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Introduction: Constructing an Alternative Globalization

There is the belief that the economy is untouchable because of the rule of the market, globalization, the decline of nation states, etc. It is principally this which has led them to this consensus politics. The most important task for the left today is to find alternatives to neoliberalism. (Interview with Chantal Mouffe in Castle, “Hearts, Minds, and Radical Democracy,” 1998)

It would not be an exaggeration to assert that much of the energy of the Left in the past decade has been spent on searching for alternatives against the existing global capitalist order. Inherited from the postwar international economic policy framework centered on the “unholy trinity” (Peet, 2003)—the International Monetary Fund avoiding balance of payment problems, the World Bank promoting economic development through international lending, and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs facilitating international trade through tariff reduction—the current model of corporate capitalism has been critiqued by many as undemocratic in its representation, inhuman in ignoring basic freedoms, and inequitable (Bello, 2002; Mertes, 2004; Yuen et al., 2004). A global resistance movement has emerged to demand not only redistributive justice, but also “a seat at the table” to reform the existing global governance structure. Although education is at the very center of the formation and expansion of this movement, it has received little theoretical and empirical attention.

This chapter looks at the emergence of the alternative globalization movement by focusing on its educational roles. The next section begins with a paradox, that is, while education is constitutive of this movement, it is often assumed and subsumed under the larger political agenda. I attribute this “abundant invisibility” both to the methodological limits within the fields of radical adult education and critical pedagogy, and to the theory-activism tension within the movement. The following sections move on to examine three main conceptualizations of education—as counteranalyses, possibilities, and new subjectivities/citizenships—in the alternative globalization movement. Broadening the conceptions of and methodological approaches to education to understand this global network entails asking new questions: Who are the actors in this pedagogic project for global justice? What are the multiple ways of knowing and doing beyond the World Bank or World Trade Organization way? In turn, how do counteranalyses and new possibilities constitute new subjectivities? I conclude the chapter by suggesting avenues for future research.
The Educational Paradox in the Alternative Globalization Movement: Abundant Yet Invisible

The alternative globalization movement finds its roots in the protest struggles in the global South against the Structural Adjustment Programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) since the late 1970s, peaking in the uprising in Caracas in 1989, and gaining political visibility after the failed ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle in 1999 (Katsiaficas, 2004). Behind each “discontent” in the long protestography (Collins, 2004)—whether it targets the World Bank, IMF, WTO, G8, North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), or Asian Development Bank—lies an educational effort to elucidate the impact of regional and international organizations on people’s lives. From debt to agricultural liberalization, to water privatization, to access to basic medicines, each issue-focused member organization/network researches and debunks the metanarrative of the growth-through-trade paradigm. Since 2001, the alternative globalization movement has been organizing an annual World Social Forum (WSF) as an alternative to the World Economic Forum. Under the overarching frame of “another world is possible,” participants (from 13,000 in 2001 to 120,000 in 2004) self-organize panels, workshops, and cultural events that challenge “a process of globalization commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations’ interests, with the complicity of national governments” (World Social Forum, 2002, Principle B). Although common protest action like demonstrations and solidarity marches are often part of the program, the WSF could be considered first and foremost a mega pedagogical site. Through diverse ways of engaging in this “open meeting place,” the goal of the WSF is to reinvent democracy such that “the mode of economic production, the structures of global governance, the dissemination of scientific innovation, the organization of the media, social relations and the relationships between society and nature, are subjected to a radical, participatory and living democratic process” (Fisher & Ponniah, 2003, p. 13).

Despite its centrality and abundance, education rarely figures center stage in the theoretical and empirical literature on the alternative globalization movement. This, I argue, is related both to the methodological limits within the fields of radical adult education and critical pedagogy, as well as to the theory versus action/intellectualism versus activism tension within the movement. There is a strong connection between radical adult education—defined as “adult education theory and practice dedicated to significant social transformation within the left-wing political tradition” (Holst, 2002, p. 4)—and social movements. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) argue that a defining characteristic of a social movement is its cognitive praxis; that is, the production of knowledge is central to the development of collective identities within social movements. Seen from this angle, social movements target not only societal transformation through educating the public, but also personal transformation through education that is internal to the movements (Holst, 2002). The past decade saw the flourishing of environmental, antiracist, feminist, and anticorporate globalization adult education that is centered on (1) an “activist-based political pedagogy” (Clover, 2004); (2) interlocking oppressions; and (3) an imperative linkage between education and social change. In parallel, critical educational theorists who have traditionally focused on national formal educational systems have also begun to look at the relationships between global capitalism and critical pedagogy. Though deeply concerned with social justice, neither the field of radical adult education nor...
critical pedagogy has paid much attention to the educational work within the alternative globalization movement. Radical adult education theorists have largely stayed within their issue and community focus while critical pedagogues remain primarily concerned with the impact of neo-liberalism on the national school setting.

In addition to the current methodological impasses in critical educational theories, the question of how and how much the movement should theorize itself also makes it difficult to discern the underlying educational currents of the alternative globalization movement. On one hand, as some have charged, academic social movement theory may not always be useful to the activists (Dixon & Bevington, 2003). On the other, “anti-intellectualism” (or as one activist puts it, “we can’t get bogged down in analysis”) often gives easy ground for critics to attack the movement as an “inchoate, ‘postideological’ mass of do-gooders, pragmatists, and puppeteers” (Featherstone, Henwood, & Parenti, 2004, p. 309). Despite the presence of movement intellectuals who occupy leadership positions in articulating the cognitive identity and interests of the movement, a sort of division of labor is apparent, a tension that has long been pointed out by critical feminist scholars including Chandra Mohanty and Gloria Anzaldua on power relations in knowledge production. Leading left intellectuals, such as Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Noam Chomsky, Immanuel Wallerstein, Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe, provide theoretical elaborations while activists do the groundwork to construct grassroots globalism. Although there is no unified theoretical position, many such theorists search for a postliberal and postsocialist political project as an alternative to neoliberalism; Postliberal because the organizing democratic principles of freedom and equality in liberal capitalism have proven to be an inadequate strategy for the Left; postsocialist because “traditional socialist thought failed to understand what were then called the new social movements: feminism, the anti-racist struggle, the environmental movement. It tried to absorb them into the model of class struggle rather than respecting them as inherently different forms of resistance arising from different modes of oppression” (Mouffe quoted in Castle, 1998). Hardt and Negri (2004), for example, propose the concept of the “multitude” that is beyond the working class, an “open and expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common” (p. xiv). Laclau and Mouffe (2001) advocate for a radicalization of democratic values and an alliance of diverse movements through a logic of difference that allows various demands to coexist without losing the power of creating a broad anti-capitalist movement. Although members of the alternative globalization movement often readily adopt these radical pluralist perspectives, some activists are wary of a theoretical monopoly by intellectuals because, according to them, “ideas don’t belong to pedestals. They belong in the street, at work, in the home, at the bar, and on the barricades” (Featherstone et al., 2004, p. 314). Subsumed by theorists who are concerned with the broader viable political project of the Left and assumed by activists who weave their educational work almost naturally into their daily organizing, education becomes an invisible pillar of the alternative globalization movement. In the following sections, I provide three conceptualizations of education—as counternarratives, alternatives, and new subjectivities/citizenships—as central to the building of this movement.

Education as Counteranalysis

The fundamental problem therefore lay with the very notion of the self-regulating market. (Holmes, 2004, p. 351)

The movement has won its most clear-cut victories, however, on the plane of ideas. (Yuen, 2004, p. xxv)
For the alternative globalization movement, a key part of the educational agenda is to provide a credible counteridea to the Thatcherite–Reagan dogma of TINA (There Is No Alternative to economic neo-liberalism). It is in the “cultural struggles” for the very definition of life, economy, nature, and society that education plays the role of counteranalyses (Escobar, 1995, p. 16). Weis and Fine (2004) propose counteranalyses as a working method for social justice research, in which “principle fracture lines” (an interior analysis of the key institutions through lines of difference and power) are juxtaposed with other lines of analyses to challenge well established facts and suggest where radical change can begin (p. xx).

The “well-established fact” of the existing capitalist order built upon a self-regulating market, free trade, and corporate control is that it is the best and only efficient global system that brings economic growth to everyone. A recent example of counteranalysis by the alternative globalization movement could be found in a public statement by more than 140 nongovernmental organization (NGO) representatives as a response to the growth-through-trade metanarrative put forward by the chief executives of over 60 multinational corporations just before the latest WTO ministerial meeting opened in Hong Kong in December 2005.

**Metanarrative**

We strongly believe that the WTO-based multilateral trading system is one of the central pillars of international co-operation. Multilateral initiatives to liberalise world trade and improve market access for goods and services are a strong driving force for global economic growth, job creation, and wider consumer choice—as well as keeping in check the ever-present threat of protectionism. We underline our conviction that a successful Doha round is vital to enable business to continue to play a leading role in the eradication of poverty and the raising of global living standards. (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, *Financial Times*, November 15th, 2005)

**Counteranalysis**

Although we have no illusions about why the corporations are so eager to see the round concluded, their argument that trade liberalisation is a “strong driving force for global economic growth, job creation and wider consumer choice” is utterly misleading. Their first claim about growth is questionable. A recent report from the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) compares average growth rates in 175 countries between 1960–1979 and 1980–2000, divided into five groups according to their per capita income at the start of each period. In the top four groups, average growth rates fell by more than half.... Second, they claim that trade liberalisation will lead to job creation. Again, if we look at the research, between 1990 and 2002, unemployment increased in 7 out of 9 regions.... We realise that the WTO and trade liberalisation has been good for the corporate bottom-line. (People’s Response to Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, *Financial Times*, November 15th, 2005)

The current neoliberal globalization paradigm has been critiqued by many as undemocratic, inequitable, imperialist, and unsustainable (see Rizvi and Engel in this section). It privileges certain scientific knowledges while discrediting, concealing, and trivializing the knowledges that inform counterhegemonic practices and agents (De Sousa Santos,
2003). It is intolerant not only of diverse human cultures and value systems, but also of biodiversity. One of the most striking examples of undemocratic, inequitable, imperialist, and unsustainable practice is the imposition of a Western intellectual property rights regime in the Uruguay Round negotiations of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, predecessor of the WTO. In an incisive analysis, an international legal scholar, Susan Sell (2003), recounts the tale of how a dozen leading U.S. pharmaceutical multinational corporations managed to shape the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement:

In March 1986, six months before the Punta del Este meeting launching the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, twelve corporate executives of US-based multinational corporations formed the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC). The IPC sought to develop international support for improving the international protection of intellectual property (patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets). The IPC, in conjunction with its counterparts in Europe and Japan, crafted a proposal based on existing industrialized country laws and presented its proposals to the GATT Secretariat. By 1994, the IPC had achieved its goal in the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) accord of the Uruguay Round... These private sector actors succeeded in getting most of what they wanted from an IP agreement, which now has the status of public international law. In effect, twelve corporations made public law for the world. (Sell, 2003, p. 96)

Patents protected under TRIPS, on seeds or drugs especially, have proven to be extremely costly to the majority world. Ninety-nine percent of Africans living with HIV/AIDS do not have access to the antiretroviral drugs because of patent restrictions. Part of the educational task of the alternative globalization movement is to expose the assumptions behind the hegemonic criteria of efficiency. The Western intellectual property regime, for example, has largely been developed through bioprospecting and biopiracy, made possible by colonialism (Schiebinger, 2004; Shiva, 2001).

Education as Possibilities

The utopian dimension of the WSF consists in claiming the existence of alternatives to neoliberal globalization. (de Sousa Santos, 2003)

Another world is not only possible; she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing. (Roy, 2004)

A common critique and misconception of the alternative globalization movement pinpoints the deconstructive rather than constructive nature of the movement. It is, however, important to underline the fact that network members are not against globalization per se. More than just resistance, the movement aims at alternative models of globalization based on transparency, democracy, and participation. In tandem with counter-analyses, the painstaking educational efforts of the movement in the past two decades consist of researching into and practicing alternative possibilities based on “globalization from below” (Brecher, Costello, & Smith, 2000). The ideas are necessarily diverse. For the sake of analysis, I group them into three broad categories: alternative development approaches, core principles, and global governance reform proposals.

The first ideological intervention of the alternative globalization movement is to insist that the free market/free trade approach is not the only one available. For the first four
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Postwar decades, the international institutional arrangement was marked by global rules of economic integration while reserving room for national economic management, commonly referred to as the “Bretton Woods compromise” (Rodrik, 2002). The deregulation of financial and investment flows on the one hand, and the rapid expansion of free trade into areas such as agriculture and services on the other have an extremely short history. Several alternatives to free trade have been proposed. The Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (1999), for example, advocates a human development approach that puts human capacity expansion at the center of a free trade regime. According to him, development can be seen “as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product” (p. 3). Yet another approach focuses on community sovereignty where “economic policies should be set in ethical, ecological, people-centered spiritual frameworks, that development goals should entail small-scale, decentralized communities” (Dunkley, 2004, p. 16).

Another set of alternatives pertains more to general principles rather than economic models. In an interesting analytical exercise after the Seattle meeting in 1999, John Cavanagh and Jerry Mander (2004) summarized 10 core principles from the publications and protest materials of various social movement organizations: (1) living democracy, (2) subsidiarity, (3) ecological sustainability, (4) common heritage, (5) economic and cultural diversity, (6) human rights, (7) jobs, livelihood, employment, (8) food security and safety, (9) equity, and (10) the precautionary principle. The core idea is that in a living democracy, people organize to “create governance systems that give a vote to those who will bear the costs when decisions are being made” (p. 80). Decisions are made as close as feasible to the level of the individuals who will bear their consequences. Hence, subsidiarity respects the notion that sovereignty resides in people, communities, and nations. An alternative economic system must take into consideration biodiversity on the one hand, and common heritage including water, land, air, forests, fisheries, culture and knowledge, and public services on the other. Other core principles include the respect for economic and cultural diversity, human rights, food sovereignty, equity, and the precautionary principle in applying biotechnology. Many concrete proposals have arisen from these principles. One idea, pushed by the Paris-based international NGO, Association pour la Taxation Financières pour l’Aide aux Citoyens/ATTAC, is the Tobin tax on international financial speculation. Another example, drawing upon the principle of the basic rights to health, is the public health clause, demanded by a global campaign on access to basic medicines, in the TRIPS Agreement (that is, TRIPS “can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members’ right to protect public health, and in particular, to promote access to medicines to all”), opening at least the theoretical possibility of patent exemption in cases of HIV/AIDS and malaria etc. Yet another example, drawing upon the principles of diversity and human rights, is the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression—that affirms the “recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples”—to put “sand in the wheels” in the incursion of the WTO into culture through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (for a full analysis see Chan-Tiberghien, 2004).

A third set of alternatives proposed by the alternative globalization movement consists of a complete overhaul of the existing global governance system. There are some similar core principles—equitable representation, accountability, transparency, and subsidiarity/devolution of power (Woods, 2001)—but reform proposals diverge. For some, a new global governance structure needs to be embedded within a human rights framework, whether it concerns the rights of labor, women, children, migrant workers, or indigenous
peoples (UBUNTU, 2003; World March of Women, 2004). For others, the issue of “democratic deficit” in the decision-making structures of global institutions needs to be addressed and redressed through the creation of more representative mechanisms such as a people’s parliamentary assembly (Charter 99, 2000); a UN Economic Security Council to coordinate if not oversee the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO (Commission on Global Governance, 1995); a new framework on international insolvency based on an ad hoc court to determine the legitimacy of debts (Jubilee, 2002); a financing facility for trade-related capacity building to enhance the negotiating capacity of developing countries at the WTO (Oxfam, 2002); or a “truth commission” to investigate the actions and impacts of the IMF and the World Bank (Fifty Years is Enough, 2002).

**Education as New Subjectivities/Citizenships**

The production of ideas, knowledges, and affects, for example, does not merely create means by which society is formed and maintained; such immaterial labor also directly produces social relationships. Immaterial labor is biopolitical in that it is oriented toward the creation of forms of social life; such labor, then, tends no longer to be limited to the economic but also becomes immediately a social, cultural, and political force. Ultimately, in philosophical terms, the production involved here is the production of subjectivity, the creation and reproduction of new subjectivities in society. Who we are, how we view the world, how we interact with each other are all created through this social, biopolitical production. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 66)

The alternative globalization movement has not only generated counteranalyses and alternatives, but also, very importantly, new subjectivities. Variously named as the “Seattle generation,” “cosmopolitan bricoleurs of resistance and cooperation,” and the “multitude” (Hardt & Negri, 2004; Losson & Quinio, 2002), movement activists have been performing and constructing global citizenship beyond its traditionally national juridical boundaries. While world citizenship could be understood as one that “embraces the need for some effective form(s) of supra-national political authority and for political action beyond the nation-state” (Heater, 2002, pp. 11–12), it does not replace local and national forms of civic participation. According to Held (2003), cosmopolitan/multiple citizenships mean that people would have access to a variety of political engagements on a continuum from the local to the global. Their actions over the past two decades—research, seminars, conferences, polycentric world social forums, teach-ins, popular theaters, documentaries, people’s tribunals, and popular summer schools—demonstrate that activists can “self-organize across significant differences without a blueprint” (Conway, 2004, p. 260). This learning-by-doing social movement practice produces a shared new cultural identity, which becomes a sustaining vector in the construction of a “counter-empire” (Hardt & Negri, 2001). It is in this sense that Hardt and Negri consider such immaterial labor of knowledge production as an important social, cultural, and political force.

**Conclusion**

Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces. Resistance that is random and isolated is clearly not as effective as that which is mobilized through *systemic politicized practices of teaching and learning*. Uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledge is one way to lay claims to alternative histories. (Chandra Mohanty, quoted in hooks, 2004, p. 32, emphasis added)
I have attempted in this chapter to offer some conceptualizations of education within the alternative globalization movement. The alternative globalization movement is pedagogical in exposing the assumptions behind the hegemonic criteria of efficiency, putting forward alternative knowledges, and constructing global citizenship. To argue that education is constitutive of the political project for global justice requires reenvisioning educational praxis as counterweight to corporate globalization. I have elsewhere proposed a “global educational justice” research paradigm that recognizes the important connections between education and global social justice (Chan-Tiberghien, 2004). In such an expansive research agenda, educational researchers focus on the conditions of possibility for diverse knowledges to be recognized. Global educational justice requires us to expand our inquiry beyond the classroom to encompass all the new relevant educational actors in the streets, world summits, corporate boardrooms, world trade negotiation tables, and myriad social movement actions. It also involves the restoration and revitalization of subjugated non-Western knowledges/ways of knowing, so as to ensure no single metanarrative—that of the market—prevails. If much of the energy of the Left in the past decade has been spent in locating alternatives to the neo-liberal order, it is time we, as educational researchers and practitioners, took leadership and participated in this global pedagogic project for living democracy.

Notes

1. To cite just a few examples, on debt (Dano, 2003; George, 1992; Rudin, 2002; Toussaint & Zacharie, 2001); on agricultural liberalization (Ghlop et al., 2003; Shiva, 2000; Shiva et al., 2003); on water privatization (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, 2003; Olivera & Lewis, 2004; Shiva 2002); on access to basic medicines (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], http://www.accessmed-msf.org/campaign/campaign.shtm).


3. See, for example, Conway (2004), Clover (2004, 2003), and Dei and Calliste (2000).

4. See, for example, Fischman et al. (2005); McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005); and Stromquist and Monkman (2000).

5. There are exceptions to this sharp delineation of division of labor. See, for example, the works of Sonia Alvarez (1997, 1998).


References


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