Globalisation Movements in Europe

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Resumen Movimientos de globalización en Europa	Abstract Globalisation Movements in Europe
Las manifestaciones de Seattle de 1998 marcan el comienzo de las iniciativas ante la globalización. La formulación de los temas que se someten a debate no está únicamente relacionada con el desarrollo de iniciativas colectivas que tengan como objetivo una globalización diferente a la existente, sino con la afirmación de la subjetividad como uno de los puntos clave de esas iniciativas. De esta manera, la resistencia se constituye a través de la afirmación de la subjetividad de los actores que intervienen contra la racionalidad impuesta. Esas afirmaciones de la subjetividad se articulan mediante los llamados "circuitos de entendimiento comunicativo", que al mismo tiempo permiten la participación de los actores en las acciones colectivas y la propuesta de alternativas a la globalización	The Seattle demonstrations in 1998 are the starting point of the initiatives related to globalization. The exposition of the issues under discussion do not only involve collective initiatives calling for a different globalization, but the assertation of subjectivity as a key process. In this sense, resistence is constructed through the affirmation of subjectivity of the agents concerned in a struggle against an imposed rationality. These affirmations of subjectivity are articulated towards the so-called "circuits of communicative understanding" which allow the agents' involvement in collective action ant the proposal of alternatives to globalisation.
Palabras clave acción colectiva, movimiento antiglobalización, subjetividad	Key words collective action, antiglobalisation movement, subjectivity

This paper is a development of a research project in progress, which focuses on globalisation movements established between the end of the previous century and the new millennium. This project is already underway in France and Italy,

and is about to be launched in Germany, Great Britain, Portugal and Spain.[1] It tackles sociological questions related to the analysis of the most significant components of these social formations, and aims to identify both a sense of the subjective involvement of participating actors at individual and collective levels, and the political, cultural and social significance produced by the initiatives themselves.

I begin by presenting the main issues raised by the collective initiatives which construct their action on globalisation. I show that this process of construction takes place separately from behavioural patterns such as the closure of identity and popular movements that are hostile towards globalisation. However, this process of construction is defined through an affirmation of individual subjectivity on the part of the actors involved in the collective action and the activation of communication channels that allow the formation of an extensive organisational network. This activation also includes the formation of more intensive communication circuits that are established between various groups within this network, and which delineate its principle constitutive components.

In this way, the present paper aims to demonstrate how collective action on globalisation is constructed. On the one hand, it seeks to identify the meanings attributed to this action by the actors involved, its objectives, the activities undertaken to achieve these and the organisational mechanisms on a variety of levels that, in a different way from versatility and permeability, allow fluidity and interchange between members of the movements themselves; on the other hand, the paper identifies political, cultural and social meanings produced by this action.

1 CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Many organised collective phenomena have recently been established, setting out criticisms and proposals for changing the structures of social life on a global scale. These consist of collective initiatives which are founded in the United States, the European Union, but also in Latin America and other parts of the world,

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[1] The contents of this paper are the responsibility of the present author only, not of the other researchers and research centres involved in the common project, in which each centre or researcher maintains individual autonomy. Those involved include scholars from several institutions: Cadis (Centre d'analyse et d'interventions sociologiques) at E.H.E.S.S, the University of Paris/Evry, the Research Centre in Hamburg, The University of Florence, the Statale University in Milan, 'La Sapienza' University in Rome, the University of the Spanish Pays Basque and the University of Madrid, the University of Warwick and the University of Lisbon.

raising issues which they believe to be connected to what they define as the globalisation of culture and economy.[2] The demonstration that took place during the WTO (World Trade Organisation) meeting in Seattle, November 1998, can be seen as a symbolic beginning to these initiatives. However, in reality, this demonstration was preceded by others, such as those that took place in May of the same year in Cologne during the meeting of the G7, in Asia during the UN International Peace Conference and in Munich during the G8 meeting in July. In the previous year demonstrations had also taken place in Birmingham, UK, during the meeting of the G7. Still further mobilisations had already taken place in 1994 in Chiapas, where Sub-commander Marcos abandoned traditional guerrilla warfare to affiliate himself with democracy. This was done in order to oppose what he and his companions define as neo-liberal globalisation and the cultural hegemony of the West, which are held to be the respective causes of increased economic difficulties of the indigenous populations and the aggression displayed towards their cultural identities (Le Bot, 1997).

In addition, there are also mobilisations which arose alongside the new millennium, of which I recall among others that of Davos in Switzerland which took place during the World Economic Forum, in Bangkok for the assembly of UNCTAD, in Washington for the World Bank/International Monetary Fund summit, in Okinawa for the G8 Meeting, in Melbourne for the World Economic Forum, and in Nice for the Council of Europe, all of which took place in the year 2000. There were also demonstrations for the World Economic Forum in Davos, which took place in the city itself, but above all I must mention the events at Porto Alegre in Brazil where, simultaneously and alternatively to the Swiss meeting of the protagonists of world finance and economics, a World Social Forum was held, with the participation of many groups from across the world. To this list of demonstrations I add other such as the Zapatistas march on Mexico City, the protests in Quebec City at the meeting of the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas), those in Genova for the G8

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[2] The development of these initiatives is taking place just as a comparable intellectual approach to globalisation is becoming prominent. As regards globalisation, many have long emphasised the planetary implications of the predominance of certain channels of financial capital in economic activities, which becomes established, without political intervention, in the powerful areas of the United States, Western Europe and the Far East (Sassen, 1991); while others emphasise in turn the importance of information infrastructures for globalisation (Castells, 1996); other groups again trace the economic aspect of globalisation back to the predominance of financial capital in the assertion of liberalism on a world scale; they trace the cultural aspects back to the attempts of western models, in particular thatof America, to prevail over others (Touraine, 1997).

meeting and in Brussels for the EU Summit, that reanimated initiatives in 2001. The same happened with the new World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, and in Barcelona, to cite just two examples.

Thus we are witness to a proliferation of initiatives on globalisation, with demonstrations involving several million people taking place between the end of the previous century and the beginning of the new millennium. They tackle a wide range of issues and rely on a vast body of organisations founded for these occasions or those in a variety of fields that have refocused their activities. I will start by examining the issues raised.

Collective initiatives begin by raising a number of issues related to the adverse situation and alternatives to globalisation that might be adopted, thus effecting a first stage in their construction. The actual formulation of these issues can be clearly seen to occur as a result of the gap between on the one hand, the rationalisation and objectification of the economy, linked to the imposition of cultural hegemony on a global scale, and on the other hand, the experiences (Dubet, 1994) of individuals and groups on which this impacts. These are experiences that are accumulated within labour relations in a restructuring of an industrialised society such as Europe (Boyer/Durand, 1998). Here, to the gap that is felt between those who are employed and thus prevented from combining the expression of their creativity with the demands of the rationalisation of production processes, can be added the gap felt between those who see economic logic imposing itself in terms which are irreconcilable with their own needs for occupational stability. There are also the experiences of those who feel, still within the same industrialised world, the gap between on the one hand, the production, elaboration and dissemination of information effected through computerised infrastructures, and on the other hand, the difficulty of affirming - through these same infrastructures - their own subjective needs for creative expression of simply for autonomous control over communication relations. Meanwhile, other experiences point to the gap between the production and dissemination of information, and the needs of individuals and groups to affirm their identities. Likewise, further experiences still indicate the gap between these forms of rationalisation and the moral necessity to develop a sense of commitment intended to diminish social difference between the developed world and poorer areas of the planet, or between attempts to impose cultural hegemony and the defence of individual and group identity.

To the first phase of development in which collective initiatives clarify and emphasise the gap between rationalisation and experience, can be added a second. During this second phase the initiatives confront the problem of this gap, with recourse to the formulation of issues, through which the content of these issues is more precisely determined. The initiatives define the aspects of how to tackle this gap that are most relevant to them, most importantly by delineating four types of issues, to which can be added a further transversal issue. These issues are simultaneously present in the various mobilisations, although the balance of prevailing issues may differ between groups.

The first is essentially economic and social, and refers on the one hand to the domination of financial capital over social life and on the other to the relationship between developed and undeveloped areas of the world. In many demonstrations it is addressed as a principle issue, for example in the case of the Seattle 1999 protest, or others either previous or subsequent in connection with the G7 or G8 meetings.

The second type of issue has essentially cultural connotations and refers to alternative ideas of culture, subjectivity and individuality that can be established in place of hegemonic models. These are tackled by various components of the initiatives both during demonstrations that focus on financial and economic questions like those in Quebec City for the FTAA meeting, or in Genoa for the G8, as well as those with a broader scope, such as the meeting in Porto Alegre in 2001 and 2002.

The third type of issue is related to political matters: for example, those concerning the denunciation of power exercised in a political manner by the states which dominate the process of globalisation; those concerning the call for peace on a global scale; those concerning the insufficiency or inadequacy of local, national and international political institutions in confronting questions of globalisation. These two last areas of concern are tackled respectively by mobilisations of a general kind or in other mobilizations of a specific character, such as the initiatives on European Council of Nice in 2000 and the mobilization in Barcelona in 2002. The fourth type of issue is connected to orientation of scientific and technological research. This way considered in initiatives such Porto Alegre and in other such events, character that denounce the use of armed conflict and demand peace, and by those that focus on the effects on genetically modified material in agricultural production.

To these four areas can be added a fifth, which raises the matter of the control of the production and dissemination of information. This issue is

simultaneously specific and transversal. It is specific in that it is tackled directly by groups of collective initiatives that specialise in the production and non-hierarchical dissemination of alternative information, and in the development of communication networks within the movement itself. Some examples are the national institutions, in Europe and other continents, of global networks such as Indymedia, Tactical Media Crew, or Rekombinant. It is transversal because the issue of the production and dissemination of information affects the construction of cultural possibilities as much as economic and financial management, the formation and development of political institutions and the control of the actual orientation of scientific and technological research.

2 THE CLOSURE OF IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

The formulation of the issues is linked, as shown above, both to the need for subjective affirmation and to the development of collective initiatives aimed at pursuing a different type of globalisation. The need for subjective affirmation is expressed through resistance to the domination that underlies the prevailing orientation of economy and culture, and is combined with individual involvement in collective initiatives that seek to realise this alternative mode of globalisation, aligning themselves with democracy and the recognition of the equality of all forms of difference. Thus it is a question of subjective resistance and individual involvement in initiatives that are separate from movements that call for a refusal of globalisation as expressed through community closure (Wieviorka, 2001).

These latter types of movement aim to defend the populations and lands that are most exposed to the threat of economic collapse as a result of the inability of their activities of production to confront extreme levels of competition, as well as cultural invasion, both due to a globalisation that thus denies traditions and heritage. In the European Union, these anxieties are most directly represented by the extreme-right and neo-populist groups, who oppose a globalisation defined in terms of economic and social collapse and cultural invasion.[3] According to these groups, this

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[3] Examples of this type of group include formations as different as the Front National in France and the Lega Nord in Italy. The first is aligned with the extreme right and is removed from political parties, even those of the moderate right that consider it an undemocratic party. The FN opposes globalisation on the grounds of defending the interests of the weaker sectors of the French population, whose social and economic interests are under threat, it opposes globalisation that encourages the investment of capital outside French territories, in areas where activities of production can obtain a poorly qualified workforce for lower wages. The FN opposes

invasion is facilitated above all through cultural diffusion as effected by the mass media, but also through the waves of immigrants from less developed parts of the world.

These formations, although intervening in issues that they would define as related to globalisation, are not defined in any country in the European Union as components of the globalisation movement; nor are they recognised as such by the components of this movement, who situate themselves as critics of globalisation who seek alternative strategies of openness, not of closure. The populist groups of the extreme right that are hostile to globalisation are thus not a part of the initiative whose conflictual components give rise to a collective action that seeks to define political, cultural, economic and social alternatives to globalisation.

Through the definition of these issues a differentiation emerges between those who display resistance on the basis of identity (Wieviorka, 2001) or initiatives that seek to defend their communities against globalisation, and those who seek alternative perspectives. The content that is attributed to each issue thus becomes an element that underlines the differentiation between those who criticise what is defined as globalisation. This first differentiation concerns those who assume a position of demanding community closure against globalisation and others who proceed in the opposite sense.

3 SUBJECTIVITY AND COLLECTIVE INITIATIVES

Through the formulation of the issues tackled by the initiatives, we see the definition of subjective resistance and individual involvement in collective action that takes a critical stance on globalisation, on account of which they intend to outline alternative perspectives which are to be determined from a democratic position that recognises civil and cultural rights, and the possibility of overcoming injustice and inequality. These forms of resistance are effected by the subject (Touraine, 1992,

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globalisation because it believes it portends an increase of immigration, held to be a threat to the culture and security of the French people. The Lega Nord (Northern League) is a populist political party that has been part of the central-right government of Italy since 2001. It is a party based in several northern areas of the country, whose economic and cultural interests it aims to defend. It believes that the former are threatened especially by the weight of the less developed areas in the South of the country and the implications of this for their increased growth. It maintains that the latter are threatened by the less modern culture of the south of the country, and, especially, by invasions of immigrants from outside the borders of the European Union, facilitated by globalisation. The Lega Nord suggests opposing these phenomena through community closure for which reason its critics, like those who criticise the Front National in France, accuse it of racism.

p.242/253) who does not intend to give in to the logic of the objectified world, to its economic rationalisation and its cultural hegemony that denies or dismisses difference (Wieviorka). These same forms of resistance are constituted by the affirmation of subjectivity by actors who wish to intervene against this rationalisation, to pursue alternatives, to change the social environment in which they find themselves living, and against the overall vision as spatially extended to the dimension of the planet. Thus these actors are involved in collective action but at the same time they move to affirm their subjective specificity, to protect their cultural, moral, political and professional individuality.

This action is constituted by subjects who aim to demonstrate their resistance to what is imposed upon them, but also to reaffirm their individual existence against the economic and political rationalisation that is enforced at a global level. These are subjects that act collectively to affirm their individual specificity and distinctive qualities in relation to the rationalisation of the world, and at the same time aim to reconfirm as actors the possibility of defining alternative rational courses of action for a globalised economy and culture. Thus, these affirmations of subjectivity thus overflow into the experience (Dubet, 1994) of those who attempt to establish these courses of action. These are experiences accumulated through activities that unfold in the context of the construction of collective action. They are differentiated experiences, that refer back to various types of subjective involvement. Of these various types of involvement, three stand out decidedly amongst the European initiatives hitherto considered by our research.

The first type is that of subjective involvement in experience marked by solidarity towards disadvantaged populations especially in the South. This might be exemplified by the experience of members of a European organisation - such as the Italian groups Mani Tese and Nigrizia - of religious or lay origins that have been involved for a long time in extending solidarity and support towards populations in southern areas of the world. They emphasise their distance from the world of economic rationalisation, through resistance and by developing accusations and proposals relating to the underdevelopment that they refuse to see as an inescapable obstacle. Through these criticisms and proposals they set out possible modes of intervention in the third world, as alternatives to those promoted by national and international official organisations, like the F.A.O. and other UN agencies, that they accuse of inefficiency, amongst other things. In this way their interventions result in tangible increases of solidarity that posit alternatives to the initiatives led by official

organisations for populations in the underdeveloped areas of the world. For some actors, these activities may be defined as alternative professions to those of the official delegates who intervene in underdeveloped areas, as will be demonstrated shortly. However, these are also the activities of actors that through their organisations can be set in a context of collective action on globalisation, of which they confirm their status as constitutive components and in which they are recognised by other organisations that belong to the movement.

The second type of involvement is that in which the gap between the objectification of the world and subjective resistance to rationalisation connected with this, is combined with the experience of constructing professional courses of action as alternatives to prevailing models. The gap between what is imposed and the move towards subjective resistance is thus tackled through the construction of professional experiences that in their modality of intervention are both similar and alternative to official paths within relevant sectors of social life. These experiences are defined through collective action on globalisation, especially that relating to two types of professional experience: that specialising in support for less developed areas of the world and that of information.

The first type of professional experience is that which occurs in the context of catholic and lay organisations that are committed, often as NGOs, to improving co-operation in less developed areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where they effect tangible interventions in support of local populations. Resistance to imposed modalities is combined with this professional experience, developed in order to perform tangible interventions with respect to the relationship between developed and less developed areas. By creating infrastructures, digging wells for water, providing sanitary facilities, those who work in these organisations combine their subjective resistance to the economic rationalisation from which social and territorial disparities are derived globally, intervening to increase solidarity towards the populations who suffer the most from this rationalisation. For these organisations, the confluence of the globalisation movement - of which they declare themselves and in some circles are recognised as founders – means finding an opening for a course of action that has been in place for some considerable time, through initiatives based on solidarity. For their members, it also means simultaneously gaining a sense of their activities, through developing professional skills with a different bias, but otherwise similar to those of representatives of official organisations employed by national and international agencies, such as the F.A.O. These are agencies whose work was

contested - especially by this type of actor – during the meeting in Rome, in June 2002.

The second type of professional experience is defined through activities that focus on information. This is carried out by those who, during the construction of collective action, become specialised in developing communication and the production and dissemination of information through recourse – as with professionals within official organisations – to information infrastructures.

These actors thus develop professional skills that are similar to those of the 'official' professionals, but in contrast they propose alternative means of elaborating and disseminating information whilst simultaneously performing the task of developing communicative networks within collective initiatives. These actors are directly involved in the production and dissemination of information either within individual organisations or through the formation of specialised information networks such as Indymedia, Tactical Media Crew, or Rekombinant, which, as we have already seen, are active at global and continental levels, as well as in individual countries.

The third type of subjective involvement is defined in political terms. Subjective resistance unfolds in the construction of political formations that converge and in some cases attempt to become constitutive elements of collective action on globalisation. These are groups whose members aim above all to intervene in the areas of institutions and political power. These members are actors who are differentiated by their organisational situation and political orientation. The most important difference related to organisational situation is that between those who work in trade union organisations and those who are principally active in political groups. Those involved in trade unionism are actors who conceive of their intervention in globalisation in the context of a trade union initiative of a largely political character, aimed at intervention in national political economy and which attempts to alter the European economy. These actors take up the economic and cultural issues connected with globalisation in the context of trade unions politically aligned with the left, or centre-left, such as the Cgil, and the Cisl in Italy, or the Cgt

and the Cfdt in France,[4] or with the more radical left, like the Italian organisation Cobas, or the French group Sud.[5]

Actors in political organisations can in turn be divided into two main branches. The first is that of subjects who come together in initiatives on globalisation seeing this as a new phase in their commitment to transform society, which unfolds according to the traditional formations of the reformist left, such as the Democratici di sinistra in Italy, the left that maintains some links with the communist tradition like the Rifondazione comunista, also in Italy, or the Green parties in Italy or in France, and the radical left like the Trotskyist French group, the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League). The second is that of those who instead develop their activist activities by affirming their subjective resistance to the economic and cultural aspects of globalisation, combining this with activist activity aimed at effecting interventions capable of provoking political decisions and engendering the prospect of changes related to various issues raised by collective initiatives. These actors seek to determine changes that should be produced by decisions on the part of political powers or within existing institutional mechanisms, or that should be implemented at a local, national or international level. They are actors who develop their political initiatives through an activist commitment that takes shape through their interventions as groups. These groups may be formed directly in order to develop collective initiatives on globalisation, such as Attac in France (an acronym which stands for Action pour un taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide des citoyens; Action for the taxation of financial transactions for the citizen's benefit), or may have restructured their position in the course of their development, such as the

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[4] The Cgil, the Confederazione generale italiana del lavoro (General Italian Confederation of Work), is directed by members of the party Democratici di sinistra (Leftwing Democrats) a political power originating from the dissolved Partito comunista italiana (Italian Communist Party) which is currently aligned with a social democratic position, but also numbers a minority faction of directors who head up the Rifondazione comunista (the Comunist Refoundation), a more radical left wing political formation. The Cisl, Confederazione italiana dei lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Workers), is a Christian based organisation which assumes a moderate centre-left political position. The Cgt, Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Work), is the French trade union linked to the Parti Communiste Français, a minority political faction of the institutional French leftwing. The Cfdt, Confédération français démocratique des travailleurs (Democratic French Federation of Workers) is a union that takes a position close to that of the Parti socialiste.

[5] Cobas, Comitati di base (Rank Committee) a trade union of the tradition radical italian left, dates back to the second half of the previous century, when, at the end of the 1960s during important labour related conflicts, groups of workers with more radical orientations that those involved in trade unionism were formed outside the principle unions. Sud, solidaire unitaire démocratique (Democratic Union for Solidarity), that gathers workers from the traditional French radical left, has more recent origins, having been founded for the most part by Trotskyists and other militant radicals that were marginalised by other unions.

Centri italiani (Italian Centres) in the north-east of the country. However, for these actors the importance of their action is not therefore limited to the application of pressure on institutions. They consider themselves to be the leaders of political intervention aimed at determining profound changes in the definition of the economic and cultural orientation of the globalisation of social life, through initiatives that focus on institutions but also look beyond these.

However, there are also actors who posit themselves politically as exclusively anti-institutional. These are actors who are committed to emphasising their distance from globalisation through recourse to violence in attacking its symbols of domination. This is exemplified by the behaviour of the group Black Block, who in Genoa in July 2001, avoided physical clashes with police (who for their part were particularly determined to quash other protesters on several occasions) and opted instead to attack branches of banks and other symbols of economic domination that results from globalisation.

The various types of connection that are established between on the one hand the defence and affirmation of subjectivity and on the other, courses of action taken by actors who seek to intervene in cultural, professional and political life in order to effect changes to globalisation, should not be understood as exclusive to one another. Indeed, in collective action, different courses of action may well become intertwined, due also to the fact that one actor may take part in several different activities, either simultaneously or at different point in time. Thus actors who are professionally specialised in information related activities are at the same time active in groups of a fundamentally political character, with a reformist or radical bias. There are also actors who move from one or more cultural and political experiences linked to traditional political or union based activities to others that stem instead from innovative approaches to globalisation by collective initiatives.

In this way we can define two main characteristics of the involvement of individual actors in collective initiatives. The first is the affirmation of individual subjectivity not only against the impositions of globalisation, but also with the collective initiative. Whether this means the affirmation of individual specificity through the construction of a professional identity or the development of an essentially political activity, the individual actor does not intend to dissolve his or her personal experience into that of the collective, which he or she has joined in order to express this personal position. Through a series of different experiences, this actor

also becomes concerned with the defence and affirmation of his or her own subjectivity, combining this with activism, and avoiding the need to dissolve individuality within the collective activities of the group in which he or she participates.

The process of passing from one experience to another allows the individual actor to remain in control of his or her own role as an activist in the context of a collective whose members recognise the validity of the need to combine subjective affirmation with a position that is continually in progress within collective action. This position corresponds to the meaning attributed by the actor to individual involvement in this action.

The second characteristic is the fluidity of activism that develops through this continual reassessment and realignment of position experienced by individual actors within collective initiatives.

4   COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATION

Fluidity does not only apply to the position assumed by these actors. It can also be identified at an organisational level.

Organisation is an essential element through which collective action intervenes in its external environment, but also, at the same time, in it internal structures. It is the instrument of rationalisation developed by the actors in order to render their intervention in the external environment possible and efficient, so that they can pursue cultural, political and economic objectives related to changing the forms of globalisation. Organisation also allows the circulation of the reams of critiques and general proposals on the subject of globalisation, continually produced by multiple components of the initiatives, and articulated in depth at occasions such as the Porto Alegre meetings in 2001 and 2002.

Organisation is also the instrument used to manage the tension that develops between the affirmation of subjectivity and the defence of individual specificity of every actor, and his or her involvement in the collective initiative. By confronting this internal tension and assuring the realisation of activities directed towards the external environment, organisation becomes an instrument for the rationalisation and management of the subjective and rational elements of the initiative. Thus it is an instrument that aims to ensure that external intervention is

rational and therefore efficient, and at the same time it is a means of managing the tension between the subjective defence and the rationalisation of collective action, in which the actor is involved while simultaneously seeking to affirm his or her individual specificity.[6]

This type of organisation is implemented through a network with uncertain boundaries, in which the actors in collective action on globalisation are involved primarily in a general and fluid capacity. The dimensions of this network extend beyond individual countries, as well as continental boundaries.

The channels of communication that make the construction of this network possible are developed above all using information infrastructures which may be used by individual actors or local, national and international groups. Direct contact and meetings between these individual actors and groups also facilitates the development of organisation.

The characteristics of organisational strategies become more clearly manifest during large-scale events, which are made possible through focused and directed use of communication networks. Gatherings such as that in Porto Alegre in 2001 reveal the full extent of the capacity of an organisational approach for intervention - both internally to collective initiative and externally. Internally, organisational capacity was confirmed by the participation of over 40,000 groups from five continents, representing 199 countries that were involved in this mobilisation. Externally, this capacity was confirmed by the coverage that this mobilisation managed to achieve in the international media, in which it gained an equal, if not higher profile that that of the Summit in Davos attended by the economic and financial leaders.

In this mobilisation, the convergence of the more disparate components of the collective initiatives is made possible by the understandings that are established in general terms regarding cultural, political, economic and social issues related to globalisation. These understandings are general in so far as they are not based on a single, shared in-depth understanding of the details of these issues. Thus it is possible for general statements on the need to confront decisively the problem of

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[6] The organisational model outlined above differs from that which is characterised by its capacity to gather and mobilise resources for action (McCarthy, Zald, 1972; Tarrow, 1997).

how to overcome the disparity between developed and undeveloped areas of the world to find agreement in groups ranging from European unions with a social democratic orientation, to groups which have a strong religious basis, such as Pax Christi, and to other groups linked to guerrilla force in Latin America. This is without taking into account the fact that many actors may be involved in this mobilisation without being organically linked to or a member of any of these or other organised components.

This type of convergence allows the realisation of not only the structuring of a global network, but also of organisational networks in individual countries, which gather together components of the collective initiative that differ greatly amongst themselves.[7] For example, this is the case for the Social Forums that were established in Italy as part of the mobilisations after the events of Genova in July 2001. This is also partly true of Attac in France that by summer 2002 was drawing together over 300 organised groups. This is without including the actors who join groups such as the Italian social Forum or the French Attac without belonging to any organised group, or, in contrast, who belong to two or more different groups. These groups in turn are not necessarily components of formations such as Attac or the Social Forum.

It is in a context of this general convergence that a further relevant characteristic of organisation becomes clear, which is its fluidity. This can be identified above all by two factors. The first is that the boundaries of the organised components of action and the network developed at a local, national and international level, are undetermined. With the exception of the gap established between the network and fundamentalist or community oriented groups, the components of action are largely mobile since they are continually realigning their internal position, to the point of being often on the verge of departing from their organisational body. This is the case, for example, with groups affiliated with the Lilliput network that remains on the boundary of the Italian Social Forums.

The second characteristic is the fact that many actors, at least in an Italian or a French context to which I make specific reference, belong to more than one of the organised components of an initiative. These actors often move between a

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[7] As part of this research project, we are drawing up charts of organisational networks at a global level as well as within individual countries in which the work is taking place.

stronger commitment to one group or another. Meanwhile, other actors do not wish be become integrated into any of these components, and others still combine this avoidance of declaring their position with an episodic involvement in collective action. In this way too, actors are able to protect the affirmation of their individual specificity as subjects involved in collective initiatives.[8]

The result of these characteristics is an organisational fluidity that involves organised components of the initiative as well as individual actors. From this derives an organisational framework in a state of continual change. There are individual actors who circulate among branches of the organisational network. There are organised formations such as the Italian Social Forums and the French Attac which undergo continual structural change.

Internal relationships and external intervention mean that these and other formations are in a state of constant change. Thus the network that is formed is not devoted to reaching organisational structures in which stability prevails decidedly over change. This network actually develops at a local, national and international level as organisation in progress.

Despite these qualities of organisation in progress, fluidity and constant change, this network is characterised by the general convergence of individual actors and groups set up to tackle issues related to globalisation, and includes within it groups of components of collective action that join together on the basis of profound communicative understandings. These groups are constituted by circuits of subnetworks of individual actors and organised formations that establish relationships between themselves, communicating freely as a result of more profound understandings that the generic agreements of the initiative's network as a whole.

Through these circuits particular bonds can be identified between those who agree to engage with the issues and constitute elements both internal and

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[8] In this way, these actors emphasise the subjective distance that they establish from the objectification of the world implemented through the cultural and economic aspects of globalisation. This also occurs when the actor tries to shape the meaning of his or her action by seeking to change the orientation of globalisation through involvement in a collective initiative. This involvement is defined for some as an attempt to build professionalism in sectors such as information and international co-operation; for others it is defined above all as a search for cultural alternatives; for other still is it principally defined on the basis of economic and social changes that need to be enforced.

external to collective action on globalisation in a profound manner, rather than in a generic way.

In the course of the research to which the present article refers, in the case of work carried out on initiatives that have taken place in French and Italian contexts, four of these circuits can be identified. These will now be examined, taking into consideration the meaning attributed by actors to their actions and the significance of this in the context of social life.

5   CIRCUITS OF COMMUNICATIVE UNDERSTANDING

A first circuit is constituted by groups and actors who directly spearhead[9] collective action in which they express an essentially political orientation. These are individual actors and organised groups that in their action privilege intervention directed at the institutional system and political power.

Examples of active, structuring components in this type of circuit are groups that operate at an international level such as Attac in France and the Centri sociali that intervene largely in an Italian context. I will consider each in turn.

Attac is one of the groups organised by the globalisation movement which is most widely known internationally. It was founded as an association at the same time as the launch of globalisation initiatives. Since its establishment it has brought together in France a range of organisations and individuals with a broad variety of political, social and cultural sympathies.[10] The organisations that make up Attac numbered around 300 in France in 2002, when the association retains a membership of around 30,000. However, it extends beyond the French context and has branches in several European countries, in Africa, in America and in Asia.

An active force on the international scene, the organisational power of Attac is revealed during relevant gatherings which involve the overall network of the collective action, such as the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. On these

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[9] These spearheads are individual actors and groups that give meaning to their action by aligning themselves first and foremost with activities that aim to change the context of globalisation. Even if they originally supported other initiatives, these actors privilege intervention in the processes of globalisation, tracing all their activities and issues raised in mobilisation back to this question.

[10] Among these groups are editing staff of journals such as *Le monde diplomatique*, trade unions such as the Cgt and the Cfdt, the union Sud, groups of students, of unemployed people, and leftwing political parties

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occasions the organisational network of the association comes into contact with other components of the initiative with which it attempts to determine relevant course of action in order to pursue the economic and cultural objectives it aims to achieve. These objectives are intended to induce political intervention in the control of the circulation and speculation of financial capital on a global level. These interventions aim above all to criticise the predominance of a uniquely liberal economic approach and to re-establish the primacy of politics over economy, to render financial transactions transparent and to redistribute internal revenue among social groups in an equal manner. These objectives emphasise a critical attitude towards the liberal politics of international bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the OMC (Organisation Mondiale du Commerce). The pursuit of these objectives began in a concrete manner with demands on institutions for a tax on international financial transactions, whose proceeds should be redistributed equally in an attempt to redress social inequalities.

The communication circuit is activated through the sharing of resources by these elements of the action. This does not take place without some tension, however. For example, tensions that arise between those within Attac who are seeking to establish an activism that is far removed from previous leftwing models, and the actors who joined the association in the hope of continuing to follow a course of action that they had previously employed in other experiences whose origins, often rather distant, date back to the worker's movement and its internal structure. There are also tensions such as that which can be identified between the affirmation of subjectivity and involvement in collective activity. This occurs because the affirmation of subjectivity evokes tensions with the position of individual actors in the context of collective action.

This double tension, between the affirmation of subjectivity and involvement in collective action, and between approaches by actors who wish to establish a radically new form of activism and others who instead see continuity between their previous engagement and their commitment to initiatives relating to globalisation, can also be found in the communication circuits of Italian groups.

The Centri sociali are organisations that were established some time ago, in some cases more than a decade, in the aftermath of initiatives by young leftwing radicals. These groups formed the centres by occupying buildings and urban spaces that were unused, and converting them into centres for political and cultural life. In

these spaces they raised issues such as the new domination of the world, social inequality, the relationship between the north and south of the world, immigration, the liberalisation of the use of drugs, war, job security, freedom of production and the enjoyment of artistic production. The actors who bring these centres into being sometimes manage to turn them into places that exert a strong cultural attraction, that are recognised for their capacities for elaborating alternative information and for artistic production.

The involvement of these centres in collective action on globalisation happened very rapidly. Right from the first mobilisations at the end of the previous century, various Centri sociali either began to spearhead action or were involved in it. Many actors redefine their activism in this context, for example forming groups that do not wish to be strictly associated with circumscribed regional bodies, such as first the Tute bianche and then the Disobbedienti, and who want to intervene in issues related to globalisation on political terms.[11] The Centri sociali do not however constitute a network of homogeneous organisations as part of the initiative on globalisation.

The centres from the north west of Italy consist of squatters who take a largely anarchic stance, and carry out activities through which they articulate the radical criticisms they aim at political and economic power, the social and cultural implications of which they reject as they impact on the lives of each individual subject, and on globalised social life as a whole. Through symbolic initiatives on the one hand, which do not exclude the use of violence, and through alternative lifestyles to those imposed by the rules of the market and prevalent cultural models, on the other, these actors attempt to emphasise the gap between their subjective rejection of domination and the objectification of the world, expressed through the rationalisation of the economy and the cultural impositions of globalisation.

In the northeast, there are other kinds of Centro sociale. These include those of Rivolta in Marghere, Pedro in Padua and Ya Basta in Vicenza whose actors are trying to implement a new form of activism, that differs from that of the traditional

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[11] These are multifaceted and fluid groups, in the sense previous described in this text. The construction of the Disobbedienti, for example, began in October 2001 during the first national meeting of the Social Forum. At this time the Laboratorio della Disobbedienza Sociale was formed, due to the initiative of many organisations such as the former Tute Bianche, Centri sociali from the northern and southern regions of the country and political organisations such as the young communists.

left or of the extreme anti-imperialist left in the issues raised and its modes of approaching these issues. The experiences of the Tute Bianche and the Disobbedienti form part of this type of activism which aims to criticise the financial and cultural aspects of globalisation which, at the same time, is rooted in but not limited by the regional context in which the Centri sociali are located. This form of activism seeks to intervene in institutions and in political power on a variety of levels, in pursuit of multiple objectives, which come together in their definition of alternatives to the economic and cultural orientation of globalisation. It is an activism that is employed to affirm the social rights of threatened populations and the cultural rights of marginalised groups, to oppose war, to halt the production and consumption of Genetically Modified Material, to remove the control of the production and enjoyment of music and art from the control of big businesses.

The Centri sociali in the south of Italy, especially in Campania, insist on unemployment but also display similar characteristics of Northern organizations. Their actors, like those in the north east, seek to redefine political course of action in order to allow on the one hand the affirmation of subjectivity and on the other the definition of alternatives to the predominant orientation of globalisation.

In the Italian context, there are however other groups that function as a connection between organisations that are active in the former circuit and those that belong to the second, as we will see. The Social Forums are actually organisations that strive to forge connections in their local areas between individual actors and organised groups that carry out activities through which they hope to confront issues related to economic and cultural globalisation. Founded in the wake of Genoa in July 2001, one year later they number more than fifty. They are spread out in different parts of the country and are extremely various in nature due to the diversity of their individual actors and groups. This indicates a tension due to friction between their three main components: the actors and groups from the traditional left, both reformist and radical; those who come from a background of Catholic or lay solidarity; those who align themselves with the new activism of the left in initiatives on globalisation. These tensions increase where certain positions or organised groups begin to prevail over others, as for example in the Rome Social Forum in which a component of the traditional radical left is very active, or alternatively in Florence, where the Catholic position on solidarity is particularly important. The Social Forums thus evolve towards the formation of an organisation characterised by the alternating presence of differentiated positions and organisations connected to a variety of communication

circuits, rather than towards a network defined essentially by the political prevalence of certain activities performed by its components.

A second type of communication circuit is constituted by those spearheading collective action who privilege activities connected to moral affirmations in order to achieve changes to the orientation of globalisation. An important component of this kind of circuit in an Italian context is the input of individual actors and organised groups such as those that established the Lilliput network. I move now to a discussion of the most pertinent features of this network.

This network is formed by individual actors and organisations that stem largely from long running endeavours based on solidarity, in either a lay or a Catholic context, that work towards the affirmation of moral choices, principally in relation to populations in southern areas of the world, or who have been involved in other fields such as environmental campaigns.[12] These individual actors and organisations consider their intervention in initiatives on globalisation non only as the logical outcome of their activities, but also as a vital area in which to redefine their commitment which is not simply to participation in, but also to the setting up of mobilisations. This can be seen when these organisations work towards determining decisive issues for a different kind of social and economic system, when they criticise economic power and its institutions as identified in bodies such as the WTO, the IMF and the European Commission, and when they propose tangible, practical alternatives to market domination of social requirements.

The Lilliput network functions in this contest to increase on the one hand its tangible interventions aimed at helping oppressed populations in the third world, and on the other, to promote non-violent strategies within collective action. Thus the actors' affirmation of subjectivity and a critical stance towards the predominant forms of globalisation along with proposals for different strategies of development, combined with tangible intervention on behalf of populations in the third world, constitute the elements of a group of organisations, in tension with one another, that make up a communication circuit that seeks to endow initiatives on globalisation with moral significance.

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[12] Among these groups are Catholic foundations such as Pax Christi, Mani Tese and Nigrizia that carry out tangible actions of intervention in southern areas of the world, and lay organisations such as the WWF that has long specialised in concrete campaigns and initiatives to protect wildlife and the environment.

A third type of communication circuit is formed by the actors and groups that join together in globalisation initiatives,[13] with a background in collective movements such as environmentalism which developed in the context of what was defined as the post-industrial era, between the 1960s and 1970s.[14].

The fourth type of communication circuit is that produced by actors and organised groups that come together in action on globalisation from a background of social initiatives such as trade unionism, political activities, like those carried out by leftwing and groups on the extreme left whose origins, at least in discursive terms, date back to industrialism and the social centrality of the conflict between workers and industrialists.[15]

These four types of communication circuit exist in tension with one another above all due to the relationship between the components of initiatives that remain connected to social conflict in the past and those that wish to align themselves with the definition of new activism. In this tension can be identified the meaning given by actors to their involvement in collective action, through which they intend on the one hand to intervene in order to alter the orientation of globalisation and on the other to affirm their subjective identity as distinct from objectification and economic rationalisation and dominant cultural impositions. These collective actions seek on the one hand to validate affirmations of subjectivity and specificity against a rationalising objectification and on the other, to construct areas of conflict with political and social adversaries.

The mobilisations developed over the years against organisations such as the WTO and the IMF move towards the construction of this area of conflict.

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[13] The actors and groups that join together in initiatives on globalisation bring to these either previous experience gained in areas such as environmental protection or a knowledge of models of action used by other social movements such as the worker's movement. These previous experiences are then offered anew as components of a new form of mobilisation.

[14] Daniel Bell sees this as a new phase in the evolution of society, insisting above all on the importance assumed by scientific and technological developments for the economy (1973); Alain Touraine defines it by emphasising the affirmation of the structuring of social life around the conflict between new central actors, the technocrats that are opposed by the new social movements, that challenge their control of knowledge application, scientific and technological research which becomes the crux of the argument as was the control of the organisation of work and the management of industrialisation which led to struggles between industrialist and the worker's movement in industrial society (1973).

[15] By industrialism is understood the affirmation of central social relations, conflict, economic activity and fundamental issues concerning institutional political decisions that relate essentially to industry and industrialisation.

However, the implications of these are cultural rather than social and political. This is due to the fact that initiatives succeed in intervening above all in out world view, rather than in the orientation that leading actors impose on the globalisation of the economy.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Collective action on globalisation that has been developing since the end of the previous century is constituted by a vast array of components, amongst which four stand out in particular in the European context considered here, defined on the basis of their situation within four types of communication circuit. The first is that of formations that spearhead action on the basis of a political orientation determined to change the financial and cultural aspects of globalisation. The second type of circuit is that which also includes groups that organise action on the basis of a moral orientation towards solidarity. The third consists of groups that join together in action from a range of social movements from the end of the previous century. The fourth is constituted by groups that again join together in action but originate from the conflicts of industrialisation.

These four types of circuit shape an equal number of sectors in which the overall organisational network of collective action on globalisation is structured. This network is made possible by communication that is established between the various components of the initiative through infrastructures of information and in other ways, largely on the basis of generic understandings which are reached in order to determine more precisely the issues to be raised which are constitutive aspects of the collective action.

In this way more profound communication circuits are established, through which affirmations of subjectivity are articulated, as well as the involvement of actors in collective action that seeks to alter the orientation of globalisation. In this way also some tensions are established, and courses of action are determined regarding the construction of collective action. On the one hand, there is a tension between the affirmation of the actor's subjectivity and his or her involvement in collective action, and on the other, between old and new forms of activism. These two tensions are a constitutive part of collective action that is constructed through attempts to forge paths that enable it to contend with dominant groups over the control of globalisation orientations. However, this action moves above all towards intervention in the cultural

effects of globalisation, promoting alternative world views to those that currently prevail. Furthermore, the meanings produced by this action through mobilisations that criticise the prevailing world view in order to propose alternatives are also essentially cultural.