seattle (November/December 99) and the demonstrations of Genoa (June 2001) and the sector of movement that have practiced strategies of civil disobedience and conflict with the police forces. In this period, it has been developed a particular new form of collective action that I've called model anti-summit. The relationship with mass media and the new TIC (Technologies of Information and Communication) and the spatial building of conflict are the most important features in this model of collective action. The anti-summit model of collective action, as a challenger in urban space control when the international organizations had meetings was hegemonic until the Governments used a "geographies of terror" strategy in the cities where the international organizations should met. The military control and exceptional legality in Genoa, where the police killed the young demonstrator Carlo Giuliani, is the best example of this strategy against the Global movements and their strategies to dispute the urban space's control.

I must apologize for my English, it isn't very good. However, I will try to be clear. Normally I don't like to read from a paper in talks. I think that communication is better when you don't, but, in this occasion, my problems with English make it impossible to do a good oral presentation. So I'm going to read the notes that I have prepared for this occasion.

The theme of this paper is new social movements against Globalisation. This is very large topic. In particular, the target of this paper will be the European movements that have used strategies to build conflicts in the streets as new forms of civil or social disobedience.

I'm going to speak about two aspects that constitute something that I have called the "anti-summit model" as a modular form of collective action (Iglesias, 2004; 4), following Sidney Tarrow's conceptualisation of collective action. In the first place, political disobedience as a tool to build conflict in urban space, and its capacity to produce important spaces of communication in the media through the confrontation between policemen and demonstrators, and the challenges to the control of urban space. In the second place, the protests since Seattle (demonstrations against the WTO) to Genoa (demonstrations against the G8) as the hegemonic struggles at the origin of the first Global movement identity.

As this is a geography students meeting, I'm going to look at the spatial aspects of this anti-summit model and government strategies to neutralize it. For this second aspect, I'm going to use the concept of "geographies of terror" -developed by Ulrich Oslender (2004), a colleague of the department and friend- to try to clarify the political decisions behind the police behavior in the demonstrations of Goteborg (May 2001), Barcelona (June 2001) and Genoa (July 2001). As Tarrow and Della Porta have noticed, this repression strategy was incremented after the 11 September attacks against the USA (Tarrow/Della Porta, 2001;2). But I think that these important authors fail to explain the political background underlying police behavior that in Genoa, for example, cost the life of the young demonstrator Carlo Giuliani. To understand the repressive strategy against this Global movement we need to study the movement's challenge to the control of urban space and its communicative use. For this, I think that we must use some human geography tools.

However, I think that, before entering these questions, it is necessary to give a definition or, at least, a minimum characterization of the Global movement.

I'm going to propose two generic definitions; The first, relating to Economic Globalization as the political-systemic adversary for the Global movements. The second relating to the movement's collective actions, able to explain the political success of the Global movement and to differentiate it from other social movements in the twentieth century.

Regarding the first definition I like very much the proposal of the Italian students Sandro Mezzadra and Fabio Raimondi that have referred to the Global movements as the constitutive contradiction of Globalization, as the Globalization's spectrum, as

the updating of the old radical dream of freedom and equality to the republican, democratic and communist projects in Occident and the anti-colonial struggles (Mezzadra/Raimondi, 2003; 22-26).

Regarding the second definition, the most important thing is a model of confrontation able to create social mobilization against Capitalism visible throughout the World, creating symbolic scenarios of system conflict: the anti-summit model.

The Demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November and December of 1999 constitute the 'founding myth' in the Global movement's genealogy. I don't have the time here to go into detail on this event, but I want to note some key aspects of the Seattle experience.

In the first place, in Seattle the anti-summit model, as a modulate form of collective action, (modulate collective action means, in the social movements theory, a form realizable in different contexts and spaces) got an unexpected potency and suggests the beginning of the first period of struggles against neoliberal Globalization in the World. The revolt of Seattle stands as a symbol of victory, which is essential in the Global movement's political discourses and practices.

Why can we speak of victory in Seattle? Why do I think that the key in this victory is a new form of collective action? I'm going to expose the following reasons:

In the first place, there is a "physical" or "material" reason. In Seattle, the majority of the WTO's delegates couldn't arrive at the Sheraton Hotel for the inaugural session (finally suspended) of the WTO summit (C.A.,2000; 73). This proved the capacity of the movement, which took control of the city center of Seattle during hours. Today, nobody denies that the blockade actions had a very great significance in the summit failure.

In the second place, the communicative potency of the Seattle's actions, had an unbelievable attention by the mass media. Despite the manipulation, the activist's arguments could thus be listened to by millions of people in the world (and particularly by other anti-capitalist groups from Europe, Asia, Latin America etc.). This unexpected success led the WTO to acknowledge the reason of some activist's claims. Bill Clinton made comprehensive pronouncements about the demonstrations. Hence, this conflictive collective action model was proving an interesting strategy to connect the movement's claims with wider society and proved an important lesson to the traditional Left, immersed in its communication crisis.

The police repression, the activist's detentions and the curfew ordered by the federal government, emphasized the dark face of the democratic administration in the United States and put in front of the eyes of millions an interesting metaphor: between the people and the international organizations must be a cops barrier.

Regarding the black block's direct actions, very criticized by other groups but really interesting and useful in my point of view, I think that the public and

organized destruction of large corporations' shops (without hurting people) implied a form of grassroots legality as a sanction against corporations responsible for the inhuman working conditions in periphery countries, to environmental degradation, to children's exploitation (for example in the Nike factories). If we remember the features of each antagonist or revolutionary movement, the anticipation of the new law even through the violence (not in this case) is an essential acting of the constituent power. The social antagonist must design the new society, also symbolic, in the control of the space, where this new law can be applied. The control of space, this is the most important difference between the anti-summit model and the conventional (and normally legal) demonstrations.

Moreover, only the conflict imagines are able to touch the multitude (spectators in this case)The broken showcases and the lacrimogene gases are a symbol able to open the Pandora's box of the first planetary movement in the XXI century. Prague and Genoa couldn't be possible without the communicative potency of Seattle.

On the other hand, Seattle constituted an alliance of a multiplicity of social groups, such as indigenous people, trade unions, pacifists, anarchists, NGO's and others building together an important feature of the Global movement: heterogeneity.

The anti-summit model began its development.

Before Seattle, the mobilisations in Prague, in September 2000, opened the development of the anti-summit model in Europe until the events of Genoa.

The paths of the European Global movements began in Prague. And again with the anti-summit model and the collisions between activists and police in the control of the streets accompanying all kinds of international meetings (European Union summits, Economic World Forum, IMF and WB...etc.), which had a very important media potency.

This is the period of the first regular relations between grassroots movements in Europe, the period of the Prague Peelvaska tactic (Routledge 2003; 333), as different forms of street actions compatible and almost complementary. To the Namesti Miru square departed three different activist columns to besiege the meeting center of IMF and WB. The blue column applying the classic urban guerrilla, the yellow column applying the civil disobedience tactic with a head of 500 tute bianche and the pink column using forms of street parade. In the columns it was possible to listen to English, Spanish, Italian, Poland, Check, German...(Iglesias 2004; 16-18).

Paul Routledge has brought a useful geographical concept to understand the Prague dynamics: the convergence space (2003). The notion of convergence space permits to speak about a transnational collective action in Prague where almost the majority of the activists weren't from the Cheek Republic. This notion permits also to understand the siege strategy (no blockade as in Seattle) again challenging the control of the city center that coordinated different European groups.

Indeed, in Prague was developed an interesting fight to the control of the protest's spaces in the city. The concept of red zone, famous then in Genoa, as urban space armored against the demonstrations and militarized, began to configure itself in Prague.

As I have said before, the challenge of space in Prague was not exactly the same as in Seattle. The target, as in Melbourne one week before, was to obstruct the exit of the delegates inflicting a hard street pressure able to discourage delegates from attending the summit.

With this aim the three blocks from Namesti Miru departed together to then separate and begin the siege to the meeting center.

The IMF and WB decision to suspend prematurely their 55 meeting is a clear element to speak about a victory in the first challenge of the Global movement in Europe.

Prague was an important success to the radical left. Only before Prague, other groups as Parties, trade Unions or the own ATTAC absorb the interest in this movement and its collective action forms (Iglesias 2004; 19).

The fact that the most important delegates were evacuated in metro or by helicopter and the struggles in the streets were fundamental in the premature ending of the meeting.

On the other hand, before Prague the relations between different European groups began to be continuous. The consolidation of the PGA net in Europe, especially before the meeting in Milan in March of 2001 was very important. The net resistance defined the organize form of this movement as really different to the Parties or trade unions.

Before Prague, the anti-summit model offered a lot of possibilities for this movement.

The principal efficacy of the anti-summit model was to make visible a new movement against international economic organizations. A movement active in the cities where the authorities used thousands policemen making red zones where freedom and rights disappeared.

In Goteborg this period began to be closed. The police shouted against the demonstrators. Three demonstrators were shouted. One month before in Barcelona repression and heavy handed police behavior were also used against for demonstrators. In Genoa, the police killed an activist. This events confirmed the crisis of the anti-summit model.

I have not time to develop this very well but I think that we have speak about geographies of terror (Oslender 2004) to define this repressive strategy.

In the first place, They wanted to neutralize the movement mobilitation capacity. It's very difficult to participate in demonstrations where police could shoot. In the second place, this strategy wanted to neutralize all the new forms of conflict and the challenger in the urban space control.

Obviously, this repression strategy was incrementally increased after the 11 September attacks against the USA. Since this moment, a new period has begun for the Global movement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Department of Geography (University of Glasgow), Lorna Philip, Hayden Lorimer, Ulrich Oslender and all the postdoctoral students, for the opportunity to participate in the ESRC/RSGS Advanced Research Training in Human Geography where I presented this paper.

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